

CEMETERIES, CONSTRUCTION, AND COMPLICITY

*TYLER'S UNIVERSE CEMETERY AS A BLACK BURIAL SITE UNDER DISTRESS*

by

ANJELYQUE EASLEY

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate

School of The University of Texas at Arlington

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

December 2021

**SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Dr. Kathryn Holliday, Ph.D., Supervising Professor

Dr. Austin Allen, Ph.D., ASLA

Dr. Amy A. Archambeau, Ph.D.

Dr. Taner R. Özdil, Ph.D., ASLA

Copyright © by

Anjelyque Easley 2021

All Rights Reserved



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my deepest admiration to my committee chair, Dr. Kathryn Holliday, who has the attitude and the substance of historical genius; she continually and convincingly conveyed a spirit of adventure regarding research and scholarship and excitement about design and history. Without her guidance and constant help, this thesis would not have been possible.

Additionally, I want to thank my committee members, Dr. Austin Allen, Dr. Amy Alexander Archambeau, and Dr. Taner R. Özdil, for their extensive knowledge and time spent discussing my topic and methodologies.

I am genuinely thankful for my former professors Marc Miller and Dr. Paul Daniel Marriott from The Pennsylvania State University, who helped me focus on my research interest and whose enthusiasm and late-night office hours got me to this point in my academic career.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends. They supported me at every moment of my academic career through the highs and lows and were willing to visit cemeteries with me every time I traveled somewhere new.

*In memory of Andy Leach and James Wilkins, whose hard work aided the efforts to document and preserve the Universe Cemetery.*

## ABSTRACT

### CEMETERIES, CONSTRUCTION, AND COMPLICITY *TYLER'S UNIVERSE CEMETERY AS A BLACK BURIAL SITE UNDER DISTRESS*

Anjelyque Easley, MLA Candidate

The University of Texas at Arlington, Fall 2021

Supervising Professor: Dr. Kathryn Holliday

Supervising Committee: Dr. Austin Allen, Dr. Amy Archambeau, and Dr. Taner R. Özdil

Black culture has shaped the American landscape in unique but often unrecognized ways. Black burial sites and cemeteries honor ancestors and are a site of reverence (LaRoche & Blakey, 1997). However, they are routinely neglected, reflecting America's history of segregation. Black burial grounds, places of connection to history and family, are often "repurposed" and forgotten as the changing of property ownership occurs. In many cases, through hostile zoning and real estate practices, Black burial grounds have been desecrated (Levinson, 2019). Urban infrastructures like major transitways have cut through Black cemeteries, effectively "burying" the existence of the Black landscape and those who rest there. These once treasured sites have become desolate patches of land because of ignorance, disrespect, and loss, with few policies and practices in place to allow their maintenance and preservation. Preservation Texas and the National Trust for Historic Preservation have identified historic cemeteries, particularly African American cemeteries, as some of our most endangered places (Way, 2019).

This thesis explores memory and cultural preservation as well as the long-term systemic threats to the survival of Black vernacular landscapes using the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas,

as a case study. Unfortunately, cemeteries often fall through the cracks of maintenance and caretaking across generations because of property ownership regulations. This is particularly true for Black cemeteries, including the Universe Cemetery, which does not benefit from perpetual care practices and lacks the protection of a legally recognized cemetery association (Way, 2019). The Universe Cemetery was established in 1870 and had a rich history that has been disturbed, forgotten, and recently rediscovered. A cemetery neglected and overgrown for decades is now nurtured by a small group of local historians and descendants who have begun small-scale efforts to document and clean up the site with the Smith County Historical Society (Lacy, 2020).

This thesis explores best practices in cultural landscape preservation and design by creating a maintenance plan for the cemetery that responds to the particular site conditions of the East Texas piney woods and honors descendants' wishes. The methodological approach begins with a literature review assessing the history of segregation and its impact on Black cultural landscapes and gathers historical maps that allow an analysis of the cemetery's relationship to the Universe community and the city of Tyler. Fieldwork on-site focuses on an inventory of extant grave markers and an assessment of their condition, as well as an analysis of site conditions. Oral history interviews with activists involved in preserving the site provide additional information about the cemetery's importance to the Tyler community and descendants today. In the absence of an active cemetery association charged with maintaining the cemetery, these outcomes are shared with the Smith County Historical Society and the National African American Historical Society Museum in Tyler, Texas, to support record-keeping, accessibility, and connections with preservation programs for continued, organized maintenance support efforts.

**Keywords:** African American, Black, Post-Enslavement, Cemetery, Cemeteries, Burial Site, Historic Preservation, Vernacular Landscapes, Public History, Tyler Texas, Cultural Landscapes, Gravemarkers, Reconstruction, East Texas



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xiii
Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Research Background .....	2
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Purpose Statement.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Definition of Key Terms.....	5
1.6 Methodology.....	10
1.7 Significance, Limitations, and Assumptions .....	11
1.8 Chapter Summary .....	13
Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW .....	14
2.1 Segregation, Black Landscapes, and Black Death.....	15
2.1.1 Segregation .....	16
2.1.2 Black Cemetery Landscapes .....	23
2.2 Intricacies When Working with Black Cemeteries.....	27
2.2.1 Preservation in Practice.....	27
2.2.2 Land Ownership and Accessibility .....	30
2.2.3 Community Engagement and Funding .....	36
2.3 Significance of Black Cemeteries Today – Texas .....	40
2.3.1 Landscape Architecture and Relation Professions.....	41
2.3.2 Black Lives Matter and Black Landscapes Matter .....	43
2.3.3 Texas Examples .....	44
2.4 Chapter Summary .....	46
Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY .....	50
3.1 Introduction.....	50

3.2 Research Design .....	51
3.3 Study Location and Population.....	53
3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods .....	54
3.4.1 Oral History Interviews.....	55
3.4.2 Site Survey .....	58
3.4.3 Archival and Secondary Data .....	63
3.4.4 Case Study .....	63
3.5 Methodological Significance and Limitations .....	65
3.6 Chapter Summary .....	66
Chapter 4 - CASE STUDY ANALYSIS .....	67
4.1 Recent Case: Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas; Smith County.....	69
4.1.1 Initial Site Selection.....	71
4.1.2 Land Ownership and Use.....	72
4.1.3 Site Accessibility .....	73
4.1.4 City Context and Cemetery Comparison .....	78
4.2 Oral History Interview Analysis and Findings .....	82
4.3 Site Survey and Case Study Analysis.....	86
4.3.1 Documentation Methods.....	86
4.3.2 Exiting Conditions and Inventory .....	86
4.3.3 Documentation Methods.....	93
4.3.4 Cemetery Experience .....	94
4.4 Gravemarker Analysis .....	97
4.4.1 Gravemarker Timeline.....	100
4.4.2 Gravemarker Condition .....	103
4.5 Chapter Summary and Synthesis of Findings.....	105
Chapter 5 - RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH .....	106
5.2 Management Plan .....	107
5.2.1 Community Engagement Management.....	107
5.2.2 Natural Environment Management.....	108
5.2.3 Gravemarker Management.....	110
5.2.4 Processional Road Trace Management.....	114

5.3 Results Summary and Future Recommendations .....	115
Chapter 6 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	117
6.1 Response to Research Questions .....	117
6.2 Discussion.....	121
6.3 Implication for Landscape Architecture .....	121
6.4 Additional Information for Further Research .....	123
REFERENCES .....	127
APPENDICES .....	141
Appendix A - Figures .....	142
Headstone and Marker Inscription Text.....	143
Conditions .....	155
Supporting Images of Cemetery Context.....	165
Symbolic Objects Found.....	172
Historic Maps.....	176
Appendix B - Gravemarker Survey Spreadsheet.....	180
Appendix C - Oral History Consent Form and Interview Transcriptions.....	198

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Oral History Interviews .....	82
Table 2 Gravemarker Maintenance Materials and Tools.....	113
Table 3 Universe Cemetery Gravemarker Field Survey Spreadsheet .....	182

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1 Oil painting, titled Plantation Burial .....	18
Figure 2-2 Freedman’s Memorial Cemetery.....	33
Figure 2-3 Drone aerial image of Shelton’s Bear Creek Cemetery .....	34
Figure 2-4 Cycle of finding or ignoring a Black cemetery.....	48
Figure 3-1 Research Method Diagram.....	51
Figure 3-2 Universe Cemetery Map - Texas Historical Commission.....	61
Figure 3-3 THC certificate.....	62
Figure 4-1 Universe Site Context .....	67
Figure 4-2 Pineywoods of Universe Cemetery.....	68
Figure 4-3 Important Dates Timeline .....	70
Figure 4-4 Entrance of the cemetery closer to the apartment parking lot.....	75
Figure 4-5 View from the apartment parking lot to Nottingham Lane.....	76
Figure 4-6 Formal entrance to the cemetery .....	77
Figure 4-7 Site analysis location and conditions map .....	78
Figure 4-8 Universe Cemetery context of three-mile radius from Tyler City center .....	79
Figure 4-9 Cemetery Maintenance Comparison.....	80
Figure 4-10 Photographs of Tyler Cemeteries.....	81
Figure 4-11 Aerial Image of Universe Cemetery .....	87
Figure 4-12 Aerial image of the cemetery from Goss family plot.....	88
Figure 4-13 Entrance from the Nottingham through the multi-family apartment parking lot.....	90
Figure 4-14 Goss Family Plot.....	91
Figure 4-15 Runoff and degeneration of burial plots.....	92
Figure 4-16 Retaining wall deteriorating.....	93
Figure 4-17 Survey Materials .....	94
Figure 4-18 Cemetery Experience. ....	96
Figure 4-19 Interpretation of the cemetery active entry zone.....	97
Figure 4-20 Headstone typology.....	99
Figure 4-21 Example of Headstone Types.....	99
Figure 4-22 Chart of year and age of death .....	102

Figure 4-23 Number of death dates on gravemarker by decade .....	103
Figure 4-24 Headstone materiality.....	104
Figure 4-25 Headstone Conditions – need of attention .....	105
Figure 5-1 Existing layers of the cemetery .....	106
Figure 5-2 Headstone degrees of need.....	111
Figure 5-3 Conditions of Headstones .....	112
Figure 5-4 Dumping and Erosion .....	112
Figure A-1 Stylized Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering in granite headstone .....	144
Figure A-2 Hand Inscription on concrete headstone .....	145
Figure A-3 Hand Inscription on concrete headstone .....	146
Figure A-4 Hand impression on concrete headstone .....	147
Figure A-5 Sans Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering on concrete headstone.....	148
Figure A-6 Brooks Sterling Funeral Home (Tyler, Texas) Funeral Marker.....	149
Figure A-7 Metal Cassimere Mortuary Marker.....	150
Figure A-8 Rusted funeral marker with weathered paper inside .....	151
Figure A-9 Pierce – Moss Funeral Home Funeral Marker .....	152
Figure A-10 Copper Brooks Sterling Funeral Home (Tyler, Texas) Funeral Marker .....	153
Figure A-11 Austin Memorial granite headstone .....	154
Figure A-12 Headstone needing to be repointed .....	156
Figure A-13 Headstone needs to be repointed and backfilled with soil .....	157
Figure A-14 Headstone broken into several pieces, some missing with red flag marker.....	158
Figure A-15 Headstone toppled.....	159
Figure A-16 Hand inscribed fieldstone marker weathered.....	160
Figure A-17 Weathered Military headstone needing to be cleaned.....	161
Figure A-18 Collins gated burial plot inaccessible by vegetation .....	162
Figure A-19 Multi-burial plot with depression needing to be filled.....	163
Figure A-20 Ledger needing to be cleared of vines in Goss gated burial plot .....	164
Figure A-21 View from cemetery toward entrance .....	166
Figure A-22 Road trace behind single family residence in parking lot from cemetery entrance	167
Figure A-23 Secondary entrance from road trace behind single family residences .....	168
Figure A-24 Road trace and processional way inside cemetery .....	169

Figure A-25 View of road toward dead-end of Nottingham Lane.....	170
Figure A-26 View of road toward entrance of Nottingham Lane.....	171
Figure A-27 Metal pipe behind military headstone .....	173
Figure A-28 Masonic marker with no visible headstone association .....	174
Figure A-29 Brick found in Anderson gated burial plot.....	175
Figure A-30 TX Winona map circa 1943 .....	177
Figure A-31 TX Bascom map circa 1966 .....	178
Figure A-32 TX Bascom map circa 2019 .....	179
Figure B-33 Chicora Foundation Survey Form .....	181
Figure C-34 Oral History Interview Agreement.....	199

If race follows the African descendant population beyond the grave, then racism, by definition, follows as well.

(La Roche & Blakey, 1997)



## Chapter 1 - INTRODUCTION

The rediscovery of distressed historic Black cemeteries is critical for landscape architecture (Mortice, 2017, Palmer, 2020). Through the case study of a cemetery in Tyler, Texas, this thesis examines the layers of complicity on national, state, and local scales to analyze Black landscapes, specifically cemeteries and burial sites. The focus on the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas, resulted from efforts of the volunteers and descendants to get media attention for the forgotten community that was once thriving. From the research, The Universe Cemetery was selected as the prominent case study because local historians recently investigated and highlighted the existence in media. Although scholarship exists on the different Black burial landscapes, little is known about the significance of these sites on multiple levels as well as their implicit layers, resulting in these sites being physically and metaphorically erased (Jones, 2011, Caldwell, 2016). To say that this happens to only one specific group is false; this happens to many groups because of generational political stance, religion, and displacement, to name a few. However, in the United States, the history of slavery and racism has led to a distinctive pattern of segregation, abandonment, and neglect for Black cemeteries. In the words of one cemetery activist, “For a very long time, especially in rural places, a lot of Black history has been erased and not valued. The people who were buried there, their lives have value as well (Gaffney, 2020).”

Many factors led to the displacement of Black people that once lived in communities where these seemingly abandoned cemeteries are located. Although there is research and literature about the issue of abandoned cemeteries, there is little research about the influence generational practice and displacement has on Black landscapes and cemeteries (see Chapter Two). As a result, many generations are complicit in covering up and neglecting the vital information that these Black landscapes hold, leaving these sites in critical danger of erasure in both the physical and theoretical

sense. Some scholars, such as Everett L. Fly, believe that African American legacies are embedded in the physical and cultural substance of many of America's built and vernacular places (Fly, 2020). The significance of reframing the existing Black landscape is recognized in this theme and has been highlighted in various fields. This thesis focuses on how the Universe Cemetery, as a case study representing Black landscapes, represents values and ideas critical to landscape architecture. Through that lens, historic preservation, oral history, and fieldwork can lead to renewed acknowledgment of care for the overlooked landscape.

## **1.1 Research Background**

By examining various types of literature, it is apparent the level of degree that Black cemeteries are impacted and continue to be reeling from differing types of erasure methods from segregation, maintenance, and care, and their significance and discovery today's landscape and practice. As more exposure to the social and equitable unjust that ultimately led to the full and partial erasure of the Black landscape, there are conversations in several professions that have begun to right a long-overlooked wrong in the documentation and recognition of such landscapes. The most prominent professions are landscape architecture and historic preservation. Professionals in both fields have long overlooked and disenfranchised these Black places and spaces (Rothstein, 2018, Hood et al., 2020). As a result, Black communities are still reeling from those previous decisions to ignore and develop without their input. Landscape architects have a vital role in interpreting challenges and changing public outlooks and behaviors toward public spaces. As a result, engagement, and awareness of critical cultural landscapes like burial sites and cemeteries can become centered into once-thriving communities.

Andrea Roberts, the Texas Freedom Colonies Project founder, writes: ‘The meanings and values informing these commemorative practices disrupt commonly held assumptions about Black community formation, Black heritage, and what constitutes legitimate preservation practice’ (Roberts, 2018). This project will delve into transcribing the names etched in stone, finding the burial locations, and highlighting the burial place of people who shaped the Tyler, Texas, landscape. This storytelling is critical for community uplift, which shows the impact of Black people in Tyler, Texas, and their shaping of the American landscape so that their descendants can reconnect with the land and their ancestors.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

A decision to remove or develop upon a cemetery is not always the decision of a descendant community, but instead by or with the consent of the local government and developers. This is an act of erasure of the landscape and the collective memory of those interred in the cemetery. At the heart of this proposal, the desire is to restore this valued landscape and preserve the cultural influence by maintenance and placemaking. Through the lens case study of a cemetery in Tyler, Texas, this thesis examines the layers of recognition of Black landscapes on the national, state, and local scale, specifically focusing on cemeteries. The objective has been to observe the reasons for the decline of a Black cemetery through an informative view of multiple perspectives of literature concerning the external and introspective attitudes toward Black death and burial sites, with the end goal of collecting and archiving stories as well as developing recommendations for the preservation of Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas.

Tyler, Texas, has a particularly violent and conservative history on the western frontier of slavery in the Deep South (Long, n.d., Holland, 2020). However, Tyler’s intensity of Jim Crow

racism has largely escaped examination in scholarly literature. The research into the Universe Cemetery aims to preserve and acknowledge the wrong that led to the partial erasure of the history of Black people who are interned here and to bring attention to the continued racism in Tyler.

### **1.3 Purpose Statement**

This research supports the efforts of local activists who seek to return the Universe Cemetery to its initial purpose allowing mourning and remembering the loss of relatives, friends, and loved ones. In addition, this thesis seeks to examine the themes and practices related to cultural preservation practices and collective memory in Black landscapes. Finally, this thesis uses a case study of a historic Black burial site in Tyler, Texas, viewed through the lens of the long-term systemic threats to the survival of Black vernacular landscapes. Understanding the cultural significance of Black landscapes and historical/archival documentation will positively change the existing narrative of systematic oppression that led to the partial erasure of a historic cultural landscape and help perpetuate preservation of other Black cemeteries moving forward.

Unfortunately, development and ignorance caused the erasure of these burial sites from the landscape, in that way erasing the remains of a powerless descendant community from collective memory. Larry Wade said in his oral history interview, “It means a lot. [...] A life lived is a life to be remembered. If you lived on this earth, you should be remembered someday somehow [...]” Eventually, as was the case in Tyler, Texas, people simply forget that the cemetery existed. If not for local historians, it would have been forgotten entirely.

The research focuses on understanding and collaborating with local and regional non-profit preservation advocacy organizations to strengthen ties between the Texas African American Museum, the Smith County Historical Society, Universe Cemetery descendants, and the Tyler

community. In addition, a draft maintenance plan will catalyze collaboration across these communities for the lasting preservation of the cemetery landscape.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The principle questions raised in this thesis are:

- What processes, legal issues, and public attitudes led to the neglect of the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas?
- What can be done to promote and preserve the legacy of this and other Black cemeteries throughout the United States?
- What are descendant attitudes and hopes for the future of this historic landscape?
- What are best practices for the maintenance of a cemetery located in a heavily wooded landscape?

#### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are defined as a reference in this document.

Abandoned Cemetery: a cemetery, regardless of whether it appears on a map or in deed records, that is not owned or operated by a cemetery organization, does not have another person legally responsible for its care, and is not maintained by any person (Statues Capital Texas, n.d.)

African American: The term African American refers to an American of African ancestral origins who self identifies or is identified by others as African American. While the term African

American has been used at least since the 1920s, it has been the preferred term in the USA since the 1970s. (Agyemang, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005).

Best Practices: These are recommendations generally offered by conservators as a likely cause to least damage to both the cemetery landscape and, in particular, the stone markers (Chicora, n.d.).

Black: The term Black generally refers to a person with African ancestral origins. In some circumstances, usually in politics or power struggles, the term Black signifies all non-White minority populations. (Agyemang, Bhopal, & Bruijnzeels, 2005). The discussion about the capitalization of the word “Black” has been long discussed, in 2014 a journalism professor wrote, “Black with a capital B refers to people of the African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a color.” They argued “African American” is an imprecise term when considering noncitizens or a connection among people of African descent around the world. But to use the lowercase “black” in such cases is inadequate (Tharps, 2014).

Cemetery: a place that is used or intended to be used for interment, and includes a graveyard, burial park, mausoleum, or any other area containing one or more graves (Statues Capital Texas, n.d.).

Cultural Identity: Cultural identity is the identity of a community, group, or individual regarding how one is influenced by one’s belonging to a group or culture. Cultural identification breaks down the understanding of the whole individual into a collection of various cultural identifiers. These cultural identifiers may be influenced by various conditions, including location, gender, race, history, nationality, language, sexuality, religious beliefs, ethnicity, and aesthetics (Chilvers, 2009).

Cultural Landscape: A geographic area of land with cultural properties representing the combined works of nature and man (UNESCO, 2019). The National Park Service (NPS) defines cultural landscapes as a geographic area that includes cultural and natural resources, including wildlife or domestic animals. In addition, it may be associated with a historic event, activity, or specific person (NPS, 2018).

Culture Loss: Culture can encompass meaningful traditions, habitual routines, navigation of familiar places, and day-to-day relations among people. When the landscape changes through urban development and lifestyle changes, the links between cultural identity and people's feelings and connectedness to everyday places and practices are altered (Johnson & Zipperer, 2007).

Erasure: Can occur either tacitly, through the degradation of time and weather, or explicitly, through the intentional removal of the surface (and sometimes subsurface) evidence of a site (Seiderman & Halling, 2019).

Ethnographic landscape: A variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, sacred religious sites, and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence, and ceremonial grounds are often components (NPS, n.d.).

Enslaved African: is perhaps more accurate than a servant (or slave), bonds persons, bond chattel laborers, or slave and conveys the involuntary aspect of enslavement (La Roche & Blakey, 1997).

Grave: means a space of ground that contains interred human remains or is in a burial park and that is used or intended to be used for interment of human remains in the ground (Statutes Capital Texas, n.d.).

Historic Sites: A distinguishable geographic area upon which some important historical event occurred, or which is associated with important historical events or persons, or which was subject to a sustained activity of man [historic, prehistoric, or both] (Page, Dolan & Gilbert, 1998).

Integrity: Under Criterion D, integrity of location, design, materials, and association are essential, with integrity of setting often assisting in the evaluative process. Design, in reference to archaeological sites, means the patterning of features and areas. Integrity of materials refers to the completeness and preservation of the assemblage. Integrity of association means only that there is a clear connection between the research questions and the data sets. Finally, integrity of setting includes the total landscape, including both natural and man-made features (Chicora, n.d., U.S. Department of Interior, n.d.).

Landscape Architecture: Landscape architecture designs outdoor public areas, landmarks, and structures to achieve environmental, social-behavioral, or aesthetic outcomes. It involves systematically investigating existing social, ecological, and geological conditions and processes in the landscape and designing interventions to produce the desired outcome. The scope of the profession includes urban design; site planning; stormwater management; town or urban planning; environmental restoration; parks and recreation planning; visual resource management; green infrastructure planning and provision; and private estate and residence landscape master planning and design; all at varying scales of design, planning, and management. A practitioner in the profession of landscape architecture is called a landscape architect (Morrow, 1957).



National Historic Landmark: A district, site, building, structure, or object of national historical significance, designated by the Secretary of the Interior under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and entered in the National Register of Historic Places (National Park Service, n.d.).

National Register of Historic Places: The comprehensive list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of national, regional, state, and local significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture kept by the NPS under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (National Park Service, n.d.).

Perpetual Care: the maintenance, repair, and care of all places in the cemetery (Statues Capital Texas, n.d.).

Significance: the quality of being important: the quality of having notable worth or influence (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Significance is a term used by the National Park Services standards for historic preservation. It refers to nationally significant properties telling important stories that have meaning for all Americans, regardless of where they live, period of (national) significance is the period when the historic events. In some cases, it is three different levels of significance. A property may be locally significant (have played a role in local events and/or a local community), significant at the state level (have played a role in the history of a specific state), or nationally significant (have played a role in the history of the nation overall) (National Park Service, n.d.).

Site Analysis: Site analysis is a predesign research activity which focuses on existing and potential conditions on and around the building site. It is an inventory of the site factors and forces, and how they coexist and interact. The purpose of the analysis is to provide thorough information

about the site assets and liabilities prior to starting the design process. Only in this way can concepts be developed that incorporate meaningful responses to the external conditions of the site (Lynch, 1984).

Site Inventory: Gathering and categorizing data and information on natural and human features in an area proposed for a planning project (Christenson, 2005).

Vernacular Landscape: A landscape with a use, construction, or physical layout that reflects endemic traditions, customs, values, or beliefs systems. Over time, related cultural values and social behaviors have manifested physical features and the materials used in the vernacular landscape. This may include the spatial organization, types of land uses, circulation, vegetation and ecology, physical structures, and objects, all of which reflect the customs and everyday lives of the related culture (National Park Service, 2018).

## **1.6 Methodology**

The current initiatives to protect and document cemeteries provide an understanding of the importance of burial practices, symbolism, and the connection to Black communities. This study applies multiple methods to encompass both quantitative and qualitative research. The dedication to adapting personable methods to assist community members with archiving and maintaining these sites helps retell these vulnerable sites' repressed legacy. The processes for preserving Black burial landscapes should follow this model: acknowledge the existence that recognizes the adjacencies, while the community's input considers the social and cultural legacy that would have been denied and still is attached to the existing narrative. The necessary outcomes of this thesis are to gather oral histories, conduct a site survey (the case study is analyzed through Francis' Case Study Method (Francis, 2001)), and produce a proposed maintenance plan for the Universe

Cemetery, which was a valuable connection to the history of a historic African American community and a neglected cultural resource of Tyler, Texas, that depicts the location of a once-thriving post-enslavement community in the late 1800s.

### **1.7 Significance, Limitations, and Assumptions**

Black burial sites in the United States are continually forgotten and rediscovered based on urban development patterns, making this a significant issue for contemporary landscape architects, planners, and historic preservationists to understand and be able to address. An example of this can be found in Freedman's Cemetery in Dallas, Texas, located in an area that had been a predominantly Black community, North Dallas Freedman's Town, that was entirely displaced by urban redevelopment. Due to the construction of a highway, the Freedman's Cemetery was buried in the 1950s, then rediscovered during the 1980s during a highway expansion that led to the additional displacement of graves and the construction of the Freedman's Memorial (Govenar, & Collins, 2000).

As of Spring 2021, there is a current U.S. Senate discussion about creating the African American Burial Grounds Network Act (Dunnivant et al., 2021, and Brown, 2020). This proposed act will find ways to identify, interpret, preserve, and record unmarked, previously abandoned, underserved, or other burial grounds relating to the historic African American experience. These policy discussions show a great need for research and documentation of Black burial sites across the country and a need to develop procedures and methodologies that can support that preservation and care in the future. The literature review will further explore the importance of the recent policy discussions about protecting and documenting burial sites that are understood to be neglected and mistreated. This research aims to create a standard that can be reproduced and allows consideration of the existing and changing landscape. The loss of recognition to Black landscapes caused by lack

of documentation and ignorance can be addressed through landscape architecture and American history.

People inherently connected to these sites are the gatekeepers; these locations are often revealed based on their oral histories, family reunions, and connections to churches. Unfortunately, these sites lack of access to resources and funding for their maintenance and documentation. Too often, these sites have not been archived and are maintained by a small number of people, in many cases by a single person. Often cemeteries are the last remaining landscape to aid in the visibility of a place based on the heritage, which informs public history, which further informs the definition of place and the rights to place.

The limitations of this study show the scope of what was hindered from outlining the best possible outcome for future research into the preservation of Black landscapes. This study focuses on one specific cemetery in Tyler and the state of Texas. It will not evaluate Black landscapes outside of the city and state boundaries. Thus, the inventory and analysis information is specific to only one site. Conclusions drawn from this thesis may apply to other Black landscapes outside of city and state.

From the research into Black landscapes, specifically cemeteries and burial sites, it is assumed that the execution of archival documentation and collection is vital for the longevity of the sites. Thus, documentation of any form is an understandable need and assumption based on broad research into preserving and acknowledging a cemetery's existence for future generations. Equitable representation of the history of those who lived, worked, and died would be lost to time without documentation. The relationship of historical landscapes to contemporary practice is essential for conversations about cultural landscape preservation and equity in the landscape

architecture profession. As a landscape architect and educator Kofi Boone has argued, “It is time, then, to think not only about how landscape architecture, as currently constituted, can better serve Black communities but also about how the profession might be radically reconceptualized” (Boone, 2020). This work helps reconceptualize the profession to create a more sustainable and equitable place.

## **1.8 Chapter Summary**

This master’s design thesis aims to present the results of a study towards aspects of a post-enslavement Black burial site. It specifically looks at factors such as the cultural preservation of Black sites and the different attitudes toward their documentation. This master’s thesis is organized into the following chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Case Study and its Context, Results of Research, and Conclusion. Chapter 1 explains the research background and objectives and defines the research problem and methodologies of the study. Chapter 2 provides a literature review on segregation, Black landscapes, Black death, intricacies when working with Black cemeteries, the significance of Black cemeteries today, and introductions to a research case study in Tyler, Texas. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology strategy used to document the case study of this thesis. This chapter explains the data collected from the literature review, site inventory and analysis, oral history interviews, and a case study. Chapter 4 gives an in-depth analysis of a recent case study, the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas, with initial communications, existing conditions, and inventory, access, and documentation methods. Chapter 5 discusses the process of developing a maintenance plan and additional considerations for the chosen site’s preservation. Finally, Chapter 6 summarizes the research, answers the thesis questions, and explores future opportunities for research.

## Chapter 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

While there has been much research on American cemeteries, few researchers have considered Black burial grounds and cemeteries. Recent political and cultural events surrounding the Black Lives Matter and Black Landscapes Matter movements have brought new urgency to the subject. This literature review aims to gain a generational understanding of the following three areas of study, which will support the development of the research methodology and outcomes. What follows in this section is the themes of:

1. History of segregation and its impact on the creation and destruction of the burial places of Black people in the United States, particularly Texas.
2. Maintenance and care standards and policies, including cultural landscape preservation, for cemeteries and Black burial sites.
3. The importance of Black burial sites for the landscape architecture profession concerning the Black Lives Matter (Lowery, 2017) and Black Landscapes Matter (Boone, 2020, and Hood, 2020) movements as it relates to Texas.

There are many factors in which historical cemeteries face erasure, including neglect resulting in unmaintained vegetative growth, vandalism, and theft. Additionally, environmental factors such as weathering and erosion change land ownership and develop a seemingly abandoned undeveloped site. In addition to those issues impacting cemeteries, systematic risk factors affect historically underrepresented groups across the United States. Thus, this thesis will focus on the abundance of Texas's post-enslavement, segregated, and Black burial sites and cemeteries. Unfortunately, they were and still are "lost" to history and purposely erased or undocumented. One

example of this implementation is that the cemeteries' being "lost" or erased is due to gentrification and construction effectually moving out "undesirable" people connected to these sites. With that in place, these burial sites and cemeteries were intentionally hidden or overlooked to erase these underrepresented settlements' existence (Davidson, 2004). Significantly, the importance of historical cemeteries is being acknowledged today, the "African American Burial Grounds Network Act," which was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Alma Adams (North Carolina); in 2021, the creation of a national policy was sent to Congress to address the lack of accountability and inclusion of black burial grounds. The bill will offer surveys and recommendations to protect African American Burial Grounds and Cemeteries (Dunnavant et al., 2021, and Brown, 2020). Thus, the examination of this national policy, along with the research into why Black cemeteries remain ignored, supports the justification that they need to be recognized as an integral part of American history and deserve their place in the historical narrative.

The outcomes of this literature review follow the examination of the complex layers that led to the erasure of such landscapes. So, to understand why this happened and continues to impact specific groups, there are questions that need to be asked and answered in addition to the ones of this thesis: Why aren't these cemeteries documented and visible on modern maps? More specifically, why is it that Black cemeteries are continuously being discovered? Is there a movement toward recognizing their existence?

## **2.1 Segregation, Black Landscapes, and Black Death**

Segregation in cemeteries based on religion, ethnicity, and culture is longstanding. In some cases, this segregation is dictated by religious practices surrounding burial rites. In others, it

reflects more patterns of societal segregation and racism. In the United States, the segregation of Black burial grounds from white burial grounds reflects hundreds of years of imposed isolation stemming from racist cultural and political ideologies linked to the practice of slavery. This pattern is also the cause for some burials being undocumented, damaged, or vandalized. This combination of systematically isolating and neglecting certain groups has led to the erasure of these sites from historical documents such as maps and deeds. The following sections outline a view into why these burial sites occur where they are and the trauma that Black people endured to grieve for those who perished.

### **2.1.1 Segregation**

Recent studies like these shed new light on segregation's longstanding impact on Black landscapes, which previous studies had not addressed. The essential sources for this topic are enslavement and the post-Enslavement period, Black Death, and the existing symbolism in these landscapes. The critical position these topics take for this thesis is the recognition of lingering impacts from inequitable treatment.

This area of study investigates what leads to the lack of documentation of Black burial sites, including what determines a burial site, how they are discovered, and what happens to them after being found. Moreover, properly documenting cemeteries after discovering and understanding why it is vital for this literature review.

Segregation in the United States has led to the demise and continuous neglect of many Black cemeteries. The origins of segregation toward Black cemeteries were initially intended to separate the enslaved burials from the enslavers (Jordan, 1986). An oil painting by John Antrobus titled "A Plantation Burial" from The Historic New Orleans Collection shows this segregated



plantation landscape. It showcases the varying emotions displayed by Black mourners (Figure 2-1). The painting sets a burial scene at sunset tucked away in a secluded cypress forest clearing with a large group of people gathered around a wooden coffin. When viewing the painting, it is essential to note the varying positions the mourners are taking: a man with his hands up to the sky as though praying for the departed soul, some gathered near the coffin, standing, and sitting, in addition to some leaning against a tree, and others observing from a distance. The antebellum artwork captures the emotion and inside view into the world of the enslaved people in the South and provides a window into the intricate world of Black spirituality and mourning. Though almost unnoticeable upon first viewing, in the distance in the bottom right and bottom left between the trees, observing the ceremony, are the plantation owners. Under watchful eyes, like the rest of their daily life of servitude, the enslaved people are denied the privacy to grieve their deceased.

**Figure 2-1** Oil painting, titled *Plantation Burial*



*Note: Oil painting, titled Plantation Burial, shows a Black preacher and mourners at an evening burial service. Painting by John Antrobus, ca. 1860, held by Historical New Orleans Collection.*

Since that practice took place, it continued to be a way that systematic racism happened in the antebellum South and Jim Crow era that saw Black people wanting to bury their deceased into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the Great Migration, African Americans from the rural South to the North, Midwest, and West (Gregory, 2007). The reason that Black burial sites in the rural South are often abandoned. Beginning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some became integrated yet still faced discriminatory maintenance practices. These practices either completely separated burials from their counterparts at a different location, or they were fenced off. As a result, that practice ensured that Black burial sites were challenging to get to and that resources and maintenance efforts were not “wasted” on these sites. Other characteristics that show the intentional separation, or bias, have

been seen in the urban development as it began to change the landscape, among other elements to be examined later in this thesis (Krüger-Kahloula, 1994).

During the 1870s, racial inequality remained across the South following the Civil War and during the Reconstruction era. As a result, “Jim Crow” practices, or segregationist policies, quickly became the law of the country. Due to Black codes and the sharecropping system, which provided few economic opportunities, Southern Black people were forced to labor the land to make a subsistence living. Although segregation was not legal in the North (as it was in the South), racism and prejudice remained rampant. For example, after the United States Supreme Court declared racially based housing regulations unlawful in 1917, several residential districts adopted restrictive covenants requiring white property owners to pledge not to sell to Black people; these remained valid until 1948 when the Court revised the documents, yet in some cases, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it still exists (Stow, 2010). Though those long-standing covenants are no longer enforced, they provide a vivid record of the legal ways that racial segregation was pursued across the United States.

During parts of the enslavement and post-enslavement times in the South, such topics had been quieted due to the emphasis of a way of life that did not exist outside of the White governing and watchful eye. As a result, during this time, there were two groups of people with the power and assets to bury their deceased and those who did not. In the South, the White population, particularly those with an antebellum affiliation and education, had control of the written and verbalized narrative resulting in this group’s perception of the events during this time remaining in the history books, a biased portrayal of history (Rainville, 2009).

Many Black citizens moved from the South to northern cities during the Great Migration. Due to housing pressures, they built their own communities within big cities, developing a new urban, African American culture. However, in many cases, a lot of the familial communities were left, and their land was quickly purchased or stolen (Purit, 2013). When the country fell into the Great Depression in the 1930s, black migration slowed significantly but resumed after World War II. However, when the Great Migration ended in 1970, the demographic impact was undeniable: Whereas nine out of ten Black Americans lived in the South in 1900, and three out of four lived on farms, by 1970, the South only housed half of the country's African Americans, with only 20 percent living in rural areas (Gregory, 2007).

People move all the time, mostly without anyone saying they are part of a mass migration, still less a Great Migration or a regional diaspora. But southerners leaving home were noticed. They were talked about. They became a social phenomenon. The noticing and the talking as much as the act of relocation created the Southern Diaspora. Unnoticed, they were just families moving from one setting to another. Noticed, they became agents of change in the unfolding history of their century (2007, 40).

During this time, people were traveling all across the country; there are several cities that the impact of the migration is still impacting, such as Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago (Foley, 1997). In addition, the demise of the Universe community in Tyler and the abandonment of the Universe Cemetery through population loss can be directly tied to community members moving from rural and semi-rural lands in East Texas to cities like Dallas and further west to California (Appendix C, Foley, 2007, and Dudney, 1986).

In his thesis, *Housing Segregation, Negro Employment, and Metropolitan Decentralization*, Kain compares the economic design of segregated neighborhoods and the high rate of unemployment affected by those who reside there. As a result, the comparison revealed that in the context of these neighborhoods, the livelihood of those who resided in the geographically isolated and bisected was cut off from resources and jobs. While on the other hand, their counterparts, the White middle class, had opportunities for resources and jobs. This act of residential segregation is an accurate spatial and inequitable practice (Kain, 1968). Interestingly, Kain's interpretation and research are that not much has changed; many cities still face an implied or assumed self-segregation.

In addition to the impact of segregation, Black grieving and expression of death have been something that many outsiders or onlookers have often ignored or questioned; their grieving process has been meticulously denied. In *The Last Great Necessity*, Sloane describes the difficulties the enslaved faced:

African American slaves were particularly susceptible to losing their rights to burial places [...] the racist slave holding society's attempt to strip African Americans of legitimate familial and community relationships encouraged them to develop and protect the areas in which they could express their sense of family and community (Sloane, 1991).

As diverse groups of enslaved Africans were brought to the New World, so were their different religious traditions resulting in acculturation pressures to change the practice of death (Orser et al., 1994). However, in secret and through give and take, some plantations allowed their enslaved to practice their traditions under a watchful eye. These people were historically unrepresented in research. As a result, the understanding of their essential part in history is largely

lost (Rainville, 2014). With the interpretation of the southern antebellum slave religion, archeologists have concluded the enslaved experience through objects and materials placed on or near the burial sites. The context of these burial sites leads to the discovery of how some of the enslaved were able to carry on with their daily lives based on their complex symbolism associated with religious paraphernalia. Thus, this resulted in the enslaved seeking refuge in the woods late at night and substituting their traditional objects with everyday objects to continue their West African spiritual traditions (Allen, 2011).

Examples of practice and objects used in the antebellum Jim Crow South result in observed and documented patterns in recent times. Some of the graves were dug along the East-West because axis slaves were careful not to violate the West African strictures against burying a corpse “crossways in the world.” Many plantations followed this rule, sometimes with towns or churches providing a single cemetery. The enslaved of various owners were laid to rest together (Rodeiger, 1981). In many cases, the enslaved were able to decorate and maintain these sites with as much care as their situation permitted, often not making them as formalized as their counterparts.

The intricate relationships Black people formed during and after their enslavement impacted their definition of community, especially as they formed free settlements during Reconstruction. In *The Claims of Kinfolk*, Penningroth analyzed property ownership customs and the differences between African and American contexts. He states that across the antebellum South, the enslaved could gain small opportunities for land ownership by their enslavers (Penningroth, 2004). Though there was not much legally to recognize their property, there was an informal understanding of where these properties were located. However, with no legally binding documentation, there was ownership conflict in the decades after Emancipation, which impacted the stability of the enslaved settlements and their social ties to a specific location.

So, the argument that there is a dire need to acknowledge the systematic erasure and separation of Black landscapes is unjust. Like churches and schools, Burial grounds were sacred and physical cornerstones in the establishment and evolution of communities (Organ,1995). Although the enslaved gently adapted this landscape as their own, as Vlach explains, the community-owned areas promoted a sense of belonging that sowed the seeds of greater resistance as well as the creation and preservation of a separate African American culture (Lee & Vlach, 1993). Though these landscapes are continuously discovered, they hold a sense of rebellion and resistance to the factors that once tried to erase them. In the nineteenth century, many rural black cemeteries were purposefully built on settings with natural beauty and visual force. Because of racial segregation rules, Black cemeteries were compelled to be built on rural land provided by private persons becoming deliberate practices that are seen today.

### **2.1.2 Black Cemetery Landscapes**

Terry Jordan's history of Texas Graveyards suggested that Black cemeteries were simply a type of Southern cemetery (Jordan, 1984). However, new scholarship by scholars looking specifically at Black burial traditions suggests more substantive ways of reframing our understanding. For example, Rainville, who researched three dozen antebellum cemeteries in her book *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia (2014)*, notes there is no national, comprehensive database for Black or white American cemeteries, only a patchwork of websites, maps, and regional records forming an incomplete register. Intending to understand Black burial practices, Rainville's research contextualizes and categorizes them as five primary types along with their settings:

1. Slave Cemeteries: Typically located on antebellum plantations

2. Church Cemeteries: Founded after Emancipation with the creation of formal African American congregations
3. Community or Neighborhood Cemeteries: Associated with antebellum Free Black communities and post-1865 African American communities
4. Public Cemeteries: In the past, often segregated by race
5. Family Cemeteries: Usually located adjacent to a homestead that may or may not still be owned by the descendants

Rainville writes: “We lose important pieces of local and family history when we allow these sacred sites to go unrecorded and disappear.” The pronoun is significant; this work of preserving memory involves a collective effort from all of us, especially in the absence of formalized mechanisms of institutional support (Rainville, 2). Rarely are old Black cemeteries documented. They are hardly ever depicted on maps and nearly never on historic city plans. The location of “slave (enslaved) burial sites” was simply not significant to most plantation owners. These family cemeteries, which have been utilized for centuries, are generally marked by landscape features and, in many cases, not by deeds or other formal documents (Lee & Vlach, 1993).

When focusing on Black cemeteries, elements aid in understanding the ethnic background and status of those interred and customs based on the markers and vestiges left. In many cases, enslaved burials lacked markers contributing to the lack of visibility; most of the time, markers used were plants, wood stakes that deteriorated, or the location was only remembered by a family member, and when they passed, so did the information about the burial site or they were vandalized/stolen. For example, some scholars have noted that many Black cemeteries and burial



sites in the South had shell decorations, bottles near or above graves in the trees, and plants placed to mark graves surrounding the graves, which, in some cases weathered away, eroded, or were stolen or vandalized (Thompson, 1983 and Vlach, 1994). Just as Diane Jones mentioned in her article titled, *The City of the Dead* (2011), the burial practice and the effigies left on the graves were a part of the divided history of Mount Auburn Cemetery, also known as “Baltimore’s last remaining African-American burial ground,” like many others across the United States. She explains the complexities of a culture that incorporated the urban landscape in a post-enslavement era. With the connection to this thesis, she, along with others, recognized efforts of discriminatory practices and developed inclusive ways of approaching such sites. A cemetery is a cultural connection to nature and memory landscapes for many Black community members. Unfortunately, many of these landscapes were erased with the ignorance of urban development.

Though it is not always addressed in scholarly articles and books, one could assume that outsiders of Black communities did not understand the burial practices and erased culturally significant elements in some cases. Other damages to the markers and objects placed on graves were damaged or removed by maintenance workers for the ease of using machineries such as lawnmowers or weedwhackers. While progress has been made in documenting and understanding traditions in Black cemeteries, there remains research to be done.

As the time has changed since the first burial in many of these Black burial sites and their traditional religious paraphernalia may be long gone for many reasons, some of the symbolism and features last to this day in the landscape. Significant indicators of an enslaved or Black cemetery include various types of vegetation, specifically the trees, as they are the spirit which roots journey to the other world. Thompson describes the importance of trees in the Kongo-Angola burial motif:

Trees planted on graves also signify the spirit; their roots literally journey to the other world. Hence Kongo elders plant trees on graves, explaining ' This tree is a sign of spirit, on its way to the other world.' The mooring of spirit with trees on graves appears in Southern Haiti, where the rationale is phrased this way: Trees live after us, death is not the end (Thompson, pg. 139, 1984).

Aside from wood or stone slabs, graves were marked in several ways. Occasionally, unusually carved wooden staffs were used, presumably to portray religious motifs or effigies. Vegetation such as cedars and yuccas were used to mark certain tombs. Historians believe this practice reflects an African belief in the living spirit. This custom can be traced back to Haiti, where Black people explain that "trees live after, death is not the end," most likely combining Christian and African beliefs. Yuccas and other "prickly" plants may have also been utilized to "keep the spirits" at bay in the graveyard. Other graves were marked with an iron pipe, railroad iron, or whatever was available (Chicora Foundation, 2007).

In *The Cotton Kingdom*, Frederick Law Olmsted records his impression of a Black burial site, and its markers wrote:

Some of these were mere billets of wood, others were brick and marble, and some were pieces of plank, cut in the ordinary form of tombstones. Many family-lots were inclosed with railings, and a few flowers or evergreen shrubs had sometimes been sometimes planted on the graves; but these were generally broken down and withered, and the ground was overgrown with weeds and briars (1982, pg. 174).

As it relates to the landscape, the final resting places were what ultimately helped historians today find these post-enslavement settlements. These sites are reference points for future

generations to connect with through reflection and provide a re-interpretation of a one-sided history. These sites, in many cases, survived even though generations moved away, and new settlers came as these spiritual places were a vital part of their communities. Further research into the traditional practices is needed to preserve these sacred sites. Without acknowledging the previous strategic practices put in place, these once meaningful sites will be permanently erased from the American landscape.

## **2.2 Intricacies When Working with Black Cemeteries**

From a preservation perspective, what is most concerning is the lack of protection for Black cemeteries and burial grounds in the past. These burial grounds are frequently discovered or disturbed because of some sort of development. They are often those of Black or African American descent (Organ, 1995). With the lack of protective policies and regulations of approaching these sites, there are opportunities for the continued practice of complicit behavior and so-called standard operating procedures of ignorance that leads to the effective “burial” of such sites. These complex multi-layered landscapes are in desperate need of care.

### **2.2.1 Preservation in Practice**

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to best practices or action. Nevertheless, it should always start with interdisciplinary collaboration to establish a foundation of mutual understanding and trust with the descendant community. As it does not happen in every case, as stated in the previous section about the Great Migration, other factors lead to the need to preserve and maintain a site.

Of course, the practice of preservation is not always the result of neglect, for not every site is dilapidated or abandoned. However, cemetery neglect results in the loss of valuable cultural and historic information repositories. In “Preservation Brief 48: Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries,” the National Park Service explains that “deferred maintenance usually accelerates the deterioration of gravemarkers (Striegel et al., 2016).” However, this brief focuses on all cemeteries, but, for that matter, Black cemeteries or “traditionally significant” ones are not always included. In 1992, The National Park Service published National Register Bulletin 41, “Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places.” While this seemed more inclusive, it still led to some inconsistencies. The cemeteries that do not meet the unique requirements are not typically eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places or funding (Potter et al., 1992).

The improvement to the ‘best’ practices for maintaining a Black landscape, specifically a cemetery and its advancements towards the future of landscape architecture, lies in examining a broader scope of skill and cultural understanding. Dunnivant and Rainville both express the need for overlap in the historical and design professions to improve the inclusivity of Black landscape recognition in the United States. When diversifying the previously used/traditional skillsets, designers are taught. Adding another layer of the design phase that acknowledges the implications of neglected voices and partially erased culture landscapes creates opportunities for more contextualized design.

Stressing the importance of inclusion on multi-layered sites and academic scholars’ responsibility is critical when developing plans and outlines for approaching Black sites. The knowledge of professionals in multiple fields contextualizes the new narrative of recognition instead of blatant ignorance. As a result of collaboration, just like (Dunnivant 2013). it empowers

those affected by one-sided research and design practice to engage with collaborative relationship building with professionals and community members.

A few local and regional surveys of Black burial grounds have been completed, including African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New England, Built by Blacks: African American Architecture and Neighborhoods in Richmond (Knoblock, 2016), Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia (Rainville, 2014). Most of these treatments have been created by historic preservationists. They have not created substantial literature on the larger patterns of Black burial in the United States and its relationship to imposed patterns of segregation.

Policies that govern cemetery preservation and maintenance vary by state, county, and municipality in the United States. In Texas, the Texas Historical Commission discusses what to do with them and maintaining their existence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (THC, n.d.). Today, there are quite a few ways to recover the cultural and historical significance once forgotten and recently found. One is the Texas Historical Commission (THC), as they have developed the Preserving Historic Cemeteries Texas Preservation Guidelines to provide aid in the preservation of the state's historic cemeteries. These guidelines serve as a resource for individuals and groups interested in saving irreplaceable cultural resources and help spearhead long-term preservation strategies. THC states that cemeteries are a vital historical resource. They are reminders of settlement patterns and reveal information about historical events, religions, lifestyles, and genealogy. THC's Cemetery Preservation Program works with citizens interested in preserving cemeteries and provides technical assistance for documenting and researching these historical sites. In addition, their Preserving Historic Cemeteries Texas Preservation Guidelines provide an overview for legal

actions to assist with the preservation of burial grounds across the state and what to do if a cemetery is being threatened or destroyed.

### **2.2.2 Land Ownership and Accessibility**

It is quite complex to approach land ownership issues of Black cemeteries and burial sites and what to do when discovered or rediscovered. These shifting land ownership policies affect the precarious existence of burial sites and cemeteries, as burials were more important than the land itself (Allen, 2011, and Fletcher, 2013). The argument that burial grounds are a significant part of American history needs to be grounded in a vernacular landscape. It shall assist in the research to analyze and understand how Texas policies define burial sites as cultural and vernacular landscapes to be recognized as necessary. The University of Texas Law Center continues to create general guides to the complicated policies that exist to allow families to navigate these complexities when interacting with these cemeteries (Way, 2019). Thus, the study examines the procedures to preserve cemeteries and burial sites in a collective sense. In many cases, the community members hold the actual narrative of place and the Black stories that are not always documented. These keepers of Black landscapes continue to care for the site even though there is not enough outside funding to take care of them.

Furthermore, in the absence of other built claims to the land, burial sites are often the only remaining link to a particular settlement or place of community: “Graves were important symbols of kinship and could be inserted into the land to form the basis for a claim of ownership. The presence of a body in the land often carried powerful meanings for both property rights and family membership.” (Penningroth, pg. 36, 2004) While the land was essential for the survival of the community’s post enslavement, so was their religious and spiritual connection to their ancestral

heritage. Thus, when first establishing their settlements, one of the first spots designated was for a church or spiritual place for worship, along with a place to bury those who have perished (Roberts, 2019).

The following outlines these factors that hinder the preservation and recognition of Black cemeteries, including ownership, location/adjacency, size, and burial type/materials as it relates to Texas:

### OWNERSHIP

Over the years, changing hands frequently and the continuous development surrounding these cemeteries and burial sites result in a higher risk of neglect and abandonment. As a result, ownership becomes challenging to determine; thus, maintenance declines. The protection of these places is nil as no one is claiming the site. Other records noted for reference are church databases, adjacent land deeds, historical maps, and verbal confirmations are several resources to navigate the changing of ownership. While depending on the ethnic group, in this case, most of the information related to ownership had and still has impacted the preservation and identification of “lost” cemeteries and burial sites. While these issues are prevalent for many rural cemeteries, they are compounded and more pervasive for Black cemeteries (see discussion of segregation, racist policies above) (Kay, 1998).

### LOCATION/ADJACENCY

As mentioned above, cemetery and burial site ownership is closely related to the context in which its location and adjacency are embedded as a whole. Therefore, analyzing the context may reveal patterns that have led to the downfall of their preservation and care of said cemeteries

(Allen, 2011). Regarding the context, it should be stated that factors that lead to the destruction of Black sites are the intentional land-use changes associated with urban renewal in central cities and urban sprawl in formerly rural areas that are in the shadow of development in generally high populated areas (Nawrocki, 1991).

Example locations of where some cemeteries discovered in the past years in Texas have been:

1. In the pathway of significant highway development. See the Dallas Freedman's Cemetery in Dallas, Texas, rediscovered in 1987 because an archeologist noted a cemetery sign when surveying the site for the state highway expansion. In 1861 the cemetery was established as a burial ground for Dallas' early African Americans and one of the largest Freedman Cemeteries in the country (Figure 2-2). When it was rediscovered, it had little to no remnants of the once-thriving North Dallas community. The significance of the site is that it was from the Civil War to the 1970s was the largest segregated African American community in Dallas. This community was regarded as Dallas's social, cultural, and economic center of black life. It was covered up and segregated for the implementation of a highway. When further researched, the original expressway had paved over roughly a fourth of the cemetery that once held the remains of nearly 7,000 slaves and Freedmen and essentially destroyed all physical above-ground reminders of Black people in this Dallas community. A memorial was built in late 1990 to commemorate and acknowledge the systematic reasoning for erasing the memory of those interned there. When understanding this example of an important site and the significant contributions made by African Americans toward the growth and development of Dallas (Schutze, 1999).



**Figure 2-2** Freedman’s Memorial Cemetery



Note: Source: *Dallas Parks, Texas, n.d.*

2. Surrounded by development with limited access, like the Shelton’s Bear Creek Cemetery in Irving, Texas (Figure 2-2), with more than 200 former enslaved people buried there. With the help of locals, a Texas Historical Marker for Bear Creek Cemetery was dedicated in 2001. This resting place, now a tiny patch of graves, sat directly in the path of State Highway 161. After the public outcry, the freeway moved, preserving the cemetery while closing off the access from the west. Newly built homes and a senior living facility were built around its’ other sides. The only entrance of the cemetery is through a grassy area with no path to a locked gate that faces the highway. In contrast, the other edges of the cemetery are

lined with stone walls that back right up to the cemetery limiting the accessibility (Fleck, 2013).

**Figure 2-3** Drone aerial image of Shelton’s Bear Creek Cemetery



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

3. An example of a cemetery on the outskirts of towns and in isolated locations of cemeteries is Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas, examined in chapter 4.

The common theme with all these cemeteries stated above is that they were Black; they were, for the most part, isolated at some point and later overtaken by infrastructure or urban development. The decision-making, policy-making apparatus perceived that there were no stakeholders interested in outcomes for the cemetery (those perceptions are incorrect and fueled by systemic racism). These sites were former agricultural fields and post-enslavement settlements, which later became locations for transportation hubs and residential or economic profit, resulting

in the greater risk of destruction. These cemeteries were susceptible to the systematic racism that led to their downfall. Instances of the systematic racism toward Black cemeteries could have [was] omitted from governmental documents and maps, leaving little to no record of their presence and, in some cases, no features that may assist in their discovery (Lemke, 2020). In numerous cases, in all these examples, people have heard about it through word of mouth and searched for them, which initiated public interest and outcry to the right and all too common wrong.

### BURIAL TYPE AND MEMENTOS

A wide range of materials was used for burial, coffin construction, grave markers, and relics placed for remembrance. The absence or existence of these features stated below affects the visibility of a cemetery; it can impact future recognition, maintenance, and preservation.

From initially viewing a cemetery of any degree, the grave markers and burials could reflect the following depending on their condition as stated by the Texas Historical Commission:

- Grave markers can be at the head, foot, or center of a grave or some distance from the grave.
- Burials can be oriented in any direction relative to a marker or nearby burials.
- The markings on the grave marker may face towards or away from the burial.
- Multiple individuals may be buried under one marker.
- Burials may lack markers, perhaps due to cultural traditions, original grave marker material deterioration, or desecration.
- Markers may also be situated over empty graves.

- If there is a depression, it may be larger or smaller than expected. Depressions do not always indicate graves since cemetery workers can borrow soil from one area to fill in low spots in another, creating depressions that may resemble graves. (Commission, n. d.)

Cemetery size was another reason for the inequitable injustice of the impertinence these Black cemeteries faced. These cemeteries ranged in size of burial land and grave count, so brushing it off as their size was and still is not an excuse for the cemeteries to be “lost.” The argument can be said that the primary reason for the development is that the location was either ideal for urban development or left to be forgotten. The characteristic of low visibility goes beyond cemeteries and characterizes many African American sites in Texas (Barile, 2004).

### **2.2.3 Community Engagement and Funding**

When it comes to the topic of maintenance and care, some scholars and community members will readily agree that it takes funding, energy, and supplies to keep a site in pristine condition and allow for perpetual care to occur (Rainville, 2014, and Lemke, 2020). However, where this interest fails, one question is, what happens once attention is no longer given to these sites or when the one person maintaining it is no longer available? Whereas some are convinced that community members will take the reins from another, in most cases, it is not; others maintain that it should be the city’s responsibility. For example, the American Planning Association (APA) released a report in the 1950s that states:

If the idea of “perpetual care” were pursued far enough, we should eventually use all our land for the interment of the dead and have no land left for the living. While we can be sure

this state of affairs will not come about, we have already reached the point at which the distribution of land between the living and the dead is a serious problem (1950, pg. 1).

At first glance, cemeteries appear to be within the extent of care, but as previously stated by APA, laws are not paralleled of standard across the nation; each state or even city has its standard for these sites. APA also mentions that cemetery problems are generally divided into two groups: those involving existing cemeteries and those involving proposed cemeteries and that the reasoning for the neglect of cemeteries is:

1. Excessive number of monuments, poorly placed, poorly maintained, poorly designed.
2. Excessive roadways and alleys, with varying widths and poor surfacing.
3. Poor maintenance of graves and lawns, sunken graves.
4. Hodge-podge of landscaping and planting because of a lack of plan and central control.
5. Poor and inefficient lot layout and design.
6. Abandoned lots and under-utilized lots.
7. Lack of maps, burial records, ownership records, cost records.
8. Poor administration.
9. Insufficient and unplanned financing.

From the perspective of 70 years ago, there is some difficulty in creating adequate policies with long-standing ideas. Since then, not much has changed with how cemeteries are maintained and treated. As a result, some complaints from community input are that they are unaware that there are specific procedures of documenting existing conditions, elements, (etc.) and they end up doing more harm than good and vital materials are removed, damaged, or stolen not knowing the significance. For example, the Texas Health and Safety Code states, “This cemetery is operated as a perpetual care cemetery, which means that a perpetual care fund for its maintenance has been established in conformity with the laws of the State of Texas. Perpetual care means to maintain, repair, and care for the cemetery, including the roads on cemetery property (Statues Capital Texas, n.d.)”

Black cemeteries often lack the benefit of the financial supports of perpetual care societies. In addition, they exist without the advocacy provided by active cemetery associations:

American burial grounds have been one of neglect or outright disregard. These burial sites have not typically benefited from solicitous application of adverse possession, dedication, eminent domain, trespass, criminal desecration, and other legal principles. Rather, they have been permitted to be alternatively overlooked or destroyed (Clark, 2005).

Oral history can often reveal impressive details on the size, the number of individuals buried, general locations of separate family plots, and old fence lines where traditional historical and documentary sources fail to provide information. These resources, on the other hand, are frequently overlooked. The use of public participation within descendent communities encourages them to become stakeholders in managing their cultural landscapes and narrative. The methodology that has been proven to work is actively interviewing people from multiple

perspectives of the community to develop a ‘true sense of place’ (McDavid, 2011). While agreeing with Clark and McDavid, there should be a consideration for continuing the efforts when an outside person is not there. Ownership of one’s story serves as an example of how advocacy and community engagement can help researchers provide the Black community an authentic voice, which they have lacked in the past. When it comes to their historical and heritage sites, they have the power to control the narrative. An example of success is from a recent project in 2020. Martha Franklin and Nedra Lee studied the descendant community of Manchaca, Texas. Their strategy was to gather oral histories from descendants, introduce descendants to the site to assist with excavation, and collaborate with the community to develop the project’s purpose. The descendants’ purpose was to educate and provide resources on the farmstead’s history and communal ideas, which they accomplished through archived versions of the oral history narratives (Franklin, 2020).

Funding for the upkeep of Black cemeteries, in many cases, is quite difficult; as stated in previous sections, they were either abandoned or forgotten, resulting in their downfall, and with little to no traditional organization, they require people with advanced knowledge to properly maintain them. While there are people interested in preserving these landscapes, funding and engagement has been the downfall in the longevity of the practice. Sources for the preservation of these Black landscapes as recommended by the Texas Historical Commission are:

- Form a cemetery association, adopt bylaws, and consider obtaining nonprofit status.
- Solicit donations from descendants of the deceased buried in the cemetery.
- Research bank records for unused trust funds designated to maintain specific graves.

- Request assistance from county commissioners courts, city councils, and County Historical Commissions. Though they may not be able to allocate funds, they may be able to use county or city equipment and personnel to maintain cemeteries for health and safety reasons.
- Request donations from area businesses, including funeral homes and monument companies. Businesses often look for ways to give back to the community.

Common sense seems to dictate that it will fall into disrepair if no one maintains the cemetery. It is a standard way of thinking about any space or place. Several researchers have confirmed that small or big attention impacts the overall feeling of self and community (Francis et al., 2012). Furthermore, attention to the spaces of care can aid understanding how its commoditization is implicated in the maintenance and reshaping of gender, race/ethnic and class inequalities (Atkinson et al., 2011).” Other opportunities for community engagement might be fundraising activities to help raise money and awareness about the cemetery to prevent culture loss and establish the recognition to develop a cemetery preservation plan later.

### **2.3 Significance of Black Cemeteries Today – Texas**

The erasing of social memory and physical traces of Black identity and existence in the United States, particularly in urban areas that have been a part of these cities’ ‘beautification era,’ is all too familiar (Wilson, 1989). During this time, undesirable landscapes or people were removed as they did not reflect the new city and state image—an example of the moment that impacted a state and is still expanding from its implementation in Texas. The poor sanitation and general “ugliness” of the minority or “undesirables” communities were frequently mentioned by these middle-class summer residents who wanted to travel. During this time, the work of Frederick Law



Olmstead, who often is named as the person having a considerable influence on the City Beautiful Movement when city to city developing undesirable locations for the betterment of its citizens (Ferguson, 2004).

Since the implementation of city effort across the United States, the impacted people were minorities and their communities. They were left to reel from the urban development and the highways that bisected them and their burial sites. As previously noted, the absence of regulation and stewardship for African American burial places exposes the sites and the Black community to unethical treatment by researchers and government officials in the past, present, and future. In addition, the gentrification of Black communities damages their cultural heritage. Gentrification drives Black citizens to relocate since their area is no longer affordable. As a result, the shrinking Black communities may not voice or receive widespread support because the descendants were driven from their areas. Archaeologists, landscape architects, and scholars are responsible for learning from past mistakes and advocating preserving Black sites to present a complete picture of our history.

### **2.3.1 Landscape Architecture and Relation Professions**

Examining the many blunders and ethical mistreatments of such landscapes can be utilized as examples of failures to influence preexisting discriminatory practices. What to improve on in the profession of landscape architecture, archeology, history, and preservation may be implementing new efforts to restore the fabric of Black landscapes, voices, and context that previously overpowered, as stated in previous sections of this thesis. However, the remains of Black and African American communities and their accompanying cultural practices are vulnerable and add another layer to be researched along with the land itself. A bill like African

American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (AAGPRA) or African American Burial Grounds Study Act would undoubtedly be a step forward in ensuring structured protection for African American historical sites (Dunnavant 2013). However, just because no official universal legislation impacting the protection of Black cemeteries exists even on the national or state scale does not mean these sites are irrelevant. These cultural landscapes hold stories of those ignored in the US. As a result, “best practices” established by those on the ground interacting with these sites can ensure the preservation of these legacies.

Through a public interest in 2009, the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) Challenge, in partnership with organizations like the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), established the Historic Black landscapes documentation challenge celebrating its 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2021. The ASLA (2021) website states:

Black people have built and shaped the American landscape in immeasurable ways. Examining these histories and spaces will expand our understanding of America’s past and future. From plantations to segregated cities, the nation’s landscapes retain the physical manifestations of our racist history. Yet historic Black landscapes also represent creative achievements and reflect Black culture, as seen in residential gardens, parks, and college campuses across this country. Documenting historic Black landscapes will reveal patterns of community that have been built over the course of four hundred years (2021).

With the establishment of organizations and topics as mentioned and the shift into recognizing the influence, Black people have made on the American landscape, this is the best time to document the Universe Cemetery as it is vital on a local and national scale.

Landscape architects, and urban planners, should be involved with designing and preserving cemeteries as they complement the balance of the urban and natural system they typically work within the practice. Just as urban landscapes, cemeteries are constantly deteriorating. Like they were original, they could be a refuge for those surrounded by development (Finney, 2012). In addition, more attention should be paid to cemeteries as they provide open spaces and opportunities to combat major issues of urban heat islands and biophilic deviancies (Uslu, 2010). Nevertheless, many historians challenge that Black landscapes deserve special attention in landscape architecture, archaeology, or historic preservation.

### **2.3.2 Black Lives Matter and Black Landscapes Matter**

Both Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Black Landscapes Matter (BLAM) were established based on recognizing a problem in how certain events, histories, and people were depicted. In both instances, the movements were developed after witnessing the role of the public realm in the killings of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown in 2012 and 2014. BLM and BLAM express the evident disparities of Black life's treatment from focusing on the person and their existence from the physical and documented form.

The BLM advocacy group is usually referenced when an example of injustice has occurred and offers resources and a platform to speak out. In the case of BLAM, Walter Hood and coeditor Grace Mitchell Tada began the conversation with other practitioners to question: Do Black landscapes matter? Moreover, how do we plan within a context of disinvestment and disenfranchisement? The written perspectives of designers, practitioners, and educators show a collective history of Black landscapes that were overlooked and not always documented (Hood, 2020). The *Black Landscapes Matter* movement and book argue that it is time for a radical rethink

of the profession and the people who control the partial narrative. The collective narratives, projects, reflections, notes, case studies, and photos showcase examples of inequitable practice that can no longer be hushed or disregarded. The moment's effort is to show that everyone's past is valued and vital in making places and spaces. People like, Boone who point out that the built environment professions have been left out of the conversation about BLAM and echoed the importance of collaborating with educational and professional systems, would, as a result, allow African Americans to be recognized and participate in shaping the American landscape. In addition, he suggests that there is a need to acknowledge the long history and layers that need to be reexamined to continue with the movement (Boone, 2020).

Just as mentioned in the first section of the literature review, the Black landscapes constantly threaten erasure from urban development, historical segregation, and gentrification booms. So, with the influence of designers in varied professions who interact with these sites, they can come together and change the way they are viewed, documented, preserved, and valued.

### **2.3.3 Texas Examples**

Recent studies like these shed new light on segregation's longstanding impact on Black landscapes, which previous studies had not addressed. The essential sources for this topic are enslavement and Black Death, the Post-Enslavement period, and the existing symbolism in these landscapes. The critical position these topics take for this thesis is the recognition of lingering impacts from inequitable treatment. As discussed above in the previous sections, all involve the effects of urban development of Black landscapes sites that were destroyed, displaced, or ruined because of lack of preservation

Everett Fly and Andrea Roberts are leaders in this field whose work focuses on Black landscapes in Texas. The research outcomes of this thesis follow the general principles and guidelines they have already laid out.

Everett Fly, who specializes in historic preservation, cultural landscape interpretation, and field documentation, expresses, through his work and public engagement, the issues, feelings, concerns, lessons, and possibilities that touch everyone in America, not just African Americans. He states that research about cemeteries, particularly Black ones, is recognized and interpreted solely in archaeology, anthropology, or genealogy fields (Turque, 2017). However, he is correct, to an extent. At the same time, static or singularly programmed sites like cemeteries come off as mono-focused sites and should be treated as such. Cemeteries are complex sites that require interdisciplinary attention from community planners, landscape architects, historic preservation professionals, as cemeteries are cultural landscapes.

Like Fly, Dr. Andrea Roberts states that many of these communities are unmapped, absent from the public record, or destroyed due to natural disasters, gentrification, and land dispossession. In many cases, they are the last connections some African Americans have to their enslaved ancestors, cultural assets, and property. Cemeteries and burial sites are vulnerable to a variety of natural (weathering, erosion, etc.), cultural (neglect, construction, etc.), and social (emigration, expulsion, etc.) impacts that contribute to the degradation and destruction of these sites. In addition to those impacts, other factors lead to their neglect. As a result, preservationists and policymakers increasingly recognize a need to change attitudes and procedures to protect better and recognize these critical places: “Forgetting as annulment and disremembering—that is, reckless omission from public memory—of Black agency in Texas’s public history and cultural landscapes must be

met with counternarratives in historic Black settlements or embodied by the descendants of enslaved Black Texans” (Roberts, 2020).

There is consistent evidence that Black cemeteries were not considered necessary throughout the literature. Therefore, their documentation was nil, but in recent years as Black people began to research their history and later connection in the American landscape, they uncovered the ‘buried’ Black history. Thus, exposing them to the inconsistencies between cemeteries reveals the lack of access to legal systems that allow recognizing cemetery associations.

Now, why is this important? Many people began to participate in the Great Migration, leaving the ancestral lands that once oppressed them to seek better opportunities. They also left those who had perished, freezing them in that place, ensuring that their family members left intending to share their stories through each generation. Nevertheless, as years went by and people passed, their stories gave them and thus resulting in the forgotten cemetery locations.

As people began to recognize the injustice of these burial sites’ steps were taken to find out as much information about these sites. Information was found through oral histories and recorded interviews, historical documents, maps, and photographs to confirm their existence. In sum, the issue is acknowledging the complicity of many who wished to diminish the value Black landscapes have in the American landscape and noting the external factors that led to the partial erasure of their landscape in Texas.

## **2.4 Chapter Summary**

The scope of this literature review is finding the gaps in the current literature of Black vernacular landscapes, specifically cemeteries and burial sites. Conclusions drawn from the

literature review indicate both a lack of systemic scholarly attention to the issue of Black cemeteries and the need to develop a conceptual framework both for their maintenance and to address their meaning to descendants (wherever they live) and to the contemporary communities where the cemeteries are located. The literature on Black cemeteries and preservation suggests it is critically important to seek their preservation as a small means of redressing a history of systemic racism, testing methods for engaging descendants in the preservation process, and for landscape architects to be actively engaged in this activity.

Over the years, numerous cemeteries in Texas have been unsurfaced and devastated during urban development and construction projects. To properly document these “forgotten” cemeteries, designers and developers must make sure their locations are known when discovered by all levels of construction and given [or directed to] the right resources to help preserve them.

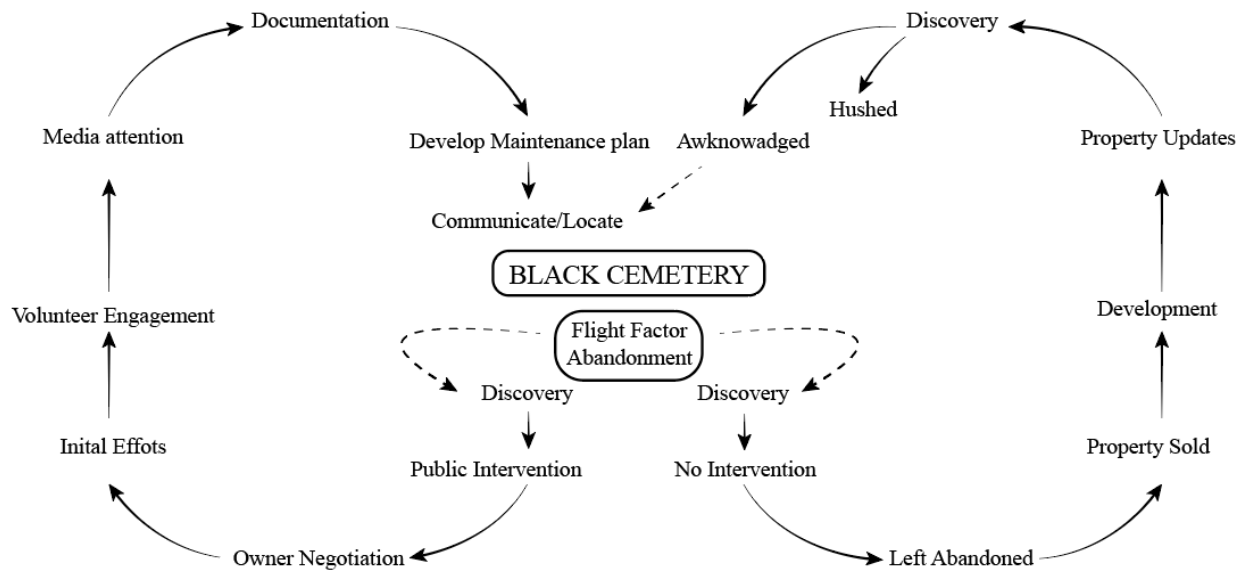
After reviewing all the previously stated subjects, the main takeaways all relate to the inequitable treatment of Black landscapes. Therefore, to make the argument to equity of Black influence in a historical lens, there is a responsibility of the people of today to recognize the injustice that these cemeteries continue to face and acknowledge the little history to change the narrative and give the stories of those who were systematically oppressed a chance to not only connect with their history but gain ownership of their once detached land.

Black burial grounds have not received the same legal or financial consideration as White burial grounds. The burial grounds of enslaved people were hidden for the necessary reason that they needed privacy to practice their traditional rituals for those who had passed. The history of segregation in the United States led to creating a separate system of burial grounds for Black people that were often hidden, isolated, and neglected over time (Jordan, 1986). This literature review

revealed three major themes that should be reiterated. First, historians and researchers continue to discuss the importance of Black burial sites; it all narrows down to:

1. The right to grieve – number of people, time off from labor, and the practice of grieving through their traditional sense.
2. The right to land – In many cases, they were hidden or developed in less desirable places, now considered prime real estate for urban sprawl and development.
3. The right to their history – Though passing down stories and lessons from the previous generations, it is essential to collect these histories to reveal the truth about the community and Black history.

**Figure 2-4** Cycle of finding or ignoring a Black cemetery.



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*



With the input of organizations, community members, and descendants, their history may be redefined so that the narrative can change, and these vernacular landscapes can be preserved (Figure 2-4). In conclusion, then, as formerly stated and echoed, defenders of Black landscapes and influence in not only Texas but all over the United States cannot be argued both ways. These stories and histories of Black people and their impact in Texas and all over the United States remain incomplete without connecting to sites like cemeteries that give them an inclining to their ancestry. Nevertheless, these vulnerable sites continue to be discovered and require recognition.

## Chapter 3 - METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

The primary methods of this thesis are drawn from cultural landscape preservation applied through a case study. Using oral history, archival research, and field surveys as a basis, the approach to the site was adapted from the standards of site survey and fieldwork as summarized by the Vernacular Architecture Forum:

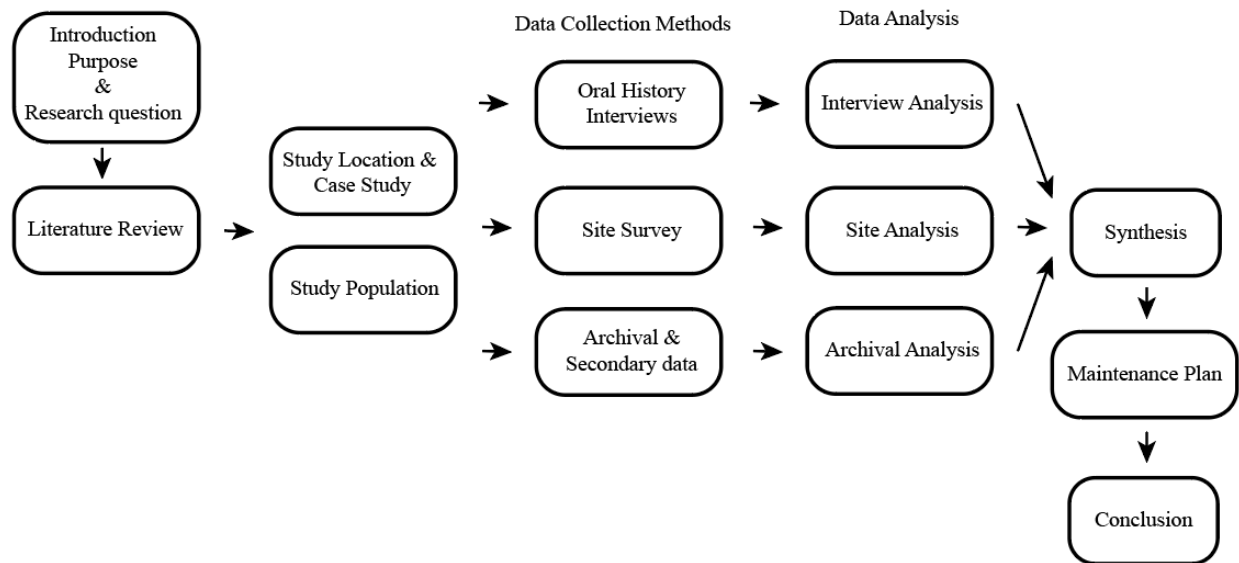
Recording through photography [...] Coupled with archival research, these tools help researchers sharpen their analysis of construction methods, changing uses, and the arrangement of space (VAF, n.d).

Additional context for the field survey was derived from the field survey techniques recommended by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification. The standards examine information gathered about historic properties depending on existing knowledge, goals for survey activities developed in the planning process, and current management tools (U.S. DOI, n.d.). These methods intend to extensively use place-based approaches to observe existing conditions to provide substantial evidence to further future preservation practices and efforts regarding the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas. This thesis provides the framework of a transdisciplinary field of study to address the ranges of social and environmental challenges Black landscapes and cemeteries face. Specifically, this cultural landscape research deals with the cultural, social, environmental, and contextual factors that shape the history and lineage of marginalized spaces to promote their preservation and documentation. This data is analyzed using the "Case Study Method for Landscape Architecture" (Francis, 2001).

### 3.2 Research Design

Methods included in this thesis start with the study location/case study and determining the study population. Then, the data collection and analysis sections focus on oral history interviews, site surveys, archival and secondary data (Francis' Case Study Method), and interview analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1980), which is detailed below in Figure 3-1.

**Figure 3-1** Research Method Diagram



The diagram above highlights the outline for this thesis; it breaks down into three parts:

- Oral History Interviews/Procedures: recordings and transcriptions.
- Site Survey: digital documentation (Drone footage, GoPro recording) and map of the various program layers of the cemetery and their relationship to each other.

- Archival and Secondary data: photography and headstone genealogy chart, maintenance procedure.

In order to develop a maintenance plan and future recommendations for preserving the cultural integrity of a Black vernacular landscape, a clear understanding and analysis of the data collected needs to be synthesized to produce evidence for its support. The production of a case study, oral history interviews recorded and transcribed, site survey research, archival documentation material, and the literature review support the maintenance plan and recommendations.

Not all recent or preserved Black cemeteries are in the same condition. This method of documentation and assessment will help elevate any current maintenance practices relevant to Black landscapes in Texas. The consideration of this thesis focusing on a site-specific issue reinforces outcomes that are capable of replication.

Preservation academia and landscape architecture are intertwined with broadening the approach and conversation about cemeteries. Without preserving cultural landscapes, the cultural loss of those who once resided in the community would continue to be overlooked. By documenting a historic Black cemetery that local community members rediscovered, this research will support and strengthen the accessibility to those interested in tangible management and recommendations of this study. The maintenance recommendations applied to the site studied in this research can be applied directly to a site and other sites of cultural landscapes at a regional or state level and a national one.

### **3.3 Study Location and Population**

The study location is the Universe Cemetery. It is a Black cemetery located in Tyler, Texas, with boundaries indicated on the Smith County GIS maps yet coincide with mapped boundaries on USGS Quadrangle maps of Bascom and Winona, Texas, dating from 1938, 1943, and 2019 (Appendix A), as the location of the cemetery is on the outer unincorporated area of Tyler. The site was chosen based on the cemetery's recent media attention and the relatively close distance to Dallas-Fort Worth. The Universe Cemetery primarily served residents of the adjacent Universe community, which the number of residents during its peak time is undocumented. However, it included a school, church, homes, and farmland. The cemetery is the only remaining part of the Universe landscape that survives. Therefore, this cemetery provides an essential means of preserving its story.

The study population for this thesis is those connected to the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas. The oral history interviews came from the Tyler African American Museum Board and the University Cemetery Committee of the Smith County Historical Association. There was an intent to identify additional descendants who had left the Tyler, Texas, area. However, the restrictions of Covid-19 meant that this portion of the proposed project could not be completed during the timeline associated with this master's thesis and remains an area for future research. The transcriptions and questions (Appendix C) created for this oral history project will be shared with the museum so that its volunteers have an opportunity to continue this project in the future.

### **3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Methods**

The research of this thesis uses secondary data collected directly by the author and primary data produced by local historians to assess the need for further assistance with the historical archival documentation of the Universe Cemetery. In addition, this study applies oral history interviews, site surveys, and archival and secondary data for archival documentation.

Site visits to Universe were conducted to visually survey the site, including interviews with the Universe Cemetery Committee members, Larry Wade, Vicki Betts, and Gloria Washington. All of them are longtime volunteers and prominent community partners with the Tyler African American Museums and Smith County Historical Society. These site visits helped assess the values attributed to Universe and how the community could utilize an outside perspective to assist with their efforts and documentation and the cemetery's management. This work with research and practice provided the basis for defining the Universe cemetery as a valuable landscape and example of what positive impacts happen when a community comes together. The result of the efforts is a maintenance plan that educates volunteers about this cemetery and inspires them to work on others.

To accomplish the above, this thesis investigates the history of Universe Cemetery through examination of survey maps and historical photos to understand what led to the partial erasure on the site and develop the best maintenance practices and policy for its protection. To establish a narrative history with bibliography, take photographs with metadata of the headstones and conditions, develop practicable maps, and refine the designation of the property owner. Perspectives will be sought by using the Texas Historical Commission's designation, the Texas Freedmen's Colonies Project Cemetery Registry resources, along with oral history interviews of

descendants, community members, developers, city planners, and volunteers. Thus, the aim is to have the necessary means to assist the Smith County Historical Society and the National African American Historical Society Museum in Tyler, Texas, with recordkeeping, accessibility, and connections with preservation programs for maintenance support efforts. Below is a format that was used.

1. Develop the historical context of the property's area, referencing any previously identified historical contexts and including research questions to guide the landscape analysis.
2. Conduct site-specific historical research. This research includes an analysis of maps and photographs, looking for changes in the spatial organization that may be observed, oral history, and on-site interviews.
3. Survey the landscape through comprehensive documentation and observation, using historical contexts as a guide for identifying characteristics of the property (McClelland, 1999).

### **3.4.1 Oral History Interviews**

An oral history is an essential tool for historic preservation and public history. Protocols for collecting oral histories were established by working with the University of Texas at Arlington's IRB office, using standards established by the Texas Historical Commission, and the Oral History Association using the oral history agreement forms created by the University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections, which hosts an extensive oral history collection. The THC and OHA state that collecting and preserving oral histories transmit knowledge that generations can share and enhance the understanding of past experiences (THC, n.d., and OHA, n.d.).

An essential aspect of this thesis was engaging with the community and shifting the public awareness of this and other Black burial sites through preservation education. Oral history provides detailed information about changes in the cemetery landscape, its meaning to descendants, and the community. In addition, it can help set priorities about how the landscape should be cared for in the future. Two interviews were recorded and conducted in person. In addition, one was virtually recorded, all of whom signed a document to have them archived with UTA. The transcription of such interviews is attached to this thesis. The audio will be housed at UTA and later the Tyler African American Museum. All of those interviewed had intimate knowledge of the cemetery and played a role in its initial preservation efforts.

This research involves several oral history interviews of volunteers and community members in the Smith County area and descendants connected to the cemetery to synthesize, analyze, and archive the information for public use. In addition to acknowledging the significance of preserving such a site, understanding the attitudes of a developing urban environment resulting from the cemetery's maintenance and public exposure is necessary. The process that was taken was influenced by the Texas Historical Commission (n.d.), which outlines the process of approaching a site:

1. Deciding on the question or issue/topic. – This case is Universe Cemetery being abandoned and found by local community members.
2. Plan the project - What is the goal of the interviews? – Gain a perspective of why people are interested in the cemetery and what they are doing.



3. Conduct background research on the person and topic. Meeting with the initial members and finding other people who had a significant part in preserving the Universe Cemetery through conversations.
4. Interview - Ask questions that reveal information and provide background on the issue/topic. – The questions were previously stated.
5. Process interview - What did you learn? Was there more information that was discovered? Were there key points that can help you with tying points together?
6. Reflect on your previous research and interviews and cycle back to the initial question or issue/topic.
7. Archive and keep materials for future personal and educational reference. – In this case, the interviews will be housed with the University of Texas at Arlington's library.

When preparing for the interviews, the questions for the oral history that participants focused on were the issues of sense of ownership (volunteers' sense of responsibility for the cemetery), significance, and projected outcomes of their efforts:

1. Tell me about yourself and your connection to the Universe cemetery.
2. What does Universe Cemetery mean to you and your history?
3. Can you tell me what you hope will happen to the cemetery, maintenance, public attention that comes out of your efforts to preserve the history of African Americans in Tyler?
4. How do you feel about the cemetery's location regarding access - should there be a better entrance?

After they were conducted, the oral history interviews were analyzed using the THC and OHA methods to formulate a comprehensible and truthful representation of the past with respect to an assumed audience. The *full transcripts* involved the verbatim transcription —both questions and answers — of the entire interview (THC, n.d.) then analyze the narrative data focusing on the answers as it relates to the thesis. This secondary and qualitative data collected from this analysis gives context and opens up unique perspectives from those not always considered (Bornat, 2003). The persons interviewed signed a release form. When contacting interviewees, each person noted that they gave the author of this thesis permission to use their words (Appendix C). Since the results of this thesis will be shared with the Tyler African American Museum, public use, both the interviewee and the interviewer gave written permission.

### **3.4.2 Site Survey**

This study follows the Texas Historical Commission (THC) and the Texas Freedom Colonies Project (TFC) guidelines for establishing the significance of the Universe Cemetery. An outline of the criteria for the THC designation is, “To be considered for Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation, a cemetery must be at least 50 years old and deemed worthy of recognition for its historical associations (THC, n.d.)” While the TFC states that, “A way to recognize or identify a Freedom Colony in a location would be to notice aspects of the natural landscape and the property types that remain, and to listen to residents define the borders, cultural landmarks, and the names they ascribe to their communities. (TFC, n.d.)” Those sources were used to identify and evaluate the process applied to the case study and site survey to define this site as a historical and cultural landscape.

This analysis provides a basis for the critical analysis of the methods and practices of the past in order to move forward and critique the results of neglect and the volunteer work conducted at the Universe Cemetery. Because of the nature of this study as an analysis of a process, the entire survey practice from beginning to end references current best practices or thoughts concerning cemeteries as a whole and ones focusing on Black sites.

Along with the initial efforts by the THC and the TFC analysis methods, additional input was later added to focus on the practice of techniques for documenting a case study concerning landscape architecture (Francis, 2001). The notion of a *Full* case study was initially considered, but an “in-depth” practice was later decided upon as a *Full* case study is relatively limited background information, perceived programming, along with features and lessons (Francis, 2001), which in many cases this case study did not have. As a result, this thesis provides a chapter for the case study and site survey to document and analyze vital, valuable information for future documentation, research, and maintenance. The report found in Chapter 4 depicts the site’s background, how it was chosen, the significance, and the existing conditions and problems. All the while, this thesis is considering these questions when adding to the history previously inadequately documented on Universe Cemetery:

- How and when did the cemetery start?
- How did it get its name(s)? Was it associated with a person, family, community, or church?
- Who first owned the land surrounding the cemetery? Who donated the land?
- If no longer active, why not? When was the last burial?
- Are there historically significant people buried there?

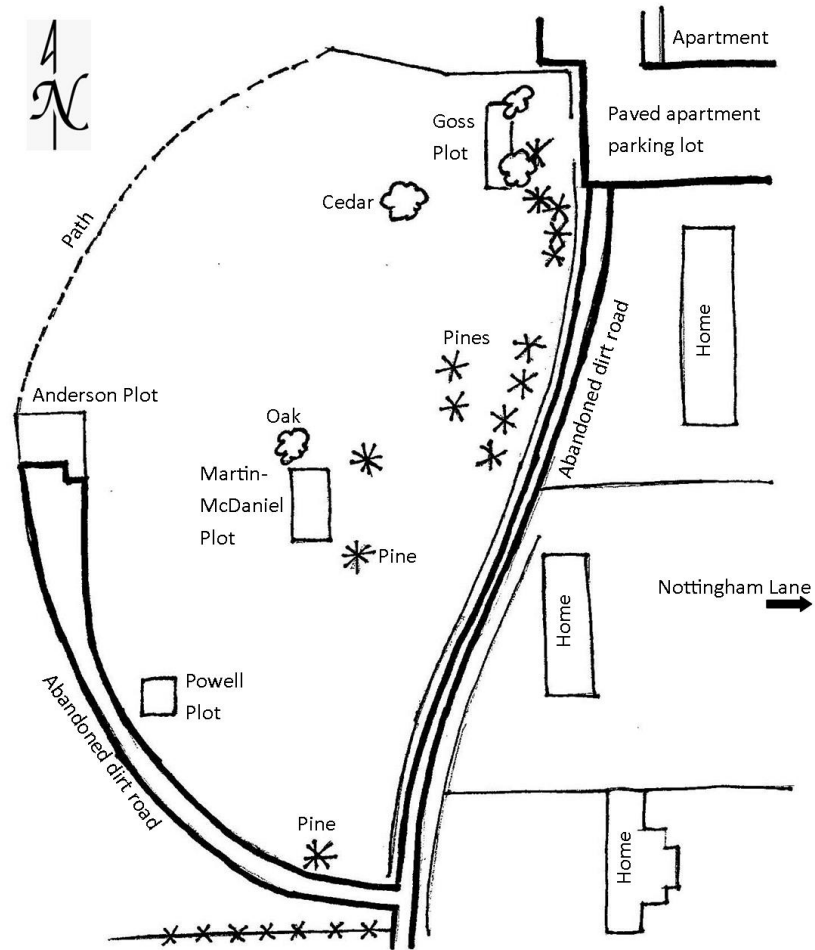
- If there is a cemetery association, when did it begin? Is it still active?
- Were additions of land or improvements made to the cemetery? If so, when did they occur?

In comparison to the THC, the efforts of the Texas Freedom Colonies Project aim to create a resource for stewards that guide them in aiding the determination of the best way to preserve the cemetery.

- Document the cemetery using Geospatial Informational Systems.
- Conduct and archive oral history interviews with people from the Smith County Historical Society, the Tyler African American Museum, the Tyler/Smith County African American Historical Society 2008, and the National African American Historical Society (East Texas Area).
- Develop a maintenance plan for the cemetery's preservation.

The application for the Texas Historical Commission required a narrative history with a bibliography, deeds, photographs, a sketch map, a property ownership map, a location map, and a \$25 fee which a local historian submitted. The brief narrative history came from Find-a-grave's deeds, census and cemetery lists, and the East Texas Genealogical Society. There were only two relevant deeds for the property, and they came from the County Clerk's office. Volunteers were able to go out to Universe Cemetery several times and get the required photographs for its documentation. The property ownership map was drawn from the Smith County Appraisal District map property search. The location map was based on Google Maps (Figure 3-2).

**Figure 3-2** Universe Cemetery Map - Texas Historical Commission

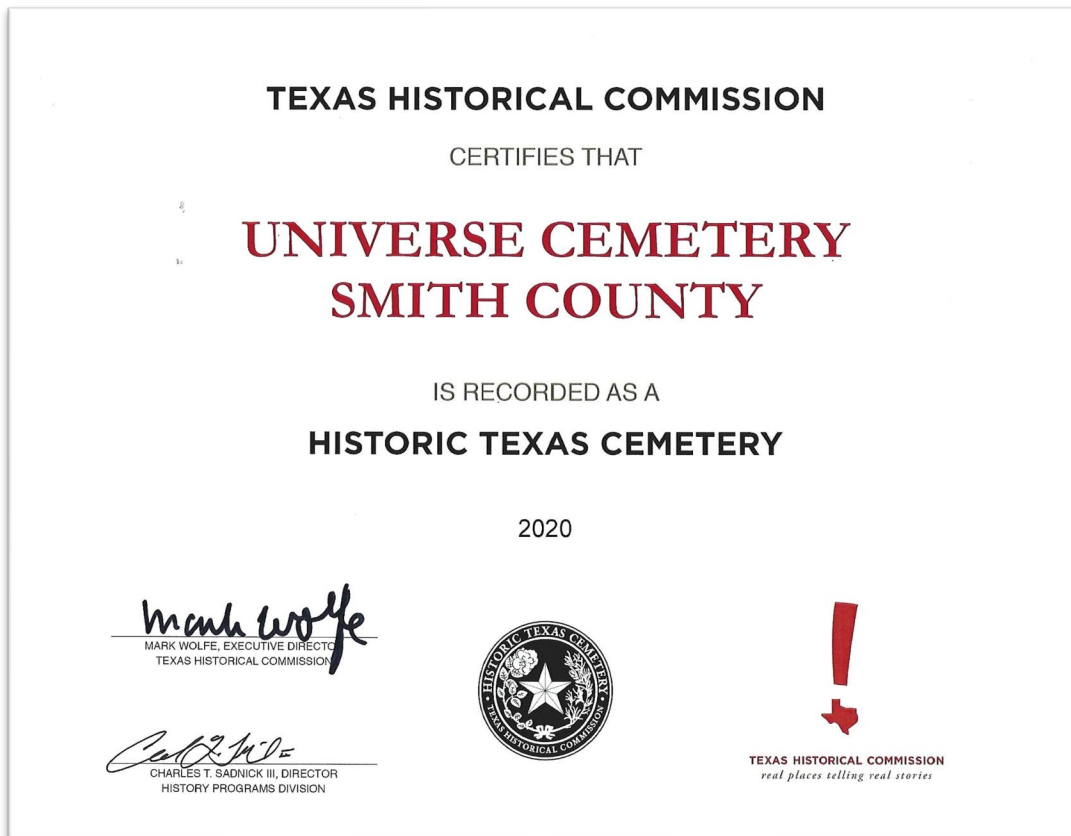


Note: The property ownership map was drawn from the Smith County Appraisal District map property search. The location map was based on Google Maps. Source: Betts, 2020.

As stated by the local historian who documented the cemetery for the THC application mentioned, the most challenging part was the map of the cemetery and existing grave markers. Due to the site's initial overgrown conditions, the terrain, and irregular shape, it was not easy to navigate and visualize the project's scope. For eight months in 2020, volunteers in Tyler cut down

trees, burned brush, and unearthed and marked headstones. As a result of the fervent work, the Texas Historical Commission has certified the Universe Cemetery of Smith County as a “Recorded Historic Texas Cemetery” (Figure 3-3).

**Figure 3-3** THC certificate



Note: *From Smith County Historical Society Website. Source: Betts, 2020.*

The approach to the cemetery to gain a sense of place from an outsider’s perspective was to take video and photographs for personal and historical reference. With a drone, DSLR camera, and GoPro, a spatial study was produced and documented of the cemetery. The recording methods assisted with the visualization of the cemetery and the surrounding context. In addition, archival photographs were taken of all above-ground headstones with visible inscriptions along with some

of the damaged headstones (Appendix A). Thanks to efforts by volunteers, the headstones and funeral markers that were disturbed, damaged, or red-flagged were marked missing. The primary goal of the research was to document the conditions of the tombs or markers along with the style and inscriptions, not the further research of information about who was interred as the timeline of this thesis did not allow for that research.

### **3.4.3 Archival and Secondary Data**

The archival and secondary data collection includes current Black landscapes and cemeteries, explicitly focusing on journals, online databases, news articles, books, and physical documentation resources. While most of this information is outlined and described in Chapter 2, supporting data for this section was produced by local historians. As a result, this data-focused mainly on Texas-based information's state and regional scale. Nevertheless, some aspects were noted from the national and federal scale for details about the future of Black landscapes and cemeteries.

The collection methods, such as the oral history interviews transcribed based on the Oral History Association's Standards (OHA, n.d.), site survey, and case study, were analyzed through Francis' Case Study Method (Francis, 2001). In addition, archival and secondary data were collected and analyzed using the Texas Historical Commission and Texas Freedom Colonies documentation practice.

### **3.4.4 Case Study**

The case study method allows for the opportunity to draw a broad, yet comprehensive examination of a single (or multiple) site enabled through a holistic review, using a wide range of

tools and techniques that would otherwise not apply when using other standalone research techniques. The various avenues such as surveys, interviews, observation, documentation, and the collection of descriptions of physical artifacts were the tools for data collection. The elements' interpretation gives pointers and an in-depth understanding of the topic or site and develops the factors that affect them in specific detail (Francis, 2001). The diversity of perspectives and documentation gives a far more significant perspective that is not always depicted from a survey response or an interview. The case study method eliminates chances of potential bias by understanding the subject under investigation and is crucial in showing a clear picture of whatever is taking place. Since the case study method is specific to a topic, it cannot be generalized. However, it can broaden the research topic and explore common problems and limitations in the subject.

The purpose of this case study on Universe Cemetery is to develop an understanding of existing conditions and to gather data to produce archival data for future use and reference of those working with the cemetery to establish a maintenance plan. Thus, as stated before, this practice may act as a frame of reference for other cemeteries in Tyler and other areas across America. In addition to the information found at the site, some of the data collected were reframed and analyzed for comparison to other cemeteries in Tyler to evaluate existing maintenance and treatment. This evaluation allows for developing the best practices for Universe and establishing clear protocols and procedures proceeding with the fieldwork.

As a result of the information collected from the case study, the information allows the decision of what the approach will be when it comes to developing a maintenance plan, understanding the importance of the cemetery, and enabling the identification of possible lines of inquiry. The case study also includes utilizing field notes and existing gravemarker categorization



for referencing data and existing features. The field notes take records of the observations, experiences, and conditions to pose questions and document existing efforts by local historians and community members. The conclusions drawn from the individual case may be used as information that contributes to further research into Black cemeteries. This method is vital as the challenges involved can be interpreted by planning, background research, and an informed selection of recommendations and practical solutions for the longevity of the Universe Cemetery.

### **3.5 Methodological Significance and Limitations**

This study focuses on one specific cemetery in Tyler and the state of Texas. It will not evaluate Black landscapes outside of the city and state boundaries. The selected case study will only provide data collection of the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas. Thus, the inventory and analysis information is specific to only this site. Conclusions drawn from this thesis may apply to other Black landscapes outside of the city and state.

Additionally, this thesis used limited toolsets for site survey data collection. More sophisticated equipment and a more extended survey period may yield additional information about the site and gravemarkers. A LIDAR survey, for example, will likely reveal the location of unmarked burials that this thesis did not document.

Black landscapes across the country are being revealed as urban development continues to change. Unfortunately, limited funding and resources are allocated to such categories. However, the cemetery can be further explored and documented through more extensive analysis with specialized equipment and representative historians for data collection with additional research and public interest.

As a result, the limitations were considered concerning the focus area, resources, funding, and time resulting in an in-depth research guideline for future research into Black landscapes to aid in the complexity of the topic and those impacted by its discovery.

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

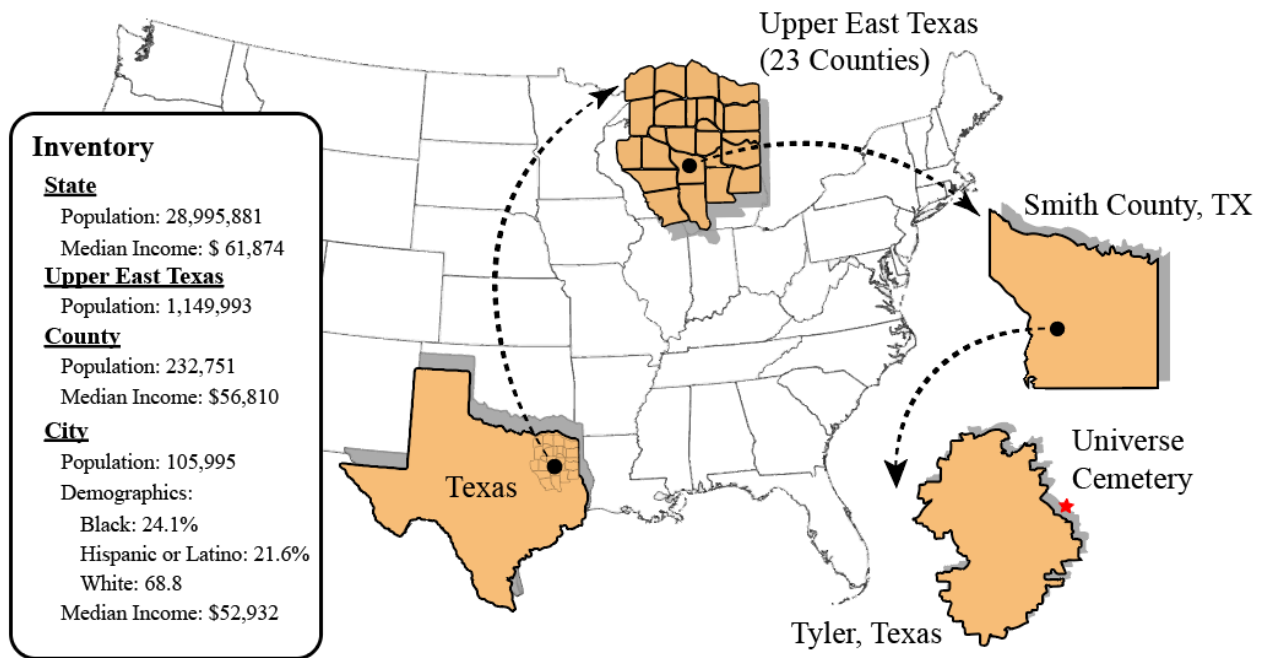
This chapter gave an overview of the case study location and the data collection and analysis methods that influence studying a cemetery's overall outcomes and benefits. These research practices provide quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to document the Universe Cemetery. The surveys, interviews, observation, documentation review, and the collection are found in the Appendices of this thesis. However, as a result, the documented information needs to be classified and cross-referenced to be efficiently recalled for examination and sorting as the study could continue or influence other sites.

The research collected ensures that the information is intended to be achieved internally and shared locally with the residents of Tyler. In addition, the stories, techniques, and documentation require the information to be displayed in an array of formats such as spreadsheets, charts, illustrations, and graphs. As a result, the data collection and analysis methods assist with providing answers to the "how" and "why" of the research questions. Chapter 4 outlines the Universe Cemetery case study and the research process and case study analysis in the next section.

## Chapter 4 - CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The Universe Cemetery is in Tyler, Texas, in a section called East Texas. East Texas is in the pineywoods area with rolling hills and pastureland; it is defined by 23 counties (East-Texas.com, n.d.). Tyler is located in Smith County and is known for its rose cultivation and the Tyler Rose Festival. Though the Universe Cemetery's address is located in Tyler, Texas, the cemetery is technically an unincorporated area of Smith County. Thus, the documentation of the cemetery is ambiguous when attempting to gain further GIS information about zoning, adjacencies, and other information for background analysis information (Figure 4-1).

**Figure 4-1** Universe Site Context



The cemetery is located in the pineywoods of East Texas on the eastern side of Tyler, which is the county seat of Smith County. It is on rolling terrain that was originally heavily wooded with pine trees, bisected by a creek. As seen in Figure 4-2, the cemetery is located in the landscape classified as pineywoods, the woodlands of the southern U.S. and East Texas. The pineywoods landscape is typically a thick forest of pines. The dominant tree with terrain is rolling with lower, wetter bottomlands that grow hardwood trees such as elm, mesquite, and ash (Pineywoods, n.d.).

**Figure 4-2** Pineywoods of Universe Cemetery



*Note: Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

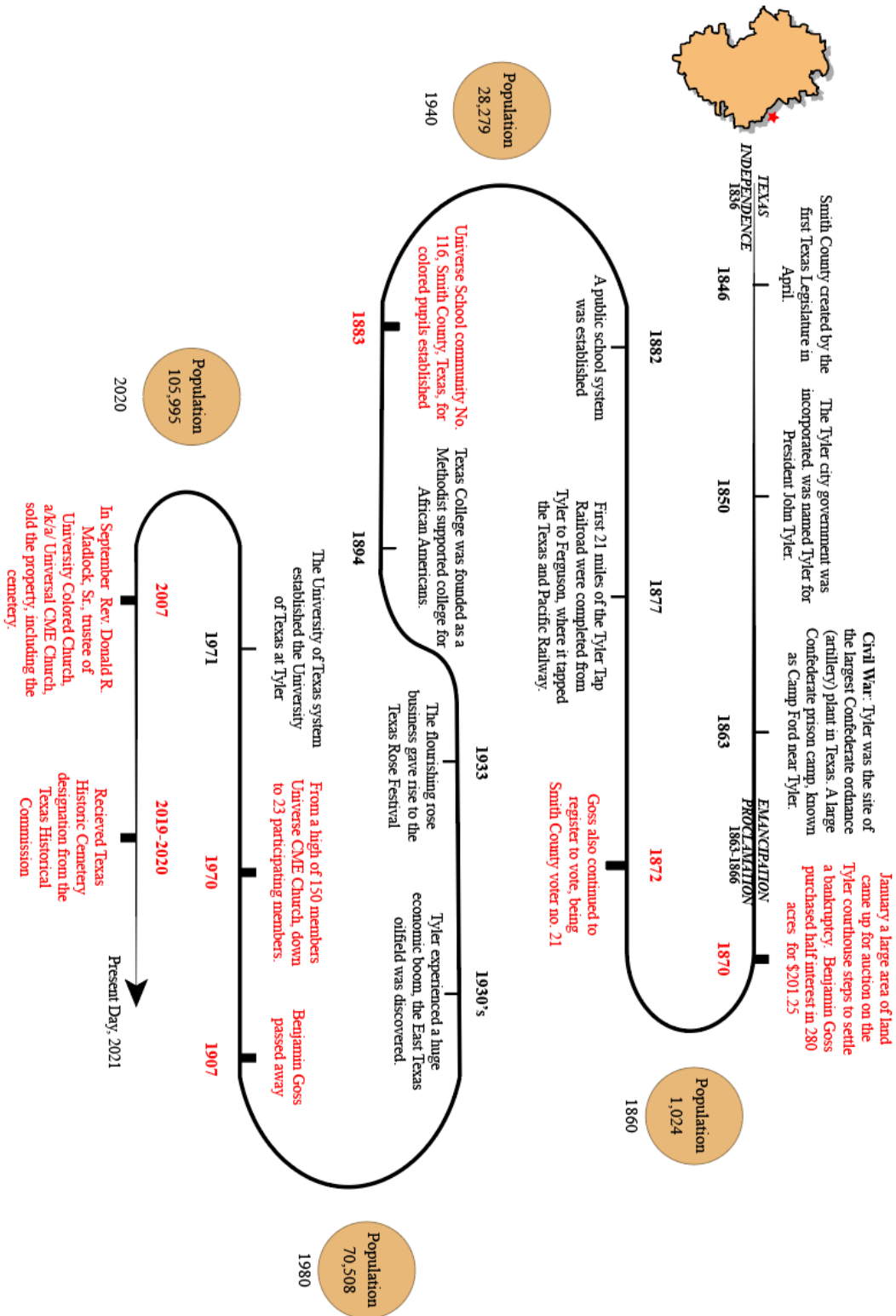
#### **4.1 Recent Case: Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas; Smith County**

The Universe Cemetery resides on the land bought by Benjamin Franklin Goss, a freed slave from North Carolina. In 1870, Goss paid \$201.25 (\$6,066.47 in 2021 dollars as calculated by inflation (Inflation Calculator, n.d.)) to purchase a large area of land that came up for auction on the Tyler courthouse steps to settle a bankruptcy for agriculture purposes. Goss deeded 2½ acres and designated several people, including himself, as trustees of the University Colored Church. The original church and University (later Universe) Cemetery were established on that site. By 1880 he acquired a total of 550 acres. Around 1891, three and a half acres of land were allocated for the Universe Church and Cemetery (Betts, 2021).

Local historian Vicki Betts has documented Goss and the Universe community. The information that she found about Universe was collected from tax records and census documents. The community grew and thrived from its foundations in agriculture; Betts mentioned that from her findings, it could be stated that Universe was not small and it had a school and church.

The plot of land was later sold in 2007 by Reverend Donald R. Madlock, Sr., the trustee of the Universe(ty) Colored Church, to Bobby Joe Manziel (Betts, 2021). The cemetery was then left untouched for thirteen years. Below is a timeline (Figure 4-3) that shows the relation of the Universe Cemetery with regard to the city of Tyler and the state of Texas (the red being relevant to the cemetery).

Figure 4-3 Important Dates Timeline



Note: Graphic produced by Author, 2021. Source: City of Tyler, n.d., Betts, 2020.

#### **4.1.1 Initial Site Selection**

For this thesis, site identification was chosen based on recent research (during August 2020) of newly discovered cemeteries in the Northeastern region of Texas that was led by community efforts and gained media attention. It was chosen after seeing a news article about the cemetery, and efforts were then made to contact those connected to the site in October 2020.

With the help of UTA faculty member Kathryn Holliday, introductory communications were made with Vicki Betts, a former University of Texas at Tyler librarian and member of the Smith County Historical Society and the National African American Historical Society. They, along with others, started the initial efforts in documenting and maintaining the cemetery. The following information is compiled from a cemetery history begun by Betts, additional archival research and oral history interviews, and site visits with individuals associated with the Universe Cemetery.

In her oral history interview, Betts explained that in the fall of 2019, Andy Leach, Matt Stith, and herself went out to the cemetery and documented its current conditions. With the help of others, she later decided to pursue a Texas Historic Cemetery designation from the Texas Historical Commission, which was obtained in 2020.

Larry Wade, the founder of the National African American Historical Society in Tyler and a retired Tyler ISD teacher who substitute teaches history, assisted with leading efforts to find, restore, and preserve abandoned Black cemeteries in Tyler. Wade hoped to create a national movement with the previously mentioned group, contacting reporter Frank Jefferson with KETK Television, who filmed a story on Universe Cemetery that aired on August 18, 2020. From then to

today, Wade and others organize monthly Saturday workdays and recruit volunteers with limb loppers, rakes, and chainsaws to maintain the cemetery.

#### **4.1.2 Land Ownership and Use**

Adjacencies and ownership are essential variables that impact cemetery preservation and visibility. Ownership of a cemetery also plays a large part in its maintenance and preservation. Some may be a city, state, or federally owned and, in some cases, are church-owned properties, cared for by a local cemetery association or by a single community member (in this case, it can result in the changing of hands leading to a greater risk of neglect or abandonment). When investigating the Universe Cemetery, it was found that ownership and accessibility to the cemetery were influenced by the permission to enter the site. The cemetery is currently (as of 2007) privately owned by Bobby Joe Manziel. As a standard form of procedure, it is recommended to:

- Understand the property before visiting, be aware of property boundaries and ownership along with laws and bills such as:
  - Conservatorship Under Chapter 715 - The following requirements must be met before a court will award control of the cemetery to the nonprofit:
    - The nonprofit corporation has a religious, ethnic, historic, or cultural relationship to the cemetery.
    - The cemetery is at least 75 years old.
    - No viable organization of plot owners exists; and the cemetery endangers health, safety, comfort, or welfare (Statues Capital Texas, n.d.).



- A city has the authority to acquire and improve cemeteries in the county where the city is located, even if the cemetery is not inside the city, and can serve as a permanent trustee for the perpetual maintenance of the cemetery.
- Formation of a Nonprofit Cemetery Corporation (Way, 2019 and Statutes Capital Texas, n.d.).
- Contact the property owner and ask them for the right to visit the cemetery. From the initial meeting it may go one of two ways: deny entry or allow temporary/full entry and access. If posed with denial of entry
- Work to find compromises which allow public access while respecting the rights of the property/landowner. While communicating with the owner, help them understand the significance of documenting the cemetery.

From analyzing the Universe Cemetery, the surrounding context provides recommendations. As of Fall 2021, the surrounding context is primarily single-family residences, apartment complexes, and new home developments. Unfortunately, there is no information to state the former residents due to the lack of GIS and city data for this area. However, it can be assumed that the surrounding population of the cemetery is not Black as there is little to no trace of the community and the original property owner, Benjamin Goss.

### **4.1.3 Site Accessibility**

State law in Texas Sec. 711.041. Access To Cemetery requires that anyone who wishes to visit a cemetery or private burial grounds where there is no public access shall have the right to reasonable ingress and egress over your property to visit the cemetery during reasonable hours

(Statues Capital Texas, n.d.). While the cemetery is technically accessible according to these requirements, it is not easily accessible. There are no formal parking spaces, no place for a car to turn, and its location is only accessible by car. Additionally, those with mobility issues will have difficulty navigating the site as there is no formal path or ground material that is stable (Figures 4-4 and 4-5).

The cemetery is not easily accessible. Any typical person will drive past it before realizing the location. However, the roads leading to and around the cemetery are relatively maintained. Despite the entrance hidden behind an apartment building and parking lot, it was well protected from development because it is fenced on all sides. From Henderson Highway/State highway 64, turn onto Nottingham Lane; trees hide the left in the parking lot of the multi-family apartment.

**Figure 4-4** Entrance of the cemetery closer to the apartment parking lot



*Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 4-5** View from the apartment parking lot to Nottingham Lane



*Note: Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 4-6** Formal entrance to the cemetery



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

Once inside, though the cemetery is only three and a half acres, there is some difficulty navigating through its winding pedestrian social trails through the trees without a map to find specific plots. Additional mapping using Geospatial Information Systems mapping and data, photographs, and the implementation of interpretive and wayfinding signage will improve accessibility on site. With the meandering feeling of the site, it is not recommended to formalize the layout instead of using the existing natural features to enhance the experience and engagement of those who visit (Figure 4-7). There can be a better connection to the site if there was signage and accessibility to the cemetery's gate entrance, so one does not drive past it. Below is a map depicting the conditions and observations from fieldwork.

**Figure 4-7** Site analysis location and conditions map



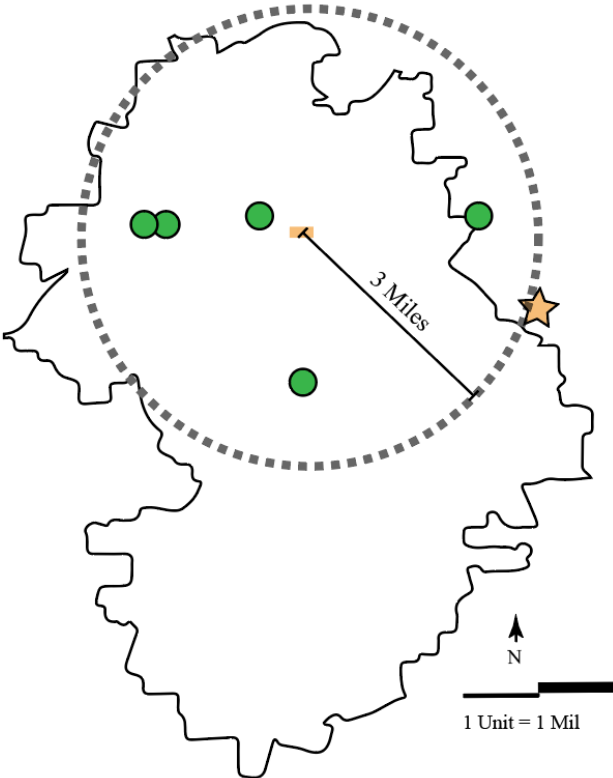
Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.* Source: Esri, Smith County, 2020.

#### 4.1.4 City Context and Cemetery Comparison

While direct adjacencies are significant, so too are the relationships and comparisons to other cemeteries in Tyler, Texas, to better understand what maintenance options are available. Additionally, analysis was directed to cemeteries within a three-mile radius from Tyler city center that includes the extents of the Universe Cemetery (Figures 4-8, 4-9, and 4-10). The intention behind researching the other cemeteries was to see the correlation and differences between internal circulation, date of establishment, and size (those interred and acreage), along with who maintains

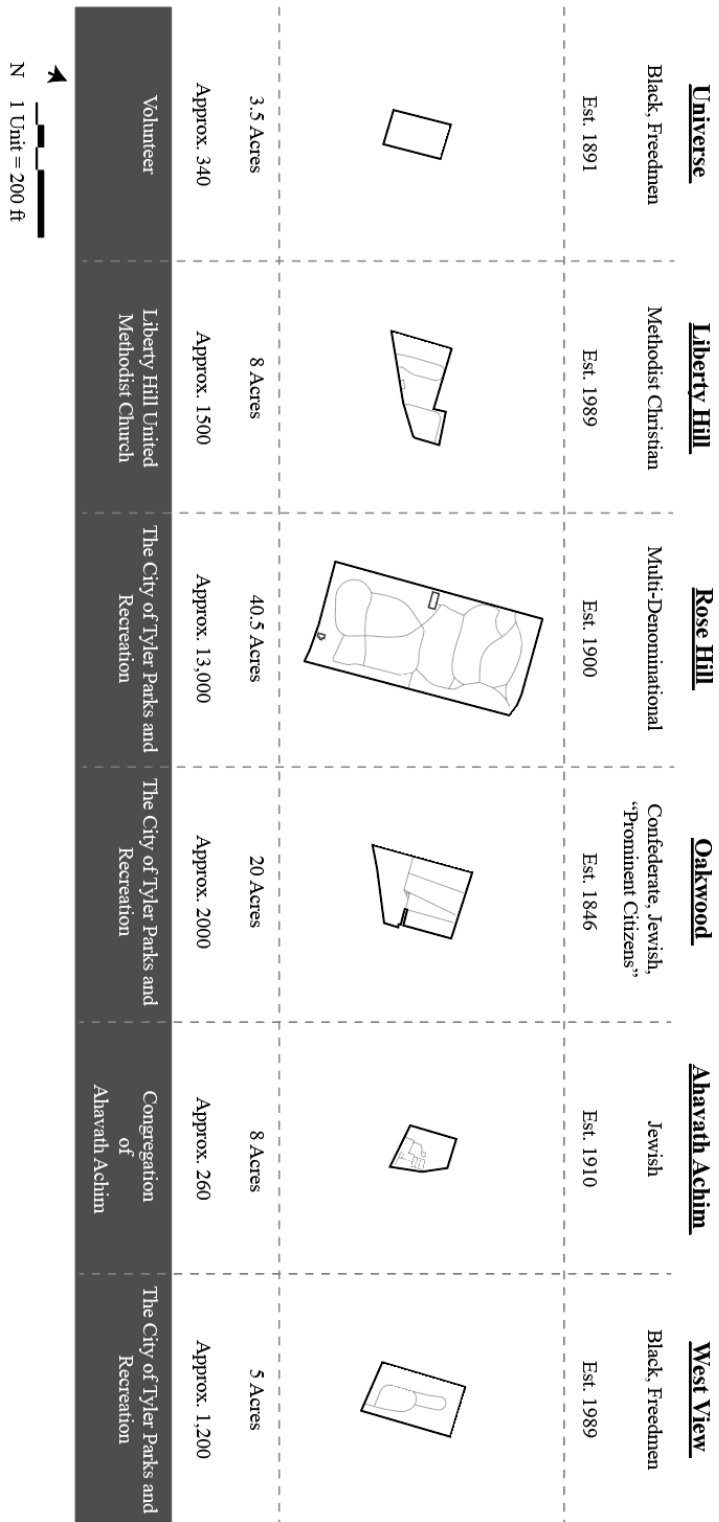
them. As a result, there were tremendous disparities between the cemeteries. The city of Tyler has cemeteries supported by religious groups or community members and privately maintains three of them.

**Figure 4-8** Universe Cemetery context of three-mile radius from Tyler City center



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 4-9 Cemetery Maintenance Comparison**



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.* Graphic adopted from: (Bradt, 2013)



**Figure 4-10** Photographs of Tyler Cemeteries



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

## 4.2 Oral History Interview Analysis and Findings

The findings from the interviews were analyzed and interpreted, which ultimately echoed some of the themes stated in the Literature Review. Again, the purpose of the interviews was to acknowledge the significance of preserving such a site and understand the attitudes that maintenance and public exposure add to the cemetery in the surrounding context. Therefore, the value-added for recording and transcribing the interviews is critical. The initial efforts and reasoning for preserving the Universe Cemetery affect those who are interred and influence a new generation of people to take on this site. The complete interview transcriptions are included in Appendix 3. The Table below summarizes the most critical themes in answer to key questions. These summaries were created using the analysis of oral history suggested by the Oral History Association (Gilford College, n.d., OHA, n.d., and THC, n.d.).

**Table 1** Oral History Interviews

Interviewer Question	Interviewee Answers <i>All members of the Universe Cemetery Committee</i>
Tell me about yourself and your connection to the Universe cemetery.	<p><b>L:</b> I'm the president of the National Historical African American Society in Tyler, a member of the Smith County Historical Society, and holds community meetings and assembles volunteers to clean and maintain the cemetery.</p> <p><b>G:</b> Owner of the African American Museum in Tyler and a volunteer.</p>

	<p><b>V:</b> Local Historian – one of the first people to re-discover the cemetery. Friend of Larry from the Smith County Historical Society and the primary volunteer of maintaining the cemetery.</p>
<p>What does Universe Cemetery mean to you?</p>	<p><b>L:</b> “It means a lot. [...] A life lived is a life to be remembered. If you lived on this earth, you should be remembered someday somehow [...].”</p> <p><b>G:</b> “It is so important because our ancestors from the past are buried there and most of their family individuals have also passed.”</p> <p><b>V:</b> “[...] very interested in African American local history [...] wondering why we didn’t have more Black history in the Historical Society.”</p>
<p>Can you tell me what you hope will happen to the cemetery, maintenance, public attention that comes out of your efforts to preserve the history of African Americans in Tyler?</p>	<p><b>L:</b> “Well, I hope not only will we develop an ongoing maintenance and upkeep will never again get in disrepair like it is in the bad shape that it has been, but it would also inspire and it’s already doing that and others to discover [other] Black cemeteries.”</p> <p><b>G:</b> “[...] a fence needs to be put up a memorial needs to be put up and I’m hoping that that’s going to happen, and plus</p>

	<p>we would get more location of people in the community or people that have their little ones buried there that they would step up then also join in and help to keep the cemetery up [and] keeping the weeds out and things like that.”</p> <p><b>V:</b> “The story is of the cemetery and the family still is impressive to me and I do not want that cemetery to fall back into just total neglect and I’m still not sure how to guarantee that it it’s going to be difficult.”</p>
<p>How do you feel about the cemetery’s location regarding access - should there be a better entrance?</p>	<p><b>L:</b> “Yes, that is a concern it didn’t happen overnight [...] Once you [the property owner] realize a cemetery is there, the public is supposed to have access, particularly relatives to a cemetery by law. So, we need to find a way [to provide access].”</p> <p><b>G:</b> “[...] there needs to be a different way to get into the cemetery where we won’t have to go through the neighborhood [meaning being the apartment building] and this [the cemetery] is outside of the city limits so the city doesn’t have any desire to help with it because it’s outside of the city limits and so that’s why it’s so imperative that community members get together and come out and help.”</p>

	<p>V: “One of the problems for that cemetery says it is in inaccessible from a road directly anybody who goes into work there at the cemetery or to visit the cemetery usually parks in a small apartment parking lot can’t it’s difficult to park along the road the road the old road that goes down off of that parking lot.”</p>
--	--

Through systematically analyzing the interview transcripts, the most central concern of all three interviewees was the longevity of the cemetery. All of which said that the cemetery should prioritize two simplified parts:

- Attention needs to be given to get more people interested in preserving and maintaining the cemetery.
- Recognition of the site and its significance along with remembering/memorializing those interred.

The questions for oral history participants focused on issues of sense of ownership (volunteers’ sense of responsibility for the cemetery), significance, and projected outcomes of their efforts. The Universe Cemetery volunteers showed interest in ensuring that other landscapes in Tyler, Texas, were known and given proper care. They all touched on the fact that another cemetery drew their interest and wanted to use the same practices for the newly discovered cemetery. The interview research conducted has produced a list of programs, shown below:

- Formalizing the access to the entrance

- Documenting those who are interred
- Recognizing the significance of the cemetery and seeking National Historical status

### **4.3 Site Survey and Case Study Analysis**

The site survey focused on identifying major organization patterns in the cemetery landscape, the role of vegetation and surrounding structures in shaping cemetery experience, and carefully documenting and analyzing the extant gravemarkers on the site as well as any more ephemeral offerings or symbolic objects left at grave sites. The detailed inventories generated as a result of the gravesite survey can be found in Appendix 1.

#### **4.3.1 Documentation Methods**

The documentations methods used in this site survey:

- Photography of existing conditions, surrounding context, and characteristics (headstones)
- Aerial drone photography
- On-site assessment of vegetation and topography

#### **4.3.2 Existing Conditions and Inventory**

Today, the cemetery site is surrounded by development (Figure 4-11). The Universe Cemetery's location is adjacent to undeveloped dense canopy land on the west and north; Subdivisions called Nottingham Forest addition along Nottingham Lane Cr274 to the east with State Highway 64 to the south. Nottingham Lane Cr274 is lined by single- and multi-family homes

and dead ends into a densely wooded area. The cemetery is accessed from the parking lot of an apartment complex on this road. To the west of the cemetery, new housing development has resulted in land clearance and tree removal.

**Figure 4-11** Aerial Image of Universe Cemetery



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021. Source: Google Earth, 2021*

**Figure 4-12** Aerial image of the cemetery from Goss family plot.



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

From an initial Google search of the cemetery, Find-a-grave states that there are approximately 334 graves (Findagrave.com, 2020). From initial communication with Vicki, sixty-three of the deceased are believed to have been born into slavery. The website and Vicki state that the earliest visible maker is Matilda Wilson from August 1, 1871 (with a photograph added by Michael Parsons) and the most recent being Emma Cole Davis from February 25, 2005 (no picture added) (Findagrave.com, 2020). As of October 2021, it should be noted that through photography documentation, the total number of gravemarkers with visible inscriptions seen was 108. The earliest headstone visible is Sam Tucker from 10/10/1818, and the most recent is Thema Warren from 5/9/1999.

The cemetery entrance is located in the parking lot of a multi-family apartment building owned by Eric Hall Properties LLC (Figure 4-13), purchased in 2011 and surrounded by



approximately 27 acres of undeveloped land purchased by Harris & Reynolds LLC in 2004. The plot of land that the cemetery occupies is approximately 4 ½ acres of land, which was purchased by Bobby Joe Manziel in 2007 (Smith County Esri, 2021). The zoning for the cemetery as of Fall 2021 is not designated as the cemetery is in the ethereal zone, which is out of the city. This is important to note to better recognize the cultural significance of the site and future preservation efforts; there needs to be a designation of the site's borders/perimeter reviewed by the city of Tyler and Smith County.

**Figure 4-13** Entrance from the Nottingham through the multi-family apartment parking lot



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

The Universe Cemetery has no noticeable formal pathway or road leading to the graves like the typically designed rural cemeteries have with their grids and alleys; there are meandering narrow paths that wind between the tall evergreen trees. The mature vegetation and overhead canopy create an oasis from the development down the road and the highway to the south. Before the intervention of local historians and volunteers, the site was overgrown and inaccessible. With their care and mindful consideration/dedication, the site has been cleared of invasive species and new growth vegetation, making it easier to maintain and access. Currently, the cemetery is primarily managed by community volunteers, Betts, who says, “There is a large section of

Universe that we haven't even touched yet, and maintenance will be ongoing during the growing season, or it will grow right back.”

There are several family plots with metal chain-linked fences, which include the Goss (Figure 4-14), McDaniel, and the Collins family plots; it is unknown when the fences were first constructed, but it is evident that some care had been taken prior to the state of disrepair.

**Figure 4-14** Goss Family Plot



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

From observing the site and conducting several walk-throughs to document the existing conditions, there are clear indicators of possible topography impact of excess water, climate change, and erosion. These indicators can be seen by depressions indicating subsidence at

gravesites, runoff eroding the sides of the southwest plots (Figure 4-15), and the existing retaining rock wall deteriorating in the cemetery's northwest corner (Figure 4-16). As a result, efforts may be needed to protect these areas from further degeneration.

**Figure 4-15** Runoff and degeneration of burial plots.



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 4-16** Retaining wall deteriorating



Note. *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

### **4.3.3 Documentation Methods**

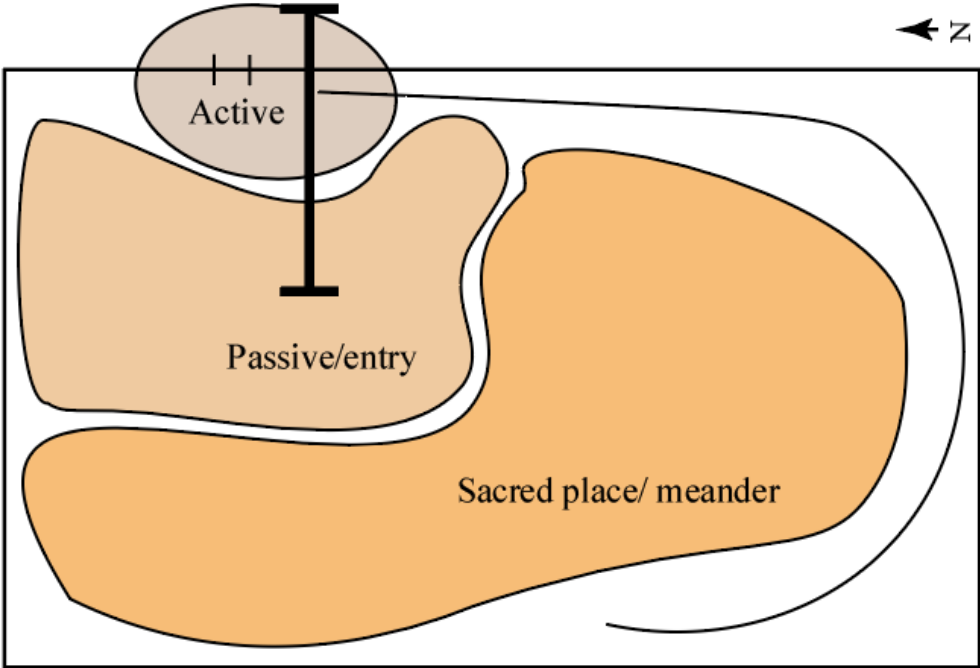
The study enriches the understanding and expansion of knowledge and recognition of Black burial sites and their importance to the American landscape. The documentations methods used in this case study investigating the Universe Cemetery were:

- The collection of historical maps that locate the site
- Oral History Interviews
- Photography of existing conditions, surrounding context, and characteristics (Figure 4-17)



- **Active Entry:** the zone for which people enter and gain first impressions of the cemetery. There can be the implementation of a formal cemetery entrance or wayfinding signage in this zone. This zone has the lightest tree canopy, the most natural light, and has had the most undergrowth removed. It is also the highest point in the cemetery.
- **Passive Entry:** After passing through the active entry zone, visitors move into a space where gravemarkers begin to appear. Pine trees grow between the gravemarkers and create a more complete canopy and shaded darker experience. Volunteers have cleared much of the undergrowth from this portion of the site, and it is relatively easy to navigate on foot. There is a gradual slope downwards into the cemetery as one moves deeper into this middle portion of the cemetery. This zone is ideal for placing education or information materials and markers, including the possibility of a memorial for names not found on the headstones but known to be interred here. In addition, seating for contemplation and reflection would be appropriate in this zone.
- **Sacred Place:** This zone is further down the sloping site, has more undergrowth, and is less maintained. Gravemarkers are less visible and can appear by surprise as one moves through this zone. Movement is more difficult and is defined by a series of meandering footpaths that wind through the trees. This is where a breadth for meaningful reflection can be taken in a quiet forest landscape and a place for meandering and engaging with the landscape.

**Figure 4-18** Cemetery Experience.



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*



**Figure 4-19** Interpretation of the cemetery active entry zone



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

#### **4.4 Gravemarker Analysis**

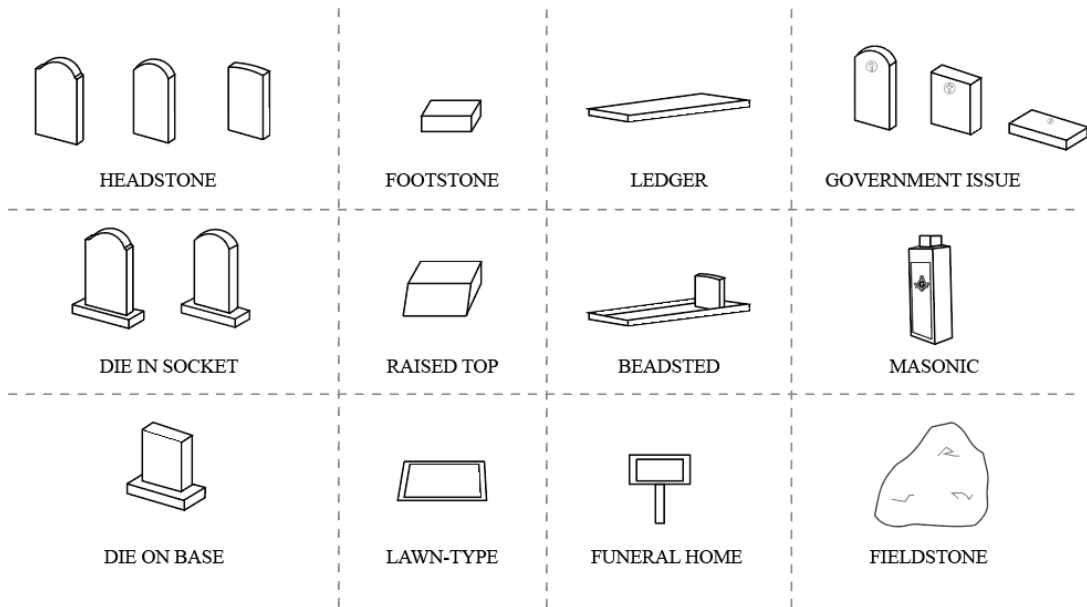
In this thesis, the information collected from the site survey led to the documentation of the markers as a manufactured element on top of the landscape. The information found on the markers guided the method of transcribing and noting the existing conditions in order to draw conclusions and a record for future research. As a result, a table (Appendix B) was introduced to show the chronology and conditions from which an analysis of several elements was drawn. The analysis determined the need for urgent treatment. In addition, it revealed information that may

have led to the abandonment of the cemetery. The documentation results were one of the critical factors for developing a maintenance plan for the survival of the cemetery.

Funeral homes associated with the cemetery were unresponsive. They, therefore, could not confirm to the Universe Committee, which rendered many of the interred locations unknown. It is unclear how the person who added names to Findagrave.com provided the information. Furthermore, research into the unmarked graves and locations could not be investigated due to time constrictions.

As of Fall 2020, the cemetery was overgrown in young pine, young oaks, bushes, and brier vines. Several large pines have died and fallen, damaging fencing and markers (Betts, 2020). Due to the lack of cyclic maintenance of the cemetery, many headstones are in poor condition. They need to be cleaned, repointed, repaired, and added. In addition, some markers are missing, have cracked/broken foundations, display indiscernible text, and have moss overgrowth. The Figures below show the variety of headstones found at the cemetery. In Appendix A, some images showcase the existing conditions of the headstones. From physical condition observations, several headstones are made with various materials resulting in differing levels of readability and repair. Due to weathering, some exposed internments will need to be reburied or fenced off for safety.

**Figure 4-20** Headstone typology



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.* Source: Chicora, n.d.

**Figure 4-21** Example of Headstone Types



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

Detailed information in metadata and headstone genealogy chart (Table 2) were collected for archival intent of publication and a resource for the volunteers and Universe Cemetery Committee for future usage. Additionally, scaled maps were not created based on the locations from the GPS points. However, spatial, and existing condition analysis diagrams were produced to translate the cemetery's layout and organization to those unable to visit (Figures 4-20 and 4-21).

Once all the information about each headstone photographed was collected and entered into the Headstone and Genealogy Spreadsheets, graphs were produced to assess the information entered quickly. The preparation of a gravemarker database was used to help sort, categorize, store, and retrieve data from the site survey and case study analysis.

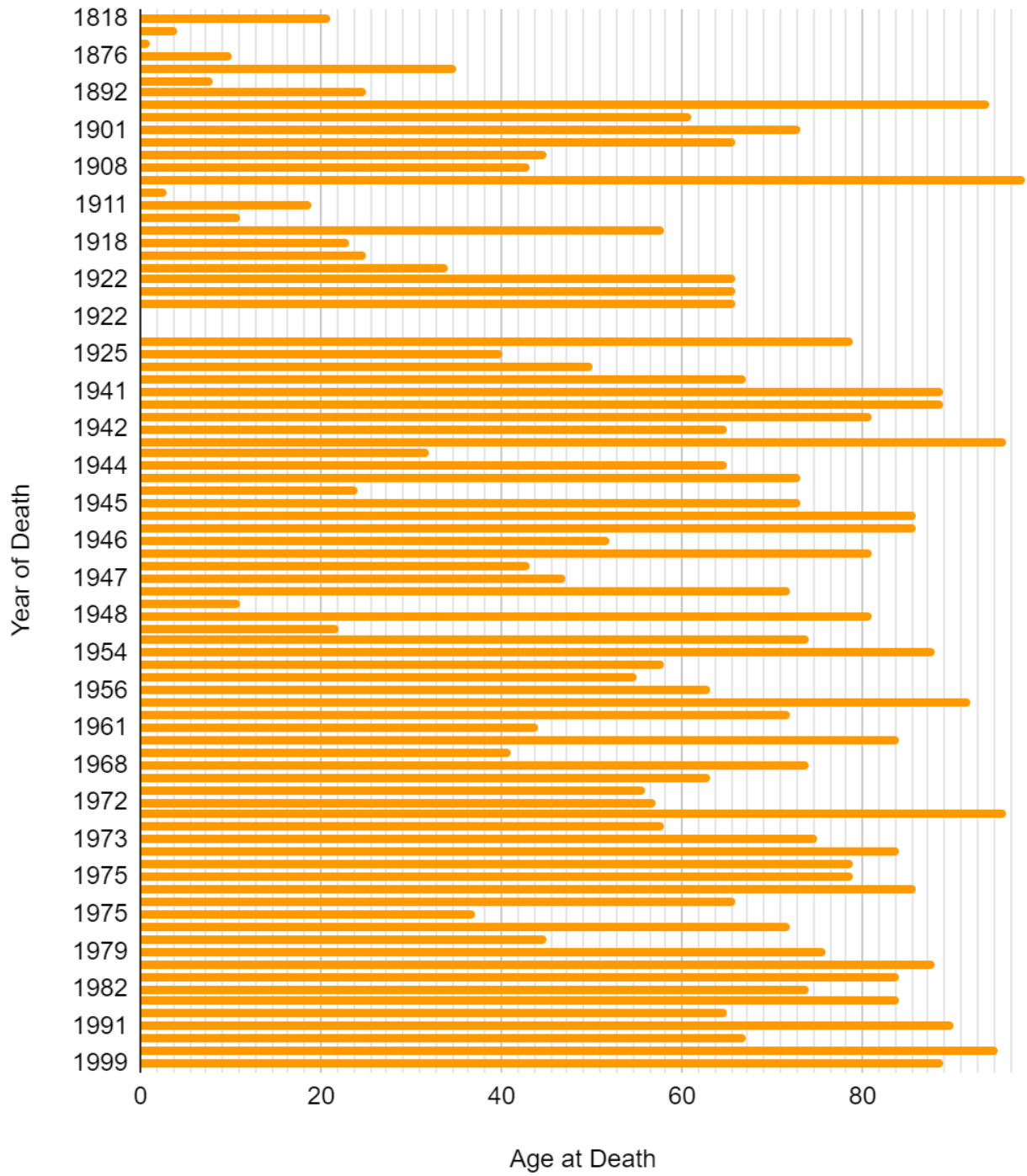
#### **4.4.1 Gravemarker Timeline**

Conclusions drawn from the timelines below show several interesting indications of what happened to those interred in the Universe Cemetery. The first chart depicts the age and year of death of those interred. When comparing the two, the chart reveals that there were several burials before the creation of the cemetery.

The second chart reveals that during the 1940's it was the most common period of death depicted on the monuments where people are remembered in the Universe Cemetery. From this chart, the data displayed allows for questions and assumptions about the impact the Great Migration had on the Black community of Tyler. Around this time, people from across the south were already moving away during the Great Migration. As mentioned in the literature review chapter, the Great Migration had a significant impact on the decline of Black communities as people moved away. However, as the chart depicts, some still stayed and buried their loved ones.

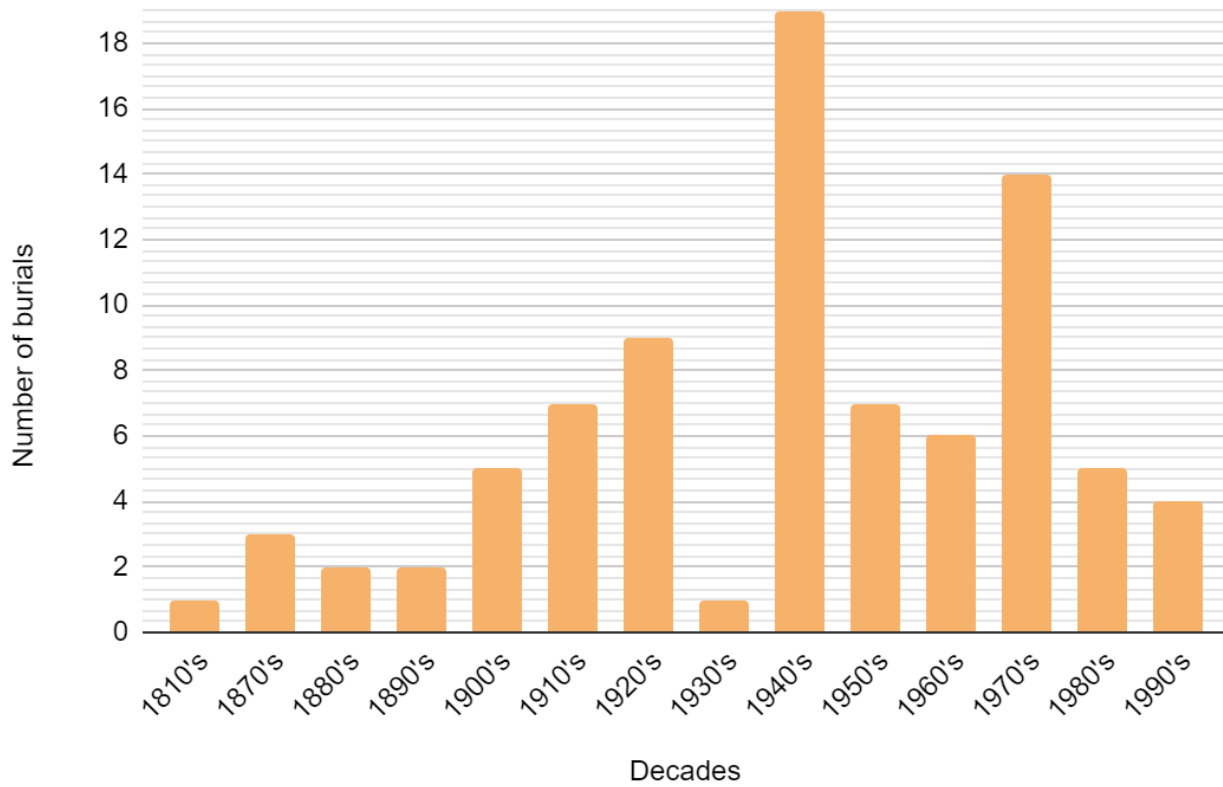
The decline depicted in the chart shows the loss of place and the people in the timeline during the Great Migration. As mentioned in the literature review, people began to migrate across the United States during this time. Interestingly, the chart shows that some may have chosen to stay or returned after the years. However, given the condition of the cemetery today, it was not to sustain the population and resulted in the downfall of the Universe community. Since the demise, it can be assumed based on the existing site conditions that those who reside in the general area surrounding the cemetery have little to no connection to the site and perhaps took advantage of the cheap land that became available during that time.

**Figure 4-22** Chart of year and age of death



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 4-23** Number of death dates on gravemarker by decade



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

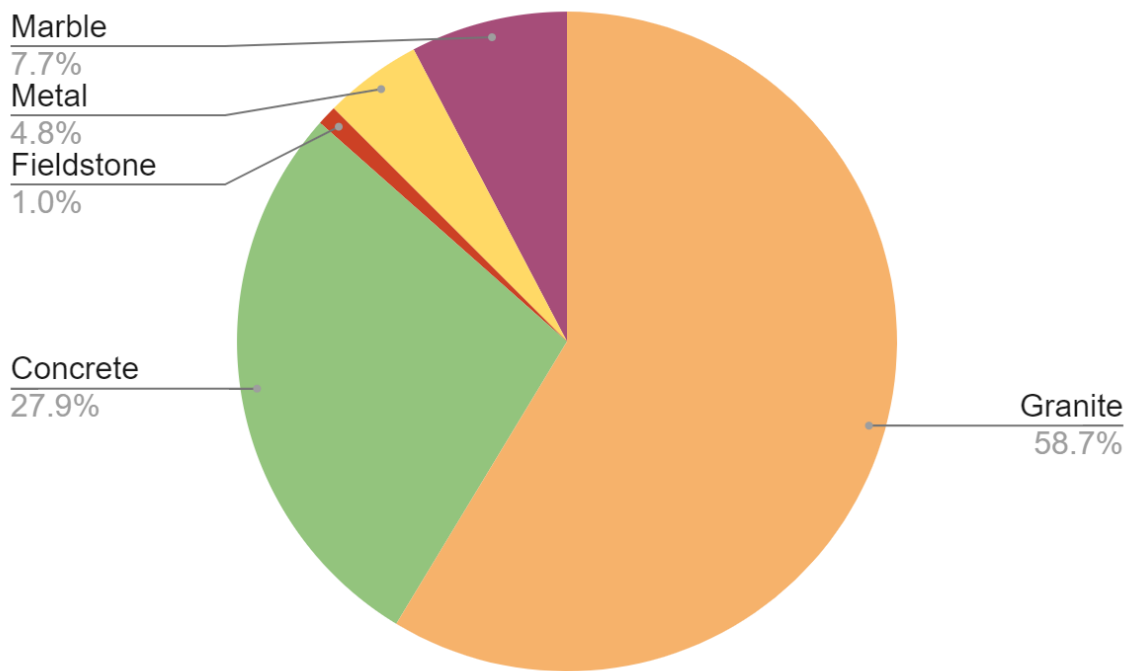
#### **4.4.2 Gravemarker Condition**

The headstones range from large granite slabs, field stones, and concrete slabs to metal funeral markers and, in some cases, multi-burial and re-marked headstones. Some gravemarkers are the typical mass-produced ones inscribed in marble or military standard metal plates or upright. While on the other hand, some headstones are hand-carved concrete, marble, or fieldstone utilizing locally available materials.

The headstones seen at the cemetery have a variety of damage due to weathering and erosion. While assessing the headstones, there are three degrees of need: immediate intervention [poor], moderate repair [slight weathering], surface cleaning [good] (Figures 4-24, 5-6, and 5-7).

Headstones considered for immediate attention are in pieces, have fading inscriptions, and/or are missing pieces in need of repair and further documentation. Moderate attention is required for headstones with overgrowth vegetation choking the marker or base and need to be repointed (straightened/aligned). Finally, those which have staining, moss, and weathering would need surface cleaning. The results of this timeline are an incomplete record; however, this information can be utilized for future use. Many of the people presumed to be buried here were not noted as the markers were not found.

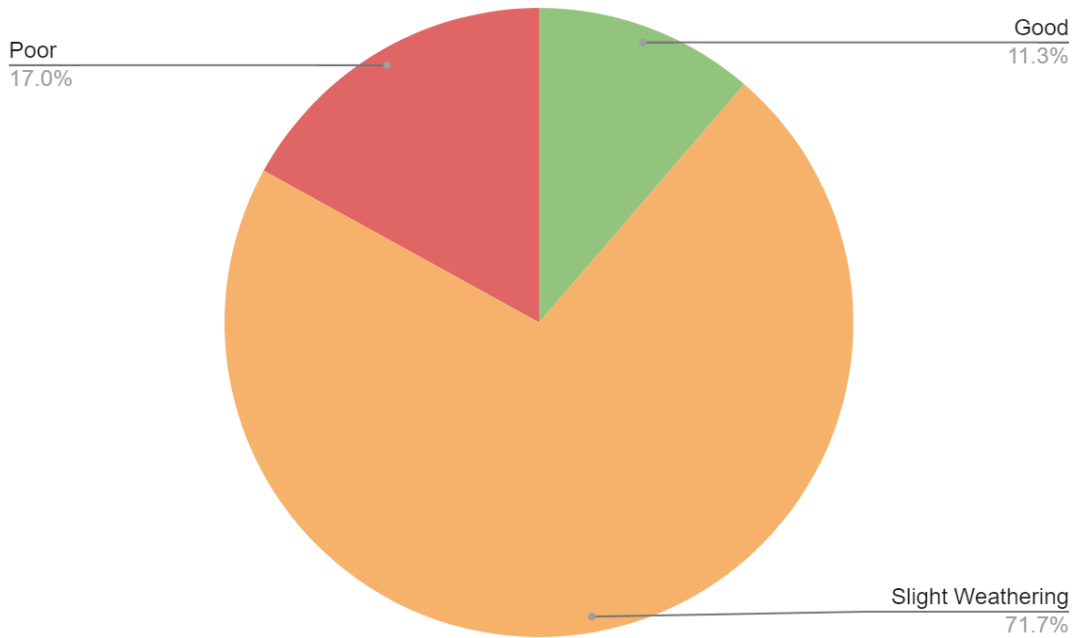
**Figure 4-24** Headstone materiality



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*



**Figure 4-25** Headstone Conditions – need of attention



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

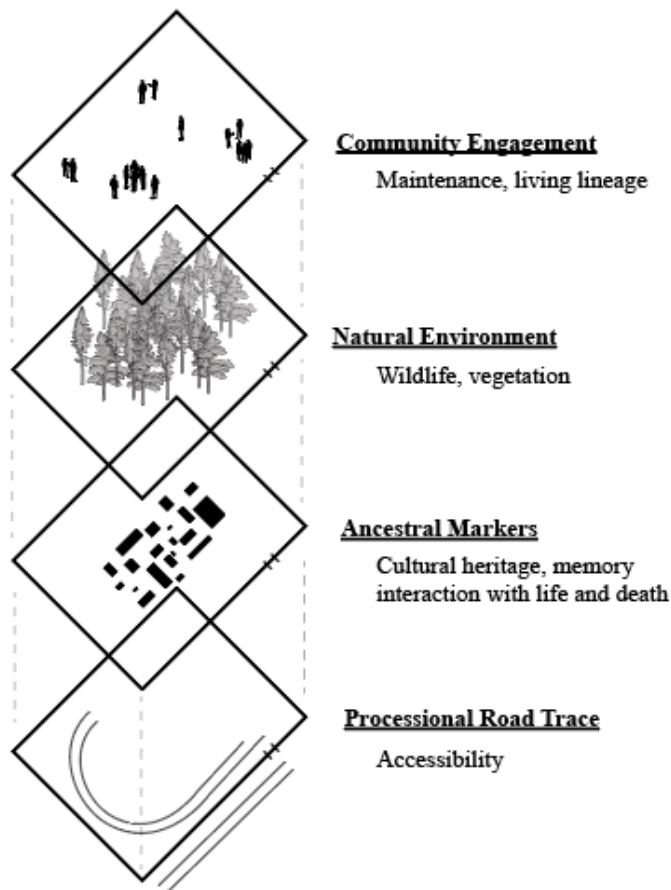
#### **4.5 Chapter Summary and Synthesis of Findings**

After analyzing all the information surveyed, collected, and documented, conclusions were drawn to archive and develop a maintenance plan for future community involvement with the Universe Cemetery. This chapter discussed several findings from the initial oral history interviews that led to the site survey and case study and the archival documentation practices. Parts of the data were documented based on the THC and TFC and Case Study Methods for Landscape Architecture (THC, n.d., TFC, n.d., Francis, 2001). As a result, these findings were then synthesized and depicted through photos and graphics to inform the significance and reasoning for developing a maintenance plan. Though this thesis focused on one specific site, the processes used for the documentation can be employed by other community members and local historians who identify cemeteries without formal caretakers and aim to preserve the legacy that they hold.

## Chapter 5 - RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

This study enriches the understanding and expansion of knowledge and recognition of Black burial sites and their importance to the American landscape. Although Universe has not faced the level of damage as other Black burial sites in Texas and the US, it has met the issue of neglect. This thesis research allows the creation of a maintenance plan that draws on best practices and creates a customized, site-specific set of recommendations for rehabilitation and restoration. The maintenance plan is structured around a site analysis that breaks the cemetery into a series of layers connected with four programmatic elements of the site (Figure 5-1).

**Figure 5-1** Existing layers of the cemetery



Note: *Graphic produced by Author, 2021.*

## **5.2 Management Plan**

The proposed maintenance plan is designed to respond to each of these different programmatic layers by suggesting different strategies appropriate for each. The graphic above shows the layers of the Universe Cemetery. It is a complex site, and in order to properly approach maintenance and preservation, each layer requires explanation. For example, preserving the cemetery to the point where it is “frozen in time,” meaning that new burials would not be allowed and significant changes to the landscape discouraged. So, interoperating the site through its layers, certain aspects of the cemetery can be preserved, and the others can be allowed to change. Below outlines the layers and how they should be approached, and the “best practices” for the longevity of the maintenance.

### **5.2.1 Community Engagement Management**

Community members such as people from the Universe Cemetery Committee, the National African American Museum, Tyler African American Museum, and Smith County Historical have been long-term volunteers. Nevertheless, as time goes on, a recommendation would be to connect with schools and universities (possibly the historical classes or volunteer hours), Boys and Girls Scouts, and religious members to continue caring for the landscape over generations. Ways to get involved can be:

- Developing a list of necessary equipment, clothing, and shoes for cemetery cleaning volunteers.

- Establishing regulations/rules about how tools are to be handled and where and how they will be placed while not being used, along with having a first aid kit available (for injuries, wildlife, and vegetation).

In addition to what is previously mentioned, a standard of recommendations for cemetery management is found on the Texas Historical Commission's website under the Maintenance, Conservation, and Repair section (Texas Historical Commission, n.d.).

Along with community engagement, the initial members who maintained the cemetery that formed the Universe Cemetery Council may benefit from developing a secondary volunteer group to continue the documentation of the information contained within Universe Cemetery. By working together, the information that comes out of a further investigation of those interred before their memory is lost forever. As a result of the efforts of this thesis and volunteers, the repository of the local history can continue to be a place that brings the fragmented groups of Tyler together through the Tyler African American Museum or the Smith Historical Society. In addition to preserving a moment in history, it is a memorial to those who have passed and those who continue to live there.

### **5.2.2 Natural Environment Management**

This layer of the cemetery should be carefully maintained as part of it is historically significant, and the other is an outcome of neglect. Black cemetery organization is often different from those found in European-American cemeteries. In mid-nineteenth-century America, churches and private cemetery corporations began landscaping and designing burial grounds to resemble parks. These manicured landscapes remain popular today (Rosenzweig, 1992). The Black cemetery landscapes in this thesis are characterized by their plantings (including yucca plants, tree-

of-heaven, daffodils, periwinkle, cedar trees, and clusters of perennials) which were found at the Universe Cemetery. These cemeteries focus on a greater sense of being one with the natural landscape rather than sterile, pruned lawns as we see standardized today.

Subsequently, the maintenance for the cemetery should be broken into two categories: overgrowth and intentional plantings. Efforts should be taken to repair any part of the landscape that has been unintentionally or intentionally damaged. Since the site is in pineywoods, there is not much grass to be maintained, only vines and new tree growth. An impact that the cemetery is facing is non-native plants and insects.

- Weed and de-vine the cemetery at least once a month.
- Prescribed burns may be used to maintain a meadow with approval and/or assistance from the local fire department for vegetation that cannot be taken off the site.
- Instead of using heavy machinery, use hand and manual tools when working near headstones and above visible depressions of graves.
- Partner and coordinate with local, state, or federal agencies to develop a monitoring and mapping plan to combat the invasive species and pests.
- Developing planned programs to enhance the quality of habitat that grass and other foliage provide, creating a robust environment for plant and animal life.

The intentional plantings should be identified clearly or marked to signal to volunteers that they should not be disturbed or removed.

As a result of minimum disruption to the landscape other than clearing out invasive vegetation, the cemetery can act as a public space. With small and meaningful intervention, the urban green infrastructure can also be a destination or park, a public garden for those living adjacently, a therapeutic garden, a sacred place, and a tourist attraction for the residence of Tyler (addition of the roses or hydrangeas). In addition to those ideas, the cemetery committee can push for ecological reimbursements by partnering with the Texas Wildlife Association Foundation (TWAF, n.d.) to promote ecological and environmental solutions to focus on leaving the cemetery “natural” and include native vegetation and limited disruption.

### **5.2.3 Gravemarker Management**

From initial observation and documentation, the stones and makers provide a varied amount of information that shows the availability of materials for the deceased. Some of the information inscribed are detailed epitaphs, dates (birth and death, in some cases both, neither, or a combination of year and specific date), and relation to other family members (son of, mother of, wife of). Other interesting observations are that some of the graves were clustered into kinship groupings, some of which were fenced in (it is unknown who put up the chain-linked fences), and others in clusters around the 3.5 acres.

For example, some of the early graves from the 1870s had gravestones that lacked the deceased’s name or their date of death. This brings up two points that need to be further explained. The first point is that the Universe Cemetery was established in 1890, and there were visible headstones as of 2021 that date to the 1870s. This brings up an interesting observation as it is most likely that the cemetery already existed before Goss purchased the land. He possibly decided to keep the location and use the existing spot for his community’s burials and church. The second

point is to note that it was a common practice in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that made it illegal to teach enslaved individuals how to read and write (Childs, 2017), so some of the inscriptions are phonetically inscribed, resulting in some of the names and words being incorrectly spelled or in some cases written relative to the relationship (mother, son, father, daughter).

**Figure 5-2** Headstone degrees of need



Note: (L to R: Immediate, moderate, surface). *Photographs taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure 5-3** Conditions of Headstones



**Figure 5-4** Dumping and Erosion



The Cemetery Conservators for United Standards (Morton, n.d.) offers a detailed list of the dos and don'ts of focusing preservation efforts on headstones and internments. The group was formed as people from across the country interested in cemeteries and learned/developed



techniques and best practices for cemetery appreciation and preservation. The charts below condense their information.

**Table 2** Gravemarker Maintenance Materials and Tools

Gravemarker Repair	Gravemarker Cleaning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tarp</li> <li>• Small Brushes</li> <li>• Angle Braces</li> <li>• Plastic Scrapers</li> <li>• 24-Inch Level</li> <li>• Worktable</li> <li>• Sponge</li> <li>• 1×2 Wooden Straight Edges</li> <li>• Mixing Pan</li> <li>• Sawhorses</li> <li>• Level</li> <li>• Orvus Soap</li> <li>• Approved Epoxy</li> <li>• Craft Sticks</li> <li>• Rubber Gloves</li> <li>• Compressed Air</li> <li>• Sprayer w/Water</li> <li>• Clamps w/Plastic Pads</li> <li>• Denatured Alcohol</li> <li>• D/2</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety glasses and protective gloves.</li> <li>• Knee pads and boots. Old markers may have broken glass around the base.</li> <li>• Natural or plastic soft bristle brushes of various shapes and sizes &amp; plastic grout brushes.</li> <li>• Wooden scrapers, craft sticks, tongue depressors, and wooden skewers,</li> <li>• Plastic scrapers, various sizes.</li> <li>• Buckets for holding your supplies and water.</li> <li>• Quart size plastic spray bottles.</li> <li>• 1-to-2-gallon garden type pump sprayer filled with clean water.</li> <li>• A small can of compressed air or mini leaf blower.</li> <li>• Rags and old towels.</li> <li>• Gallons and gallons of water. Old clean plastic milk bottles work great for transporting water to the markers.</li> <li>• D/2 biological solution. It works best at 45 degrees and above. Use undiluted for best results. (Our group recommends D/2 as the first choice in cleaning headstones and markers)</li> </ul>

Note: *Information derived from the Cemetery Conservators for United Standards.* Source: (Morton, n.d.).

- D/2 Bio growth Solution - Used to remove dirt, soot, pollution, and biological discoloration from most masonry surfaces. After application the stones should be dried thoroughly in the sun.
- A 2-part Epoxy can be applied to dry stones for adhering the broken pieces together along with adding clamps or a stabilizing structure to allow for the epoxy to cure.
- Though not always recommended depending on the condition of the headstone, a wire or soft bristle brush can be used to remove any leftover loose dirt that would adversely affect the epoxy bond (Morton, n.d.).

#### **5.2.4 Processional Road Trace Management**

The Americans with Disabilities Act does not necessarily cover cemeteries regarding outlining standards. As a result, it might be difficult for people with mobility challenges to get from one place to another within the cemetery. The cemetery is located on hilly and uneven terrain. Since there are multiple access points, future accessibility points could ease the navigation to the plots up a steep incline.

- Allow persons who desired the privilege of cleaning around family plots.
- Families who desire to continue using the cemetery as their burial ground will still have the right to do so.
- Walking pathways and graveside gathering spaces to minimize damage to sensitive burial locations and vegetation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the cemetery has two entrances. However, the main one used by volunteers is behind the apartment building. The secondary entrance is behind single-family homes and is not clearly defined. Therefore, to better determine the circulation of the site, further examination on the accessibility to the cemetery needs to be considered along with signage to increase visibility.

Texas law states that “Any person who wishes to visit a cemetery that has no public ingress or egress shall have the rights for visitation during reasonable hours and for purposes associated with cemetery visits. The owner of the lands surrounding the cemetery may designate the routes for reasonable access (Health and Safety Code, Section 711.041 and Section 711.0521) (THC, n.d.)”

### **5.3 Results Summary and Future Recommendations**

The cemetery’s value as a historical resource can be found in its stories. The Universe Cemetery has a complex structure, as it is comprised of basic layered elements: landownership (context) along with the spatial elements (hardscape), processional road trace (accessibility), ancestral markers (burials), natural environment (wildlife and softscape), and Community (volunteers). Its layered design and management plan consists of shaping and preserving these elements for the site’s longevity. The cemetery reflects events that unfolded over time locally and statewide. These historically significant events impacted the Black community and affected the residents of Smith County and Tyler, Texas. Condensing the recommendations into phases sheds light on the future of the cemetery.

- **Phase 1:** Featured the creation of a data map. This thesis recorded existing headstones and markers, labeling the markers numerically and recording other information, such as inscriptions and decorative symbols/motifs.
- **Phase 2:** Includes the creation of an accurate site map. Topographical features were noted, including the location of standing burials labeled to represent the appropriate number associated with the data map.
- **Phase 3:** Future preservation plans include ground-penetrating radar for documentation of unmarked graves. This technology will act as noninvasive means to determine more accurately how many burials are truly present.

These recommendations stem from researching the larger scale of Texas to the 3.5-acre land of the cemetery. The layered history and approach given for the recommendations consisted of formally implied programmatic elements and findings from the site survey and site analysis along with the analysis and findings. The suggestions for the betterment of the landscape highlight and enhance the long-forgotten impact those who are interred had on the development of Tyler. In addition, this chapter explored benefits and programs to contextualize and provide opportunities to provide tangible solutions for local groups to engage and own. From these, recommendations can show the outcomes of using and understanding the layering to develop criteria and best practice procedures for other newly discovered cemeteries.

## **Chapter 6 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

This study provides an outline for people who come across disturbed burial sites to recognize, document, and provide an analytical lens and support for maintenance and care that Black landscapes are deservedly owed (see Figure 2-4). In addition, the influence of this one burial site can act as a catalyst to preserving and documenting other Black burial sites and landscapes. The framework used in this thesis, which combines site analysis and oral history connected to a case study site, broad connections of the data collection and analysis practices in this thesis will allow others to use tangible methodologies when analyzing and planning for similar landscapes. The framework that has been developed can be applied to any cemetery that was once abandoned and later rediscovered.

Black cemeteries are more than resting places for those who have passed on; they are public sites of cultural memory. It is essential to document these sites to create an inclusive history for a complete historical record of Texas and the American past. Perhaps, with additional resources and increased degrees of support (local, state, federal), the future of Black cemeteries—and landscapes—may be preserved and respected in America.

### **6.1 Response to Research Questions**

The answers to the principle questions raised in this thesis are:

Question A:

What processes, legal issues, and public attitudes led to the erasure of the Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas?

Answer:

While the Universe community thrived through the 1920s, as evidenced by the number of burials during the 1940s due to the Great Migration and descendants moving away, the church and school closed. The properties were sold during the late 1970s. This conforms to national patterns in the history of race and segregation in the United States. The particular outcome for the Universe Cemetery is linked to the local history of the city of Tyler and its history of racially motivated violence and segregation during the Jim Crow era, though this thesis is not blaming the descendants or community members; it is on the city of Tyler. The city maintained most of the cemeteries (see Figure 4-9 and 4-10) and chose to ignore Universe, which was right outside the city limits. The cemetery has been mapped and documented since its origin, unlike many Black cemeteries across the United States.

When Bobby Joe purchased the land in 2007, the purchaser knew the land existed and may have chosen not to disclose the cemetery's existence for development. In the oral history interview with Vick, she said, "And I was concerned because when I went to do the deed research, initial, just initial deed research, I found that the cemetery itself had been sold within the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And was no longer any kind of church property or anything like that. And that the person they sold it to was someone, I was worried about him having it. So, then I decided that what I really needed to do, to do any level of protection was to get it a Texas State Historic Cemetery designation.". Without the efforts of people like Larry, Gloria, and Vicky, who knows what would have happened to the cemetery. The present owner provides access to the cemetery as required by law; the current process for visiting the site is open for all and does not require special accommodations. There is no locked gate at the entrance.

Many people are complicit in the failures of the Universe Cemetery. However, these sites can be rightfully documented and preserved with the community's help and new U.S. Senate Bills, such as creating the African American Burial Grounds Network Act. An outcome of this research is the interest community members have in preserving the cemetery. None of those who continually volunteer have a direct connection but have a genuine interest in saving a cemetery in need of help. This call to help is echoed in the oral history interview with Larry Wade, where he effortlessly says, "It means a lot. [...] A life lived is a life to be remembered. If you lived on this earth, you should be remembered someday somehow [...]." This statement shows the power volunteers have; they are the ones who can change the perspective of others and save a neglected space and history.

#### Questions B and C:

What can be done to promote and preserve the legacy of this and other Black cemeteries throughout the United States?

What are descendant attitudes and hopes for the future of this historic landscape?

#### Answer:

The framework provided by this thesis suggests a methodology that can be transferred to other distressed cemeteries across the United States. As shown in Figure 2-2, cycles of neglect affecting Black cemeteries can, for the most part, go in two extremes, one of continual neglect with no intervention and the other with intervention. Each extreme varies in every case as not all cemeteries have the same issues. Nevertheless, in both cases, interest and care for these landscapes can act as a catalyst for the betterment of others and future bills and laws for their preservation.

As a result of efforts of community interest in the Universe Cemetery, a recommendation is to develop an active cemetery association that can be charged with maintaining the cemetery. The outcomes of this thesis are shared with the Smith County Historical Society and the National African American Historical Society Museum in Tyler, Texas, to support record-keeping, accessibility, and connections with preservation programs for continued, organized maintenance support efforts.

The primary researcher was unable to contact descendants associated with the cemetery. Nevertheless, with the connection to the volunteers, community members in the area engaged with the site. Their help and reasoning behind helping were to keep the memory of those interred and protect the landscape from development. As a result, an outcome of the thesis, which was previously mentioned, is that many people related to Black cemeteries left during The Great Migration. These sites were left behind, and the importance of documenting these landscapes encourages the documentation to allow for this to become a resource so that descendants reconnect with a community their family once inhabited. Without the documentation of these sites, they fall along the wayside and erase a part of someone's history.

#### Question D:

What are best practices for the maintenance of a cemetery located in a heavily wooded landscape?

#### Answer:

Best practices for the Pineywoods suggest that minimal disruption of the landscape is essential. The focal point to be put on the headstones and accessibility. As new pine saplings take root, routine clearing of undergrowth should occur at least twice a year. Hand tools are preferable,



and there is no need for large types of machinery as the overhead tree canopy prevents grass from growing in the cemetery and near the headstones. In addition, vines hugging the base of several headstones need to be pulled to prevent regrowth based on the guidelines of NCPTT. As far as the headstones, previously mentioned practices for cleaning two to three times a year (see Chapter 5) should be implemented to preserve inscriptions. These maintenance practices are labor-intensive and require a committed volunteer labor force in the absence of city funding for maintenance.

## **6.2 Discussion**

The success of these landscapes starts with the community. These landscapes wither away without any engagement from financial support, volunteering, or community gatherings. They are left abandoned, leading to worsening conditions. Though approaching some of these cemeteries seems to be a daunting and challenging endeavor, public interest, and engagement, along with cyclic maintenance procedures, will prevent the site from falling back into disrepair. As with the attention efforts, other burial sites newly rediscovered will have a frame of reference for best practices, and those interred shall be remembered.

## **6.3 Implication for Landscape Architecture**

Cemeteries and burial sites are complex spaces. They hold a careful balance between the continual growth of the natural environment and human interference. The role of the Landscape Architect is to engage, interpret, and design. They have a unique perspective on engaging and bringing “life” back into a desolate landscape. With the research put into this thesis, many references were from historians and archeologists who chose to engage with these landscapes.

In most cases, the Landscape Architects are not flashy or in prominent locations to garner attention and a hefty paycheck. This statement is not to be disrespectful, but a Landscape Architect's role is to positively influence these burial sites as they understand what makes a space a comfortable place. Cemeteries are a unique space that needs interdisciplinary design practices that engage with planners, architects, landscape architects, and gardeners, which allow us to keep a sense of balance between the works of people and the natural environment. That way, it can be presented as a space that would remind visitors of a natural park setting like the former designs of cemeteries. Furthermore, as a designer, they can interoperate the need of burial sites and influence components of varying degrees such as:

- Softscape (vegetation)
- Hardscape (pathways, spatial elements)
- Internment practice/execution (above ground, below, cremated, planted, etc.)
- Context (adjacencies)
- Structures
- Circulation – Pedestrian and Vehicle
- Entrance and visitor experience – fix processional way, add seating and lighting
- Property boundary designation and clarification

The significance of these components assists with assessing the cemetery to convey to people what is needed to preserve the landscape. In addition to initial observation, access and visibility

are another way to convince the public of its importance. Finally, the visitation frequency encourages the community to engage and take ownership of the sacred place. Landscape Architecture professionals should be aware of these vernacular landscapes and their significance within the greater context, therefore enhancing the experience for accessibility, visibility, and sustainability.

The site analysis revealed layers already established within the cemetery without modern methods added. These layers are the degrees of experience from active to passive to sacred. The new language suggests the opportunity to create pockets of engagement so that the community can claim ownership of the narrative of Black experience and impact in Tyler. Thus, this layered mixed-use approach establishes a way to memorialize the founder, Benjamin Franklin Goss, the ancestral roots, and history. This small plot of land holds a wealth of information about the primarily undocumented history of Black people in Tyler. With the layers, the space will reach a point of being well maintained that it will influence members to continue their efforts with other local cemeteries to serve the community of Tyler for generations.

#### **6.4 Additional Information for Further Research**

The Black cemeteries and burial sites of Tyler, Texas, depict the histories of transitions from the anonymity of the unmarked burials of the enslaved and post-enslavement period to the well-known public figures in recent times. These names etched in stone, and the unmarked leave a legacy of sheer perseverance to overcome the many ways their existence was silenced or erased. This cultural landscape is a living museum. The flow of traditions from symbology, vegetation, and artifacts assists with the narrative and reasoning for mapping and researching this site.

The documentary methods used in this thesis are simple, as there is no need for fancy or expensive equipment to document the beginning steps to saving a vernacular and cultural landscape. Instead, with photography, oral histories, a pen, a notebook, and community engagement from individuals or families, the authentic narrative of these sites, as well as the sacred space, can be preserved. As mentioned before, this thesis focuses on one site. However, this level of detail is feasible; the survey is not a one-size-fits-all. The analysis needs to be tailored to specific sites. These sites are continually evolving, and even as some pass away or move from the area; these sites should still be preserved. Furthermore, additional research may lead to the integration of educational aspects that intend to become the standards for further funding opportunities for Black burial sites. Examples of such are:

- Nominate the Universe Cemetery for National Historic Landmark Status (*Criterion A and/or D for their association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history in the areas of education and ethnic history; black*) (NPS, 2008).
- Produce a visual representation of burial sections, accompanied by an educational walking tour of the notable markers and names (virtual website archive or in-person signage).
- Map and document the remainder of the graves in the cemetery to complete the historical narrative of the displaced Black burial landscapes and design markers for unmarked graves.
- Continuing to survey the site to provide the cemetery company with documentation to better assist them with the maintenance of graves and the physical landscaped features of the site and establish markers for unmarked lots.

As far as advancing the cemetery and gaining more information about the history, possible future projects that will help elevate this research can be:

- Further research into Benjamin Franklin Goss, the Universe community, and the breadth of this land and community heritage.
- Purchasing/acquiring adjacent land – find the remnants of the church and possible disturbed burials.
- Set up a digital system that has interned persons' information easily accessible for visitors to search gravesites and obtain information about the cemetery.
- Addition of shelter for maintenance.
- Descendant engagement (art, oral history interviews).

Future documentation recommendations for the cemetery would be to find ways of funding to hire someone with archaeological and grave mapping experience so more in-depth surveys can locate existing burials and see if there is open space for future descendants to rest with their ancestors. Also, suppose the cemetery is filled. In that case, additional land could be purchased so that more burials can take place or even convert part to become a sacred gathering space/wildlife refuge.

To conclude, perhaps the single most important step one can take to preserve and protect a Black landscape or cemetery is to keep their history alive. Just as the author of this thesis and the interviewees go out and ask questions, record the stories, and document the existing conditions before it is too late. Community members and designers can collect as much information about a

cemetery as possible from several visits. However, it is crucial to make sure that the information is collected in an accessible way and can be reproduced if needed. The methodologies used in this thesis focused on an interdisciplinary approach, and so should future interactions with cemeteries, as they are vital to determine what should be included in the site survey so that future work can be undertaken. The collection of information keeps the history of these cemeteries relevant. It allows for others to learn and reconnect with their heritage. As stewards of the landscape and history, the future generations depend on the knowledge from the past.

## REFERENCES

- Agyemang, C., Bhopal, R., & Bruijnzeels, M. (2005). Negro, Black, Black African, African Caribbean, African American or what? Labelling African origin populations in the health arena in the 21st century. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 59*(12), 1014-1018
- Allen A. (2020). "Site of the Unseen: The Racial Gaming of the American Landscape," Hood, W., & Tada, G. M. (2020). *Black Landscapes Matter*. University of Virginia Press.
- Jones, D. (2011). The City of the Dead The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery. *Landscape Journal, 30*(2), 226-240.
- American Planning Association (APA). (1950, July). Cemeteries in the city plan. Retrieved from <https://www.planning.org/pas/reports/report16.htm>
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). (n.d.) Inc. [US]: About ASLA. Retrieved from <https://www.asla.org/aboutasla.aspx>
- Antrobus J. (1860). Plantation Funeral, [Painting]. The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, LA, United States. Retrieved from <http://www.slaveryimages.org/s/slaveryimages/item/1850>
- Atkinson, S., Lawson, V., & Wiles, J. (2011). Care of the body: spaces of practice. *Social & cultural geography, 12*(6), 563-572. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2011.601238>

- Barile, K. S. (2004). Race, the National Register, and cultural resource management: creating an historic context for postbellum sites. *Historical Archaeology*, 38(1), 90-100. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03376635>
- Betts, V. (2020). Universe/University Cemetery designated as a historic Texas Cemetery. *Smith County Historical Society*. Retrieved from <https://smithcountyhistoricalsociety.org/universe-university-cemetery-designated-as-a-historic-Texas-cemetery/>
- Boone, K. (2020). Notes Towards a History of Black Landscape Architecture. *Places Journal*. <https://placesjournal.org/article/notes-toward-a-history-of-black-landscape-architecture/>
- Bornat, J. (2003). A second take: Revisiting interviews with a different purpose. *Oral History*, 31(1), 47-53.
- Bradt, T. (2013). *New Urban Cemetery: Departures 1 & 2*. [Master of Landscape Architecture thesis, The University of Toronto]. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/tylerallenbradt/docs/bradt\\_three\\_urban\\_cemeteries\\_thesis\\_prep](https://issuu.com/tylerallenbradt/docs/bradt_three_urban_cemeteries_thesis_prep)
- Brown, S. (2020). Senate unanimously passes Brown Bill to create National Network of African American Burial Grounds. Sherrod Brown U.S. Senator for Ohio. Retrieved from <https://www.brown.senate.gov/newsroom/press/release/brown-bill-national-network-african-american-burial-grounds>
- Caldwell, C. (2016). “Doin’ It Up Right”: Safeguarding the African-American Burial Landscape Through the Lens of Eden Cemetery.



- Childs, D. (2017). African American education and social studies: Teaching the history of African American education within a critical pedagogy framework. *Ohio Social Studies Review*, 54(1), 2014.
- Chilvers, I. (2009). *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists*. Fourth edition 2009. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Chicora Foundation. 2007. Grave matters: The preservation of African- American cemeteries. <http://www.sciway.net/hist/chicora/gravematters.html>
- Chicora Foundation. (n.d.). Abandoned Cemeteries: SC archaeology law: Archaeology studies: Chicora Foundation. Abandoned Cemeteries | SC Archaeology Law | Archaeology Studies | Chicora Foundation. Retrieved November 7, 2021, from <https://www.chicora.org/faqs.html>
- Christensen, A. J. (2005). *Dictionary of Landscape Architecture and Construction*. New York, NY: *McGraw-Hill*.
- Clark, M. L. (2005). Keep your hands off my (dead) body: A critique of the ways in which the state disrupts the personhood interests of the deceased and his or her kin in disposing of the dead and assigning identity in death. *Rutgers L. Rev.*, 58, 45. [https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/facsch\\_lawrev/1539](https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/facsch_lawrev/1539)
- Commission, T. H. (2001). "Preserving Historic Cemeteries Texas Preservation Guidelines".
- Commission, T. H. (n.d.). Locating unmarked graves. Locating Unmarked Graves |

THC.Texas.gov - Texas Historical Commission.

<https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/cemetery-preservation/maintenance-conservation-and-repair/locating>

Davidson, J. M. (2004). *Mediating race and\* class through the death experience: Power relations and resistance strategies of an African-American community, Dallas, Texas (1869–1907)*. The University of Texas at Austin.

Dallas Parks, TX. (n.d.). Freedman’s memorial cemetery.

<http://www.dallasparcs.org/facilities/facility/details/Freedmans-Memorial-Cemetery-769>

Dudney Jr, R. N. (1986). *TEXAS RECONSTRUCTION: THE ROLE OF THE BUREAU OF REFUGEES, FREEDMEN AND ABANDONED LANDS, 1865-1870, SMITH COUNTY, (TYLER) TEXAS (SLAVERY, REVISIONISTS, KU KLUX KLAN)* (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&I University)

Dunnavant, J., Justinvil, D., & Colwell, C. (2021). Craft an African American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

East-Texas.com. (n.d.). East Texas maps. East Texas maps, maps of East Texas counties, list of Texas counties. Retrieved October 7, 2021, from <https://www.east-texas.com/east-texas-maps.htm>

Way H. K. (2019). Entrepreneurship and Community Development Clinic, *Protecting and Preserving African-American Cemeteries in Texas*. <https://law.utexas.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2020/01/2020-01-ECDC-African-American-Cemeteries.pdf>

- Everett L. Fly. (n.d.). "American cultural landscapes: Black roots and treasures". *Harvard Graduate School of Design*. Retrieved from <https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/event/everett-l-fly/>
- Family Search. (2021). [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Texas\\_Cemeteries](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Texas_Cemeteries)
- Ferguson, C. L. C. (2004). *Upscale suburban architecture and\* development in Dallas and Houston, Texas, 1890–1930*. University of Delaware.
- Findagrave.com (n.d.). Universe Cemetery, sorted by oldest graves first, Retrieved from <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/7355/memorial-search?page=1&orderby=d>
- Finney, P. J. (2012). Landscape Architecture and the "Rural" Cemetery Movement. *Focus on Global Resources*, 31(4). Retrieved from <https://www.crl.edu/focus/article/8246>
- Fleck, D. (2013, September 10). Shelton's Bear Creek Cemetery becomes even more hidden. *Dallas News*. Retrieved from <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2013/09/10/shelton-s-bear-creek-cemetery-becomes-even-more-hidden/>
- Fletcher, K. (2013). *The City of the Dead for colored people: Baltimore's Mount Auburn Cemetery, 1807–2012*. Morgan State University.
- Foley, N. (1998). *The white scourge: Mexicans, blacks, and poor whites in Texas cotton culture* (Vol. 2). Univ of California Press.
- Francis, J., Giles-Corti, B., Wood, L., & Knuiman, M. (2012). Creating sense of community: The role of public space. *Journal of environmental psychology*, 32(4), 401-409.

- Francis, M. (2001). A case study method for landscape architecture. *Landscape journal*, 20(1), 15-29.
- Franklin, M. & Lee, N. (2020) African American descendants, community outreach, and the Ransom and Sarah Williams Farmstead Project, *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage*, 7:2, 135-148, DOI: 10.1080/20518196.2020.1718408
- Gaffney, A. (2020) The Fight to Save America's Historic Black Cemeteries. National Geographic Magazine. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/historic-black-cemeteries-at-risk-can-they-be-preserved>
- Garrity, C. (n.d.). topoView. USGS Topoview. Retrieved from <https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#15/32.3412/-95.2499>
- Gilford College, (n.d.). Oral history: best practices and procedures: Transcription. Some Guidelines for Transcribing Oral Histories. Retrieved from <https://library.guilford.edu/c.php?g=111767&p=722621>
- Govenar, A. B., and Phillip. C. (2000). *Facing the Rising Sun: Freedman's Cemetery* Dallas, Texas: African American Museum and Black Dallas Remembered, 2000. Print.
- Gregory, J. N. (2006). *The southern diaspora: How the great migrations of black and white southerners transformed America*. Univ of North Carolina Press.
- Hood, W., & Tada, G. M. (2020). *Black Landscapes Matter*. University of Virginia Press.
- Holland, B. (2020). Racist, unlawful restrictions remain in historic East Texas property deeds. <https://www.kltv.com>. Retrieved from <https://www.kltv.com/2020/06/16/racist->

unlawful-restrictions-remain-historic-east-texas-property-deeds/

Inflation rate between 1891-2021: Inflation calculator. (n.d.). \$201.25 in 1891 → 2021 |

Inflation Calculator. Retrieved from

<https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1891?amount=201.25>

Johnson, C. Y., & Zipperer, W. C. (2007). Culture, place and urban growth in the US South.

*Urban ecosystems*, 10(4), 459-474.

Jordan, T. G. (1982). *Texas graveyards: a cultural legacy* (Vol. 13). University of Texas Press.

Kain, J. (1968) Housing segregation, Negro employment, and metropolitan decentralization,

*Quarterly Journal of Economics*.

Kay, D. H. (1998). Cemetery relocation: Emerging urban land development issue. *Journal of*

*Urban Planning and Development*, 124(1), 1-10.

Knoblock, G. A. (2015). *African American Historic Burial Grounds and Gravesites of New*

*England*. McFarland.

Krüger-Kahloula, A. (1994). On the wrong side of the fence: Racial segregation in American

cemeteries. *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, 130, 133.

Lacy, C. (2020, July 16). Universe/University Cemetery designated as a historic Texas

Cemetery. *Smith County Historical Society*. Retrieved from

<https://smithcountyhistoricalsociety.org/universe-university-cemetery-designated-as-a-historic-Texas-cemetery/>

LaRoche, C. J., & Blakey, M. L. (1997). Seizing intellectual power: the dialogue at the New

- York African Burial Ground. *Historical Archaeology*, 31(3), 84-106.
- Vlach, J. M. (1993). *Back of the big house: The architecture of plantation slavery*. UNC Press Books.
- Lemke, A. (2020). "Missing Cemeteries" and Structural Racism: Historical Maps and Endangered African/African American and Hispanic Mortuary Customs in Texas. *Historical Archaeology*, 54(3), 605-623.
- Levinson, N. (2019). Places Journal: 10 by 10. *Places Journal*.
- Long, C. (n.d.). Tyler, TX. *Texas State Historical Association*. Retrieved from <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/tyler-tx>
- Lowery, W. (2017). Black Lives Matter: birth of a movement | Wesley Lowery. [online] the Guardian. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jan/17/black-lives-matter-birth-of-a-movement>
- Lynch, K., Lynch, K. R., & Hack, G. (1984). *Site planning*. MIT press.
- McDavid, C. (2011). When is "Gone" Gone? Archaeology, Gentrification, and Competing Narratives about Freedmen's Town, Houston. *Historical Archaeology*, 45(3), 74-88. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23070035>
- Morrow, B. (1957). Dictionary of Landscape Architecture. Published by *University of New Mexico Press*.
- Morton, M. (n.d.). *Repair and Cleaning basics*. Cemetery Conservators for United Standards. Retrieved November 17, 2021, from

<http://cemeteryconservatorsunitedstandards.org/standards/repairs/>

Mortice, Z. (2017). "Perpetual Neglect: The Preservation Crisis of African-American Cemeteries," *Places Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.22269/170530>

National Park Service Affiliated Areas. (n.d.): An Overview.

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11281>

National Park Service (NPS). (2018). Understand Cultural Landscapes. Retrieved from

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/culturallandscapes/understand-cl.htm>

National Park Service. (2008). NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS

Implications for Federal Preservation Officers.

Olmsted, F. L. (1862). *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States. Based Upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations*. (Vol. 2). Mason brothers.

OHA. (n.d.). OHA principles and best practices. *Oral History Association*. Retrieved from

<https://www.oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/>

Organ, D. J. (1995). *The historical geography of African-American frontier settlement* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley).

Orser, C. E., & Pedro P. A. Funari. (2001). Archaeology and Slave Resistance and Rebellion.

*World Archaeology*, 33(1), 61–72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/827889>

Page, R. R., Gilbert, C., & Dolan, S. (1998). *A guide to cultural landscape reports: contents,*

*process, and techniques* (Vol. 1). US Department of the Interior, National Park Service,

Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program.

Palmer, B. (2020). The Lives of East End: Recovering African American Burial Grounds.

*Virginia Quarterly Review*, 96(4), 60-83.

Penningroth, D. C. (2004). The claims of kinfolk: African American property and community in the nineteenth-century South. *The University of North Carolina Press*.

Pineywoods. Texas Parks & Wildlife kids: Pineywoods. (n.d.). from

[https://tpwd.texas.gov/kids/about\\_texas/regions/pineywoods/big\\_kids/](https://tpwd.texas.gov/kids/about_texas/regions/pineywoods/big_kids/)

Potter, E. W., & Boland, B. M. (1992). *Guidelines for evaluating and registering cemeteries and burial places* (Vol. 41). US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, National Register of Historic Places.

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/pur1.32754075448377>

Pruitt, B. (2013). The Other Great Migration: The Movement of Rural African Americans to Houston, 1900-1941 (Vol. 21). *Texas A&M University Press*.

Rainville, L. (2009). Protecting our shared heritage in African-American cemeteries. *Journal of field archaeology*, 34(2), 196-206

Rainville, L. (2011). *Classification of African-American cemeteries*. African-American Cemeteries in Albermarle & Amherst Counties. Retrieved from

[http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/cem/AACemeteries\\_Classification.shtml](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/cem/AACemeteries_Classification.shtml)

Rainville, L. (2014). Hidden history: African American cemeteries in Central Virginia.



*University of Virginia Press.*

Roberts, A. R. (2018). Performance as place preservation: The role of storytelling in the formation of Shankleville community's Black counter publics. *Journal of Community Archaeology & Heritage*, 5(3), 146-165.

Roberts, A. R. (2019, October). "Until the Lord Come Get Me, It Burn Down, Or the Next Storm Blow It Away": The Aesthetics of Freedom in African American Vernacular Homestead Preservation. In *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* (Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 73-97). University of Minnesota Press.

Roberts, A. R. (2020). The end of bootstraps and good masters: Fostering social inclusion by creating counternarratives. *Columbia University Press.*

Roediger, D. R. (1981). And Die in Dixie: Funerals, Death, & Heaven in the Slave Community 1700-1865. *The Massachusetts Review*, 22(1), 163-183

Rothstein, R. (2018). The color of law. *Liveright Publishing Corporation.*

Rosenzweig, R., & Blackmar, E. (1992). The park and the people: A history of Central Park. Ithaca, N.Y: *Cornell University Press.*

Schutze, J. (1999). Old times not forgotten. Dallas Observer. Retrieved from <https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/old-times-not-forgotten-6401256?showFullText=true>

Seidemann, R. M., & Halling, C. L. (2019). Landscape Structural Violence: A View from New Orleans's Cemeteries. *American Antiquity*, 84(4), 669-683.

Sloan, David C. (1991). *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History*. Baltimore, MD: *The Johns Hopkins University Press*.

Smith County. Esri., Inc., (2021). Smith County, TX [map]. Scale Not Given. "Smith County Map Viewer". <https://www.smithcountymapsite.org/gallery/maps/>

Statutes Capital Texas. (n.d.). HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE TITLE 8. DEATH AND DISPOSITION OF THE BODY SUBTITLE C. CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIES CHAPTER 711. GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO CEMETERIES SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS. Retrieved from <https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/HS/pdf/HS.711.pdf>

Stevens, C. (2021). 2021 HALS Challenge: Historic Black Landscapes. National Park Service. [https://www.nps.gov/hdp/competitions/HALS\\_Challenge.html](https://www.nps.gov/hdp/competitions/HALS_Challenge.html)

Stow, S. (2010). Agonistic homegoing: Frederick Douglass, Joseph Lowery, and the democratic value of African American public mourning. *American Political Science Review*, 104(4), 681-697.

Striegel, M. F., Gale, F., Church, J., Dietrich-Smith, D. (2016). PRESERVATION BRIEFS Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries. National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior. Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240.

Swaffield, Simon & Deming, M. (2011). Research strategies in landscape architecture: Mapping the terrain. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*. 6. 34-45.  
10.1080/18626033.2011.9723445.

- Texas Historical Commission (THC). (n.d.). Maintenance, conservation, and Repair. Maintenance, Conservation, and Repair | THC.Texas.gov - *Texas Historical Commission*. Retrieved from <https://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/cemetery-preservation/maintenance-conservation-and-repair>
- Texas Historical Commission (THC). (n.d.). Oral History Guidelines| THC.Texas.gov - *Texas Historical Commission* Retrieved from <https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/publications/OralHistory.pdf>
- Tharps, L. L. (2014). The case for black with a capital B. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-black-with-a-capital-b.html>
- Thompson, R. F. (2010). *Flash of the spirit: African & Afro-American art & philosophy*. Vintage.
- Torres, R. (2021). Tyler's National African American Historical Society works to clean, restore newly found abandoned Black Cemetery. *TylerPaper.com*. Retrieved from [https://tylerpaper.com/news/local/tylers-national-african-american-historical-society-works-to-clean-restore-newly-found-abandoned-black-cemetery/article\\_d3b6bc76-18af-11ec-8f86-5b391ee10c4f.html](https://tylerpaper.com/news/local/tylers-national-african-american-historical-society-works-to-clean-restore-newly-found-abandoned-black-cemetery/article_d3b6bc76-18af-11ec-8f86-5b391ee10c4f.html)
- Turque, B. (2017). 'battlefield of memory': Asphalt where a black cemetery is said to have stood. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/a-battlefield-of-memory-asphalt-where-a-black-cemetery-is-said-to-have-stood/2017>

TWAF. (n.d.). conservation initiatives. *Texas Wildlife Association Foundation*. Retrieved from <https://twafoundation.org/conservation-legacy/twaf-conservation-initiatives/>

UNESCO (2019). World Heritage Centre. Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, .19–177. Paris, FR.

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). Secretary's standards--archeology and historic preservation. National Parks Service. Retrieved from [https://home1.nps.gov/history/local-law/Arch\\_Standards.htm](https://home1.nps.gov/history/local-law/Arch_Standards.htm)

U.S. Department of the Interior. (n.d.). Publications of the National Register of Historic Places. *National Parks Service*. Retrieved from <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/publications.htm>

Uslu, A. (2010). An ecological approach for the evaluation of an abandoned cemetery as a green area: The case of Ankara/Karakusunlar cemetery. *African Journal of Agricultural Research*, 5(10), 1043-1054

Vlach, J. M. (1994). *The Afro-American tradition in decorative arts*. University of Georgia Press.

Wilson, W. H. (1989). *The city beautiful movement* (p. 126). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A - Figures

## **Headstone and Marker Inscription Text**

**Figure A-1** Stylized Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering in granite headstone



*Note: Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*



**Figure A-2** Hand Inscription on concrete headstone



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-3** Hand Inscription on concrete headstone



*Note: Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-4** Hand impression on concrete headstone



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-5** Sans Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering on concrete headstone



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-6** Brooks Sterling Funeral Home (Tyler, Texas) Funeral Marker



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

Figure A-7 Metal Cassimere Mortuary Marker



**Figure A-8** Rusted funeral marker with weathered paper inside



*Note: Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-9** Pierce – Moss Funeral Home Funeral Marker



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*



**Figure A-10** Copper Brooks Sterling Funeral Home (Tyler, Texas) Funeral Marker



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-11** Austin Memorial granite headstone



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

## Conditions

**Figure A-12** Headstone needing to be repointed



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-13** Headstone needs to be repointed and backfilled with soil



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-14** Headstone broken into several pieces, some missing with red flag marker



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-15** Headstone toppled



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-16** Hand inscribed fieldstone marker weathered



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*



**Figure A-17** Weathered Military headstone needing to be cleaned



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-18** Collins gated burial plot inaccessible by vegetation



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-19** Multi-burial plot with depression needing to be filled



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-20** Ledger needing to be cleared of vines in Goss gated burial plot



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

## **Supporting Images of Cemetery Context**

**Figure A-21** View from cemetery toward entrance



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-22** Road trace behind single family residence in parking lot from cemetery entrance



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-23** Secondary entrance from road trace behind single family residences



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*



**Figure A-24** Road trace and processional way inside cemetery



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-25** View of road toward dead-end of Nottingham Lane



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-26** View of road toward entrance of Nottingham Lane



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

## **Symbolic Objects Found**

**Figure A-27** Metal pipe behind military headstone



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-28** Masonic marker with no visible headstone association



Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

**Figure A-29** Brick found in Anderson gated burial plot

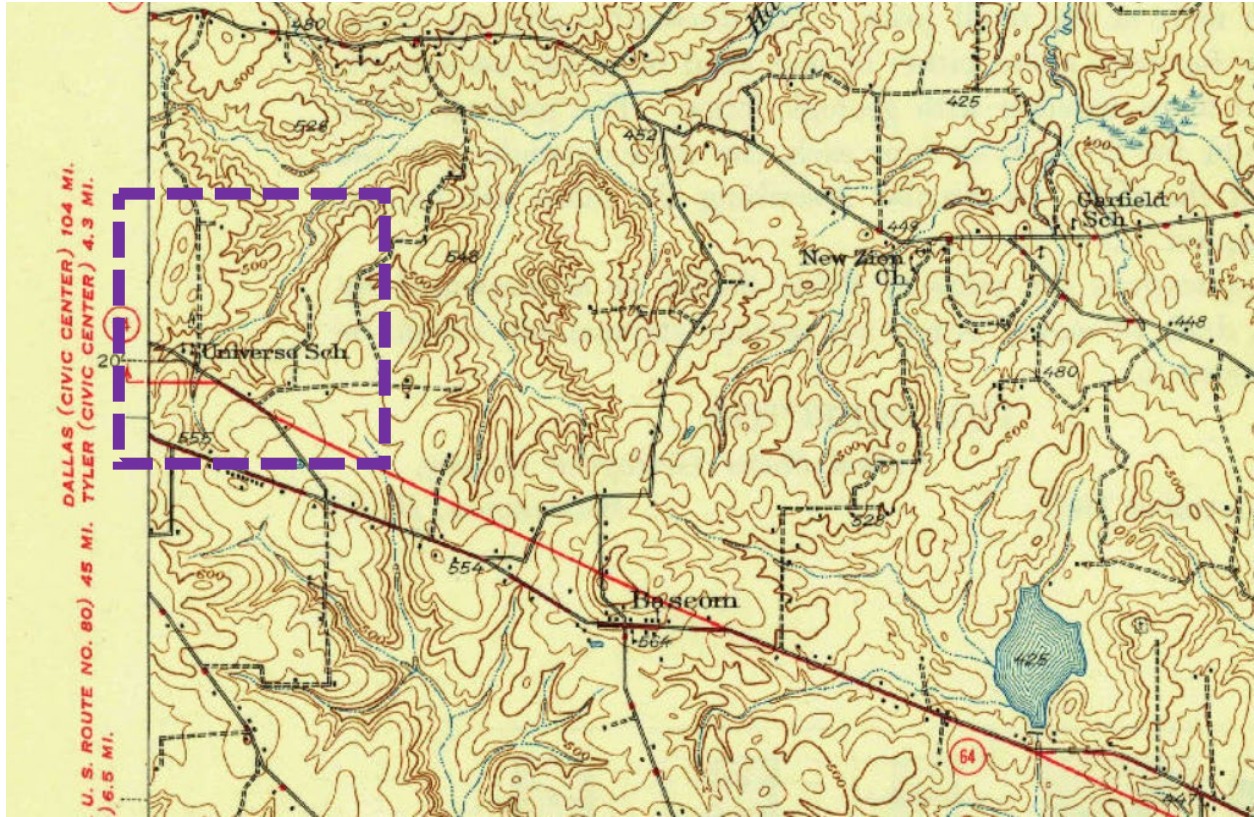


Note: *Photograph taken by Author, 2021.*

## Historic Maps

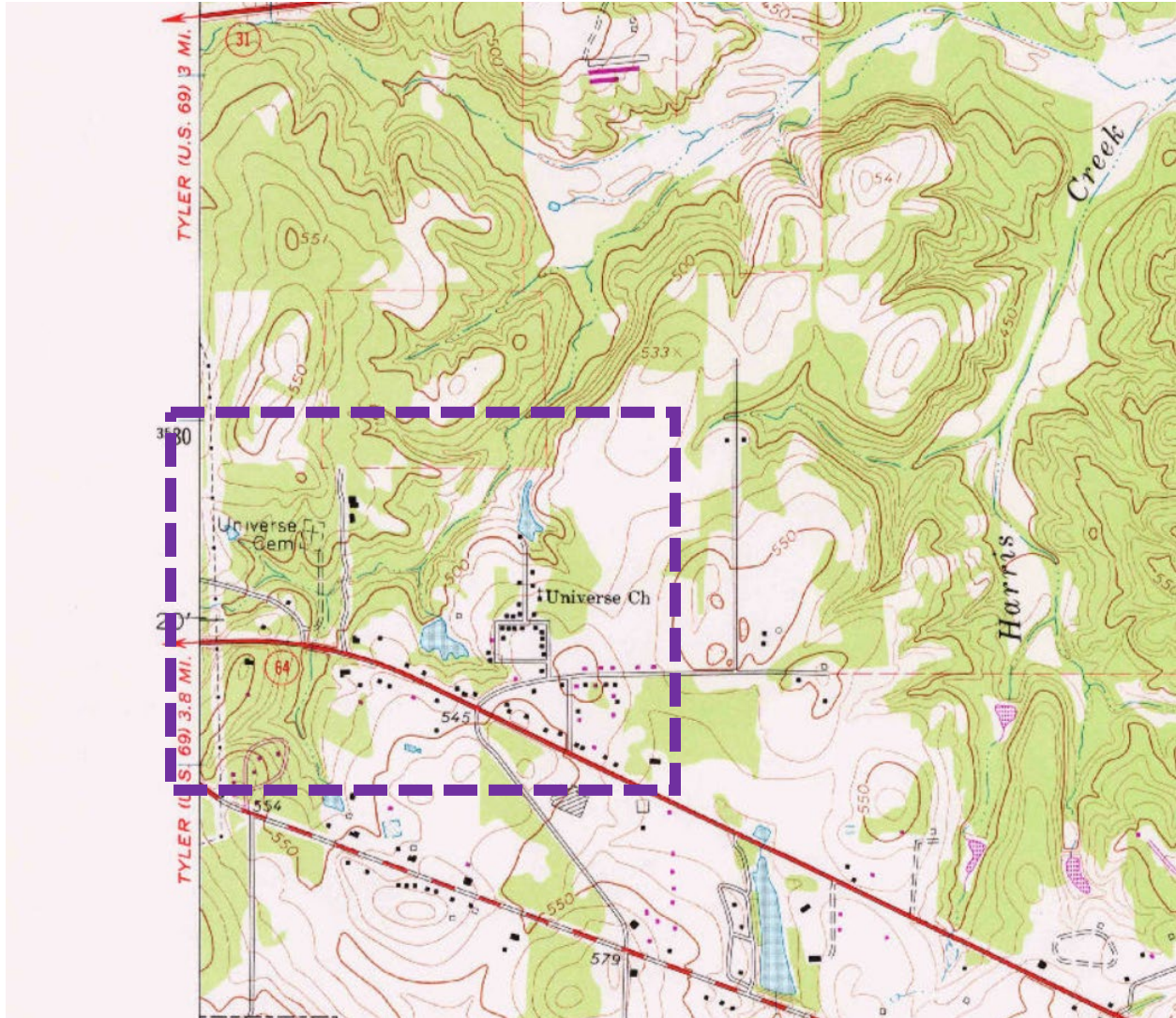


Figure A-30 TX Winona map circa 1943



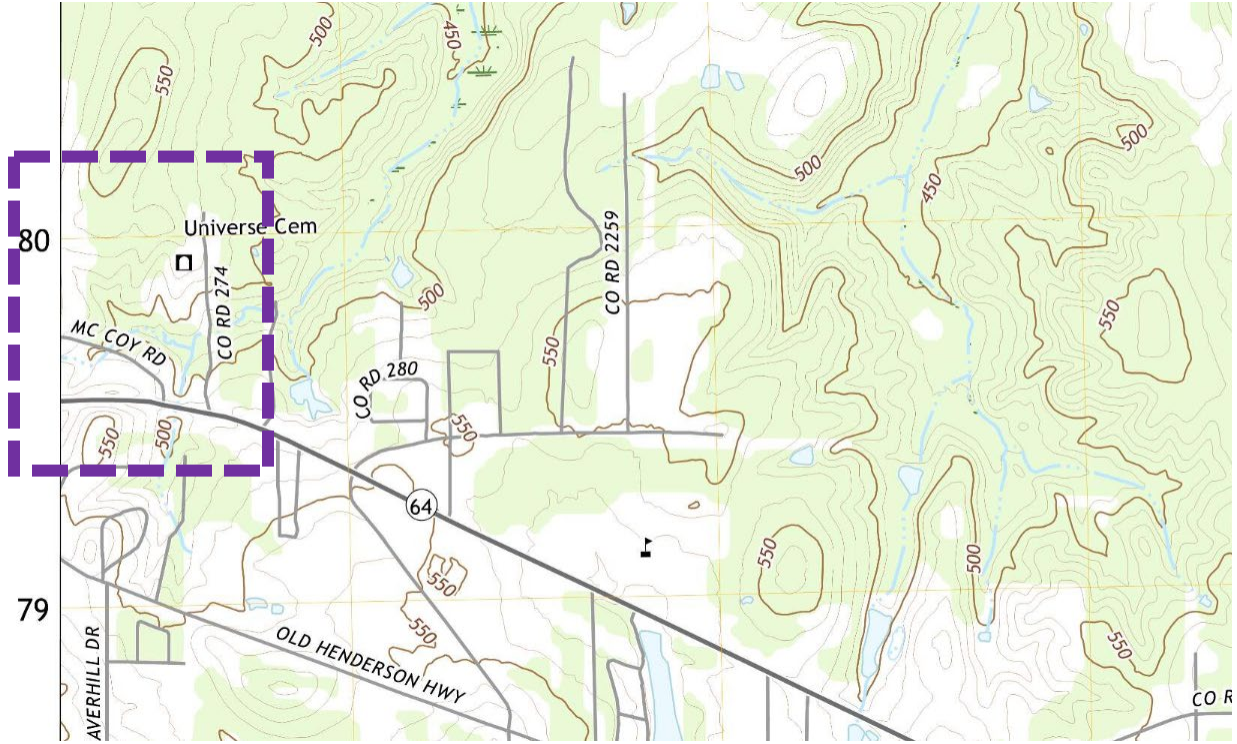
Note: Part of U.S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey: TX\_Winona map showing the locations of the Universe School, circa 1943. Source: (Garrity, n.d., USGS.gov, n.d.).

Figure A-31 TX Bascom map circa 1966



Note: Part of U.S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey: TX\_Bascom map showing the locations of the Universe Cemetery, circa 1966. Source: (Garrity, n.d., USGS.gov, n.d.).

**Figure A-32 TX Bascom map circa 2019**



Note: Part of U.S. Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey: TX\_Bascom map showing the locations of the Universe Cemetery, circa 2019. Source: (Garrity, n.d., USGS.gov, n.d.).

## Appendix B - Gravemarker Survey Spreadsheet

Figure B-33 Chicora Foundation Survey Form



Chicora Foundation, Inc.  
 PO Box 8664  
 Columbia, SC 29202  
 803-787-6910

**CEMETERY FIELD SURVEY SHEET  
 INDIVIDUAL MARKER/MONUMENT**

Cemetery: \_\_\_\_\_ Grave #: \_\_\_\_\_ Section #: \_\_\_\_\_ Lot #: \_\_\_\_\_ Photo No: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) on marker: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Marker/Monument:  tablet headstone  die in socket  die on base  
 government issue  lawn-type  plaque  
 raised top  pulpit  die, base, cap  
 bedstead/cradle  table tomb  box tomb  
 ledger  obelisk  other:

Inscription:

Inscription Technique:  carved  painted  other:

Material:  marble  granite  sandstone  slate  
 limestone  fieldstone  other stone:  
 cast iron  zinc  wood  concrete  
 other material:

Gravestone Size (ft/in): Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Width: \_\_\_\_\_ Thickness: \_\_\_\_\_

Gravestone Design Features:  Bible  clasping hands  flowers  
 willow and urn  cross  cross & crown  
 lamb  dove  inverted torch  
 Masonic  other fraternal order:  
 finger pointing  other design:

Condition of Marker:  weathered  cracked  broken  vandalized  
 unattached  loose  leaning  repaired  
 biologicals  stained  portions missing:  
 other:

Stonecutter's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Mark: \_\_\_\_\_

Footstone: Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Design/initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Coping: Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Design: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Fencing: Material: \_\_\_\_\_ Design: \_\_\_\_\_ Condition: \_\_\_\_\_

Grave Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_ Marker inscription faces what direction: \_\_\_\_\_

Grave Goods:

Surveyor: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Table 3** Universe Cemetery Gravemarker Field Survey Spreadsheet

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Oscar	Thomas	Gross Sr.	3/10/1897	6/11/1981	84	OSCAR THOMAS GOSS, SR. MARCH 10, 1897 JUNE 11, 1981	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	NONE	Flat	Granite	Good	-	M
-	-	Suella	-	Goss	8/7/1899	3/20/1995	95	SUELLA GOSS AUG. 7, 1899 MAR. 20, 1995	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Left-T: Cross M: Clasp Hands B: Two roses	Flat die on base	Granite/concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
-	-	Sleatie	-	Goss Davenport	1893	1981	~88	MOTHER SLEATIE GOSS DAVENPORT 1893----1981	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Two roses with greenery, one full one a bud and prayer hands	Flat	Granite/concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
Yes	-	Andrew	W.	Goss	3/28/1860	2/2/1942	81	GOSS ANDREW W.   GEORGIA MAR. 28. 1860   NOV. 5. 1859 FEB. 2, 1942   MAY 13, 1946	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flowers with greenery on either side of Goss name	Headstone	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Yes	-	Georgia	-	Goss	11/5/1859	5/13/1946	86	GOSS ANDREW W.   GEORGIA MAR. 28. 1860   NOV. 5. 1859 FEB. 2, 1942   MAY 13, 1946	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flowers with greenery on either side of Goss name	Headstone	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
-	-	Georgia	-	Goss	11/5/1859	5/14/1946	86	GEORGIA GOSS NOV. 5. 1859 MAY 13, 1946	Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
Yes	-	A	W	M Sr. Goss	-	-	-	-	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Yes	-	A	W	M Sr. Goss	-	-	-	-	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
Yes	-	Inez	Erwin	Erwin Goss	-	-	-	-	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	__ ABOVES IN MOON AND STARS __ ABOVE THE OCEAN __ IS BEYOND THE PLA __ IS WAITING WITH	Hand inscription	Manual etched inscription of a Star of David or 6-pointed star, bottom of stone has a pot with two stems and leaves horizontal	Headstone	Granite	Poor	Two pieces broken, some parts missing needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	ALMO__4	Hand inscription	-	-	Granite	Poor	Pieces broken, some parts missing needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U
-	-	Millie	-	Roberts	3/13/182?	3/25/1???	-	MILLIE ROBERTS BORN MAR. 13 182? DIED MAR. 26 1??? GOD DEFENDS THE RIGHT	Hand impression	Hands shaking	Headstone	-	Poor	Broken into six pieces, inscription is almost weathered away, oxidization	F
-	-	Ed	-	Goss	-	8/	-	ED GOSS DID AUG 19	Hand inscription	-	Fieldstone	Fieldstone	Poor	In poor condition right side of the marker has sever weathering	M
-	Yes: Mother	Maudie	-	Goss Mims	10/28/1916	6/14/1961	44	MAUDIE GOSS MIMS OCT. 28, 1916 JUNE 14, 1961 GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in the middle with flowers on both sides	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Maudie G Mims -- Brooks Sterling Funeral Home Tyler, Texas	Hand impression	-	Funeral Marker	Metal	Poor	Marker has severe weathering	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Mary	Ann	-	4/15/1856	9/8/1922	66	MARY ANN APR. 15, 1956 SEPT. 8, 1922	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Good	Marker has weathering on face	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Mary	Ann	Goss	4/15/1856	9/8/1922	66	MARY ANN GOSS BORN APR-15-1856 DIED SEPT-8-1922 MEMORY-OF-MOTHER	Hand inscription, impression	-		Concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering at base	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Maggie	Ann	Goss	1/3/1903	7/11/1914	11	MAGGIE GOSS JAN. 3, 1903 JULY 11, 1914	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Good	Marker has weathering on face	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Emma	-	Goss	-	1/3/1934	-	EMMA GOSS DIED JAN. 3, 1934	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Good	Marker has weathering on face	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Isaac	-	-	12/25/1851	1/25/1941	89	ISAAC DEC. 25, 1851 JAN. 25, 1941	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Alfonzo	-	Goss	-	1935	-	ALFONZO GOSS DIED 1935	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Mary	Ann	Goss	4/15/1856	9/8/1922	66	GOSS ISAAC   MARY ANN DEC. 25, 1851   APR. 15, 1856 JAN. 25, 1941   Sept. 8, 1922 THE CROSS LEADS GENERATIONS ON	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in center with two ivy leaves on ither side and two smaller crosses with three leaves on left and right	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F



Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Issac	-	Goss	12/25/1851	1/25/1941	89	GOSS ISAAC   MARY ANN DEC. 25, 1851   APR. 15, 1856 JAN. 25, 1941   Sept. 8, 1922 THE CROSS LEADS GENERATIONS ON	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in center with two ivy leaves on either side and two smaller crosses with three leaves on left and right	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Jim	-	Goss		1940	-	JIM GOSS DIED 1940	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Criss	-	Goss	1894	10/9/1919	~25	CRISS GOSS AGE 25 YRS DIED OCT. 9, 1919	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	U
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Alice	-	Byrd	10/20/1877	7/11/1951	74	ALICE BYRD OCT. 20, 1877 JULY 11, 1951	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Filigree on both upper corners	Headstone	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
Gated Goss Family Plot	-	Ollie	Mae	Stevenson	1890	1974	~84	OLLIE MAE STEVENSON 1890-1974 B-S	Serif - Standard engraving / raster lettering	-	Ledger	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
Yes	-	Margeret	Reed	Pearson	7/28/1914	4/4/1972	57	MARGARET REED PEARSON JULY 28, 1914 APR. 4, 1972	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Roses on either corner of entire headstone	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
Yes	-	Hattie	-	Goss Reed	8/7/1875	2/17/1972	96	HATTIE GOSS REED AUG. 7, 1875 FEB. 17, 1972 IN LOVING MEMORY	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Roses on either corner of entire headstone	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
Yes	-	Nora	-	Reed	12/17/1902	-	-	NORA REED	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Roses on either corner of entire headstone	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Georgia	Etta	McCorkle	4/26/1866	9/25/1876	10	GEORGIA ETTA Dau. of C.& P. McCORKLE APR. 26, 1866. DIED SEP. 25, 1876.	Serif italicized - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Bird relief with texture in background in semi-sphere	Die in socket	Marble	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
-	-	Martha	-	McCorkle	9/10/1849	6/22/1885	35	FAREWELL MARTHA Dau. Of C.& P. McCORKLE BORN SEP. 10, 1849. DIED JUNE 22, 1885.	Serif italicized - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Hands shaking with texture in background in semi-sphere	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	F
-	-	B.A.	-	Wilson	1867	1871	~4	B.A. DAU. OF PETE & JOANNA WILSON BORN 1867. DIED 1871. GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN	Hand impression	Bird relief	Die in socket	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face, right corner of base chipped	F
-	-	Matilda	-	Wilson	8/18/1870	8/1/1871	~1	MATILDA DAU. OF PETE &, J.A. WILSON. BORN AUG. 18 1870 DIED AUG. 1 1871 GONE SO SOON	Hand impression	Bird relief	Die in socket	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face, missing base	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Ann	-	Murphy	3/6/1867	11/8/1892	25	ANN. WIFE OF SANDY. MURPHY BORN MAR. 6 1867 DIED NOV. 8 1892	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Bird relief or hand shaking	Die in socket	Concrete	Poor	Two pieces broken, some parts missing needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
Yes	Yes: D.W.	Dillie	-	Watters	4/10/1847	12/6/1943	96	IN MEMORY OF DILLIE WATTERS APR. 10, 1847 DEC. 6, 1943	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree centered above all names under "In Memory of"	Die in socket	Granite	Poor	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	U
Yes	Yes: D.W.	Dan	-	Curtis	6/6/1804	5/25/1899	94	IN MEMORY OF DAN CURTIS JUNE 6, 1804 MAY 25, 1899	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree centered above all names under "In Memory of"	Die in socket	Granite	Poor	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	M
Yes	Yes: D.W.	Mimmia	-	Curtis	1812	1910	~98	IN MEMORY OF MIMMIA CURTIS BORN 1812 DIED 1910	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree centered above all names under "In Memory of"	Die in socket	Granite	Poor	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	F
-	Yes	Henry	P.	Mullin	8/24/1923	8/26/1923	2 days	HENRY P. MULLIN AUG. 24. 1923 AUG. 26. 1923	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Marble	Slight Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	M
-	Yes: B.M.	Bennie	E.	Mullin	10/7/1922	10/23/1922	16 days	BENNIE E. MULLIN. OCT. 7. 1922. OCT. 23. 1922.	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Marble	Slight Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	U
-	-	Baklosinoll	-	-	4/12/1863	7/8/1908	45	BAKLOSINOLL BORN APRIL 12 1863 DIED JULY 8 1908	Hand inscription	-	Ledger	Concrete	Slight Weathering	needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U
-	-	Ada	-	Aulk???	-	7/25/1943	-	ADA AULK?? BORN?? DIED JULY 25, 1943	Hand inscription	-	Ledger	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
														weathered inscription	
Yes	-	Jane	-	Greenleaf	1839	1/30/1900	~61	JANE   ROBT. GREENLEAF   GREENLEAF DIED.   DIED. JAN.   JAN. 30.   8. 1900.   1901. AGE 61 YRS.   AGE 73 YRS. WE GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU.	Hand impression	Hands shaking	Die in socket	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Top right chipped, needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
Yes	-	Robt.	-	Greenleaf	1828	1/8/1901	~73	JANE   ROBT. GREENLEAF   GREENLEAF DIED.   DIED. JAN.   JAN. 30.   8. 1900.   1901. AGE 61 YRS.   AGE 73 YRS. WE GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU.	Hand impression	Hands shaking	Die in socket	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Top right chipped, needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	Sidney	J	Perkins	6/14/1912	9/6/1944	32	SIDNEY J PERKINS TEXAS PVT 307 INFANTRY WORLD WAR II JUNE 14 1912 SEPT 6 1944	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in circle	Flat Military	Granite	Good	-	M
-	-	Missouri		Henry	1871	1938	~67	MISSOURI HENRY BELOVED WIFE OF JAMES HENRY 1871-1938 AGE 67 AT REST	Sans Serif- Impression	Bird on central piece, urns on either side of headstone with boarder around top and 4 grape bunches evenly spaced around	Die in socket	Concrete	Weathering	Top chipped, needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	William	Anderson	Peete	1856	1914	~58	WILLIAM ANDERSON PEETE 1856--1914 "OLD HICKORY" LIVES AGAIN IN HEARTS MADE BETTER BT HIS PRESENCE ERECTED BY FORMER STUDENTS AND ADMIRERS	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree on upper corners	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	Marker has weathering on face	M
-	Yes: R.L.W.	Peep	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	M
-	-	Luvern	M	Henry	12/3/1936	7/5/1948	11	DADYS BABY LUVERN M HENRY DEC 3 1936 JUL 5 1948 AT REST	Sans Serif- Impression	Flowers in top corners	Raised top die in socket	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered symbol inscriptions in both top corners	F
-	-	Rubie	L.	Thompson	11/29/1920	8/6/1945	24	SON RUBIE L. THOMPSON NOV. 29. 1920 AUG. 6. 1945 MY LOVE GOES WITH YOU AND MY SOUL WAITS TO JOIN YOU	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flowers in top corners on either side of "Son"	Raised top die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Weathering fading some of the text	F
Gated McDaniel Plot	-	Benton	-	gorsicama	-	-	-	-	Sans Serif- Impression	-	-	Brick	Poor	Needs immediate attention to save weathered symbol inscriptions	U
Gated McDaniel Plot	Yes: M.M.	Mandy	-	McDaniel	-	-	52	M MANDY MCDANIEL DIED AGE 52 YRS Remember -----	Sans Serif- relief raster	Letter "M" with half of wreath on either side	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed, weathering on face	U
Gated McDaniel Plot	Yes: Husband	W.	R.	Martin	1/16/1894	2/1/1946	52	W.R. MARTIN JAN. 16, 1894 FEB 1, 1946 GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Bunch of grapes with leaves on either side	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed, weathering on face	U

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
Gated McDaniel Plot	-	Hope	-	McDaniel	1898	1973	~75	HOPE Mc DANIEL 1898 1973	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Ledger	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
Gated McDaniel Plot	-	Annie	L.	McDaniel	1908	1982	~74	ANNIE L. McDANIEL 1908 -- 1982 PRECIOUS MEMORIES	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Angel in bottom left corner praying	Headstone	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F
-	-	William	-	Sutton	6/17/1893	3/29/1968	74	WILLIAM SUTTON TEXAS PFC CO C 537 ENGINEERS WORLD WAR I JUNE 17 1893 MARCH 29 1968	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle, pipe behind pointing left	Headstone Military	Marble	Slight Weathering	-	M
-	Yes: Grandmother	Agnes	-	Luster	1866	1958	~92	AGNES LUSTER 1866--1958 IN LOVING MEMORY	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in the middle with flowers on both sides	Die in socket	Granite	Good	Needs to be repointed	F
-	-	Ira	-	King	1/26/1896	2/18/1975	79	IRA KING PVT US ARMY JAN 26 1896 FEB 18 1975	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Flat Military	Granite	Good		U
Yes, Headstones missing	-	Johnnie	-	Murphy	11/24/1899	10/18/1955	55	JOHNNIE MURPHY NOV. 24, 1899 OCT. 18, 1955 AT REST	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower in center with stems on either side	Die in socket	Marble	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed, weathered on face	M
-	-	Jessie	E	Kilgore	1895	1974	~79	JESSIE E KILGORE 1895 - 1974 B-S	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Ledger	Metal	Slight Weathering	Slight weathering and oxidization	U
Yes	Yes: Warren	Thelma	-	Warren	2/27/1910	5/9/1999	89	THELMA WARREN FEB. 27, 1910 MAY 9, 1999	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
Yes	-	Harold	-	Warren	7/7/1902	3/20/1979	76	HAROLD WARREN JULY 7, 1902 MAR. 20, 1979	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	M
Yes	Yes: Sister	Lois	-	Warren	1/8/1904	5/2/1947	43	LOIS WARREN JAN. 8, 1904 MAY 2, 1947	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F
Yes	Yes: Mother	Laura	-	Warren	1/11/1879	9/7/1944	65	LAURA WARREN JAN. 11, 1879 SEPT. 7, 1944	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F
-	-	Sister	-	-	-	-	-	SISTER	Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed and immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
-	-	Ben	-	-	-	-	-		Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed and immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	Curtis	-	Wilson	11/6/??73	-	-	CURTIS WILSON PASS - NOV -6-??93	Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed and immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	-	-	Wilson	-	-	-	WILSON	Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed and immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Henry	-	Harvey	2/17/1887	1/9/1960	72	HENRY HARVEY TEXAS PFC 7 CO 165 DEPOT BRIGADE WORLD WAR I FEB 17 1887 JAN 9 1960	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Flat Military	Marble	Slight Weathering	Weathering on face	M
-	Yes: Wife	Alma	Lee	Warfield	4/6/1926	1/25/1994	67	ALMA LEE WARFIELD APR. 6. 1926 JAN. 25. 1994	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Heart with "In loving memory" text inside with two flowers at base	Raised top die in socket	Granite	Good	Needs to be repointed	F
-	-	Arbernard	-	Harvey	8/18/1924	8/18/1966	41	ARBERNARD HARVEY TEXAS ST2 USN WORLD WAR II AUG 18 1924 AUG 18 1966	Serif- letters attached to metal	Cross	Headstone Military	Concrete with metal face	Good	-	M
-	-	Irene	-	Warren	11/16/1914	8/23/1971	56	AT REST IRENE WARREN NOV. 16, 1914 SEPT. 23, 1971	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree on upper corners	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F
-	-	Sam	-	Williams	2/29/1889	8/17/1975	86	SAM WILLIAMS PVT US ARMY WORLD WAR I FEB 29 1889 AUG 17 1975	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Flat Military	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	M
-	-	Cynthia	V.	White	9/15/1879	10/26/1963	84	CYNTHIA V. WHITE SEPT. 15, 1879 OCT. 26. 26. 1963 AT REST BACK INSCRIBED: HUSBAND: WILLIE WARFIELD DAUGHTER: LOYCE ELAINE GRANDSON: CECIL GREAT GRANDSON: DAVID STEPSONS: REGINALD, GREGORY & CHRISTOPHER	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Inscription in open book incision with flowers with filagree stems on either side	Flat	Granite	Good	-	F



Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	Yes: Brother	E.A.	-	Henry	3/19/1898	9/9/1982	84	REV. E. A. HENRY MAR. 19, 1898 SEPT. 9, 1982 HE MAKETH ME TO LIE DOWN IN GREEN PASTURES	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Prayer hands with roses behind	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	M
-	-	Eugenia	Murphy	Ryder	7/20/1904	4/12/1968	63	EUGEINA MURPHY RYDER JULY 20, 1904 APRIL 12, 1968 BACK INSCRIBED: EUGENIA RYDER	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower with stem filagree on upper corners	Die in socket	Granite	Slight Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	F
-	-	Rufus	U	Murphy	11/15/1913	8/12/1972	58	RUFUS U MURPHY TEXAS CPL 477 COAST ARTY BN WORLD WAR II NOV 15 1913 AUG 12 1972	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Headstone Military	Granite	Slight Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	M
-	-	Ike		Murphy	4/22/1908	3/31/1975	66	IKE MURPHY PVT US ARMY APR 22 1908 MAR 31 1975	Serif- letters attached to metal	Cross	Flat Military	metal	Good	-	M
-	-	Ida	Mae	Murphy Battles	1938	1975	~37	IDA MAE MURPHY BATTLES 1938 1975	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Pipe pointing left 2' in front of marker	Ledger	Concrete	Poor	Broken into three pieces, inscription is weathered	F
-	Yes: "Poppee"	George	-	Murphy	5/1/1901	11/14/1991	90	GEORGE MURPHY MAY 1 1901 NOV. 14 1901	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Inscription in open book incision with flowers with filagree stems on top and bottom	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	M

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	Yes: Husband	Everett	-	Ward	8/5/1932	2/11/1978	45	EVERETT WARD AUG. 5, 1932 FEB. 11, 1977 IN LOVING MEMORY	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	M
Gated Plot	-	Louise	Campbell	Lott	7/23/1917	10/20/1982	65	LOUISE CAMPBELL LOTT 1917 - 1982 (EXACT DATE FROM FUNERAL MARKER)	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Flat	Granite	Slight Weathering	-	F
Gated Plot	-	Jim	B	Powell	9/2/1904	5/12/1977	72	JIM B POWELL PVT US ARMY WORLD WAR II SEP 2 1904 MAY 12 1977	Serif- letters attached to metal	Cross	Flat Military	metal	Good	-	M
-	-	Roxie	-	Whetstone	1881	1889	~8	ROXIE WHETSTONE 1881 - 1889	Hand inscription	-	Headstone	Concrete	Slight Weathering	Needs to be repointed and immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
-	-	Will	-	Smith	12/25/1892	1/9/1956	63	WILL SMITH TEXAS PVT SUP CO 816 PIONEER INF WORLD WAR I DEC 25 1892 JAN 9 1956	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Flat Military	Marble	Slight Weathering	Weathering on face	M
Gated Collins Plot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gated Collins Plot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	E.	-	Mayfield	1900	1947	~47	HUSBAND E. MAYFIELD 1900 - 1947	Serif - incised lettering	"Husband" in ribbon	Headstone	Granite	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Emzie	L.	Wheeler	5/5/1885	?/5/1925	~40	K OF P- EZMIE L. WHEELER MAY 5, 1885 ???? 5, 1925	Serif - incised lettering	-	Headstone	Concrete	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription, chipped in right corner	U
-	-	Gabriel	-	Wheeler	1/1/1867	4/9/1948	81	GABRIEL WHEELER JAN. 1, 1867 APR. 9, 1948	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower in center with stems on either side	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs to be repointed	U
-	-	Fannie	-	Wheeler	1/13/1866	7/20/1954	88	FANNIE WHEELER JAN. 13, 1866 JULY 20, 1954	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Flower in center with stems on either side	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs to be repointed	F
-	-	Delma	E.	Mayfield	2/5/1928	2/26/1950	22	SON DELMA E. MAYFIELD FEB. 5, 1928 FEB. 26, 1950	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Son center with flower and stems on either side (Inscription is double etched)	Flat	Granite	Weathering	-	F
Yes	-	Willie	Ann	Henry	2/24/1872	5/31/1945	73	HENRY WILLIE ANN WILLIAM FEB 24 1872 JUN 24 1864 MAY 31 1945 APR 13 1946	Sans Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	On either side of "Henry" single flower with leaves on either side	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
Yes	-	William	-	Henry	6/21/1864	4/13/1946	81	HENRY WILLIE ANN WILLIAM FEB 24 1872 JUN 24 1864 MAY 31 1945 APR 13 1946	Sans Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	Sam	-	Tucker	1797	10/10/1818	21	K OF P SAM TUCKER AGE 21 DIED OCT. 10, 1818 AT REST	Sans Serif - impressed lettering	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Fallen - Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	Luther	-	Crawford	1907	1911	~3	LUTHER CRAWFORD 1907-1911	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Cracked - Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
Yes	-	Georga	-	Harvey	3/10/1891	1/1/1911	19	GEORGIA HARVEY ???? MAR 10 1891 HARVEY JAN 1 1911 + MAY 1 18?? JAN 12 19??	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Fallen - Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
Yes	-	?	-	Harvey	5/1/18??	1/12/19??	-	GEORGIA HARVEY ???? MAR 10 1891 HARVEY JAN 1 1911 + MAY 1 18?? JAN 12 19??	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Fallen - Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	U
Yes	-	Fletcher	-	Harvey	7/13/1840	3/9/1907	66	FLETCHER+TOMMY HARVEY HARVEY + MAR 10 1865 JULY .13.1840 + SEPT + 1908 MARCH.9.1907+ 18	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
Yes	-	Tommy	-	Harvey	3/10/1865	9/18/1908	43	FLETCHER+TOMMY HARVEY HARVEY + MAR 10 1865 JULY .13.1840 + SEPT + 1908 MARCH.9.1907+ 18	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	poor	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	Johnnie	-	Harvey	7/14/1889	-	-	JOHNNIE HARVEY JULY.14.1889	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	Weathering		M
-	-	Jan	-	Harvey	11/20/1843	4/27/1923	79	JAN HARVEY ELLA ??? NOV 20 1843 + AUG 1 1875 APR 27 1923 + NOV 7 1947	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	M
-	-	Ella	-	??	8/1/1875	11/7/1947	72	JAN HARVEY ELLA ??? NOV 20 1843 + AUG 1 1875 APR 27 1923 + NOV 7 1947	Hand inscription	-	Die in socket	Concrete	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F

Multi-Burial	Footstone	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Date of Death	Age	Inscription	Lettering	Symbols/Motifs	Headstone/Marker Form	Material	Condition (Good, Poor, Weathered)	Condition Description	Male/Female/Unknown
-	-	JH	-	Patton	8/1/1876	2/5/1942	65	REV. JH PATTON OUR FATHER AUG. 1. 1876 FEB 5. 1942	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs repointing, slightly weathered	M
-	-	Etta	-	Patton	2/17/1870	2/15/1944	73	MRS. ETTA PATTON OUR MOTHER FEB. 17. 1870 FEB. 15. 1944	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Fallen off base	F
-	-	??en	-	Smith	12/25/1874	8/31/1925	50	??EN SMITH DEC. 25. 1874 AUG. 31. 1925	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Mason symbol in circle	Die in socket	Granite	Poor	Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription and broken, missing pieces	U
-	-	Freddie	-	McDaniel	4/9/1895	6/7/1918	23	COME YE BLESSED FREDDIE WIFE OF LEWIS McDANIEL BORN APR 9 1895 DIED JUNE 7 1918	Raster and Sans Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Open book on pedestal shaped headstone	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Not on base - Needs immediate attention to save weathered inscription	F
-	-	Ward	-	Powell	4/10/1887	7/1/1921	34	MRS. WARD POWELL APR. 10. 1887 JULY 1. 1921 AT REST	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	-	Die in socket	Granite	Weathering	Needs immediate attention to save weathered	F
-	-	Gene	-	Choice	7/27/1896	8/24/1954	58	GENE CHOICE TEXAS PVT CO C 355 LABOR BN QMC WORLD WAR I JULY 27 1896 AUG 24 1954	Serif - Standard engraving / incised lettering	Cross in Circle	Die in socket Military	Marble	Weathering	-	M

## **Appendix C - Oral History Consent Form and Interview Transcriptions**

Figure C-34 Oral History Interview Agreement



**Oral History Agreement (Interviewee)**

This Agreement is made and entered into the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, by and between The University of Texas at Arlington and \_\_\_\_\_," hereinafter called "Interviewee."

Interviewee agrees to donate to the UT Arlington Library a recorded interview, tentatively entitled "Interview with \_\_\_\_\_," conducted by \_\_\_\_\_," on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_. This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interview, namely the recording of the interview, a written transcript (should one be created) prepared from the recording, and any reproductions or digital representations of the interview, hereinafter collectively called "the Work."

In consideration of the mutual covenants, conditions and terms set forth below, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

- o Interviewee irrevocably assigns to the UT Arlington Library all his or her present and future copyright, title, and interest in and to the Work, including the right to reproduce such materials in copies of audio cassette, printed form, video, phono-records, on the Internet, and/or successor technologies, to distribute copies (in the aforementioned forms) to the public, to perform or display the work publicly, to prepare derivative works thereof, and to have others do so for research purposes. This assignment applies to the Library, its successors, and assigns, for and during the existence of the copyright and all renewals and extensions thereof.
- o By virtue of the assignment, the UT Arlington Library will have the right to use the Work for any research, education, or other purpose that the Library may deem appropriate.
- o Interviewee understands that the donated materials and works reproduced from them are not protected by archival or scholar's privilege (because no such privilege exists) and therefore will not be protected from subpoena.
- o Interviewee agrees to public use of the tapes and transcripts, including the aforementioned forms of reproduction, under the following condition, if initialed:  
 Closed for a period of \_\_\_ months/years, as of the date of the interview.
- o The Work will be subject to the researcher regulations of the UT Arlington Library Special Collections.
- o Oral history interviews will be transcribed contingent upon availability of adequate staff and funding.
- o Interviewee will receive from UTA, free of charge, one copy of the typewritten transcript of the interview (should one be created) and one copy of the recorded interview.
- o To ensure against substantive error or misquotation, an Interviewee whose interview is transcribed will have the right to review the transcript before it is put into final form. The UT Arlington Library will therefore send Interviewee a copy of the edited transcript for review and comment. Interviewee will return transcript and comments to the UT Arlington Library within 45 days of the date of the cover letter sent by UT Arlington with the transcript. In the event that Interviewee does not respond within 45 days, UT Arlington will assume that Interviewee has given full approval of the transcript.
- o All notices and other correspondence concerning this Agreement will be sent to the following:

Library Address: UT Arlington Library, Special Collections, P.O. Box 19497, Arlington, TX 76019-0497

Interviewee's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

You may be entitled to know what information UT Arlington collects concerning you. You may review and have UT Arlington correct this information according to procedures set forth in UTS 139. The law is found in sections 552.021, 552.023 and 559.004 of the Texas Government Code.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 UT Arlington Representative's Name      UT Arlington Representative's Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewee's Name      Interviewee's Signature      Date

Form approved by UT System Counsel 4/1/2005.

## Probing Email for Interviews

Hello [Interviewee's Name];

My name is Anjelyque Easley, and I am conducting a research study on about your [experience/connection] with Universe Cemetery in Tyler, Texas. I am a graduate student at the University of Texas at Arlington working on my master's thesis entitled: "Cemeteries, Construction, and Complicity: Black Burial Sites Under Distress". The purpose of my study to identify the reasons for the lack of maintenance and documentation of the Universe Cemetery. The aim of the research is to further preserve the oral history of those connected to Universe's history and to develop a maintenance plan for its future. The research from this study will aid in the preservation of the historic Black Cemetery, Universe located in Smith County in Tyler, Texas. As a result, it may influence the overall maintenance and preservation of the physical cemetery and the stories of descendants and those who are interred there.

If you are interested, I would like to request your participation in this research for interviews through several different avenues based on your comfort from in-person, phone interview, or virtual (Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Zoom, Skype). Participation will take a minimum of one hour and will vary based on agreed duration.

The information that you share with me will become part of the collections of the University of Texas at Arlington's library and the Tyler African American Museum for it to be archived and preserved for future generations to learn from. If, however, you prefer to keep the interview confidential we will honor that request. In that case those able to access the information from the study are the advising faculty member, Dr. Kathryn Holliday and myself and no information allowing identification of any kind will be published.

If you accept, I will welcome the opportunity to further discuss your participation in this historic research and will contact you to arrange an interview [date, time, communication method]. Thank you for your time and consideration, **please contact me if you have any questions by email or my cell.**

Thank you again for your time,

Anjelyque Easley



## Universe Cemetery Committee Member Interview 1

Interviewee: Larry Wade

Interviewer: Anjelyque Easley

Date: October 12, 2021

Location: National African American Historical Society at Tyler Smith County Texas

200 S Glenwood Blvd, Tyler, TX 75702

[Said before recording]

This is Anjelyque Easley. Today is the 12th of October 2021. I'm interviewing Larry Wade, a member of the Universe Cemetery Committee, for the first time. The interview is taking place at the National African American Historical Society at Tyler Smith County, Texas, located at 200 S Glenwood Blvd, Tyler, TX 75702. This interview is being conducted by a graduate student from the Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Texas at Arlington and is part of a thesis project titled: *Cemeteries, Construction, And Complicity | Tyler's Universe Cemetery as a Black Burial Site Under Distress*.

[Start of Interview]

**AE: (4:56) Tell me about yourself in your connection to the Universe Cemetery.**

LW: [previous information from this recording was not pertinent to this thesis] The Universe Cemetery came about because that's one of the goals first of all when I started the Tyler Smith County African American Historical Society and let me add it grew to about six or seven counties

here in East Texas. So, I decided later to put it under the umbrella of what we call the National African American Society. My goal is to one day be all over the United States. My goal is that every county in the United States will have an African American Historical Society and a museum. Now, if there's a museum already existing in that county that has a lot of African American History that's sufficient but that's my goal. I started the Tyler Smith County African American National Historical Society and National African American Historical Society. One of the goals that you will see even this evening in our meeting [at the National African American Historical Society building] is cemetery preservation. One of the problems that I found is that many African Americans have been buried in cemeteries that had been abandoned. Years ago, I realize this, and not knowing that last year one of my good historian friends who will be here later, Vicki Betts [a member of the Universe Cemetery Committee] she had [re]discovered her and some other white friends one who passed on, [Andy Leah] they had discovered this cemetery call Universe. I don't know that I had ever heard about it right here in Smith County Tyler and so when she brought it to my attention, and they have been doing research on it and had gotten the Texas State Historical Marker [Designation] (Figure 3-3) and all of that and she brought it to my attention. I said, "oh we have to clean it up." So, I brought it to the attention of the [National African American Historical] Society. Vicky has been a longtime member also at the Smith County Historical Society. Most counties in Texas, the 254 counties and have the state of Texas in a law, years ago designated that there can be and should be a historical commission or society and every County. Sometimes they have Black history, and, in most cases, they do not have any or very little [information about Black people/history]. And so, I have been the only African American active member for probably 20 years downtown [in Tyler]. A few years ago I became the first African-American on that board [Smith County Historical Society] they asked me to serve when I board, so Vicki, I've known her

since years ago being a member of Smith County Historical Society, and then she was a librarian at the University of Texas at Tyler, so I met her years ago so when she brought to my attention about Universe I said that's one of the goals of the National African American Historical Society that we identify and help clean up after American historical cemeteries abandoned. So, I said, "we have to do something about this." About a year ago maybe in September, August we started talking about it a year ago last year and I think in September we started what we called "Monthly clean-ups." Every 3rd Saturday we would go out there and ask people to volunteer. For one solid year, we've done that. And then a few months ago another when we started on another one (Garrett Cemetery, which is located at the corner of Grande Boulevard and Hollytree Drive directly behind Kendrick Cemetery in Tyler, Torres, 2021) and we are being apprised of others [cemeteries] so even at this meeting, we're going to be talking about plans going forward about how we going to be dual clean up and restoration. But Universe, this is how I got acquainted with it through Vicki and others from the Smith County Historical Society.

**AE: (8:38) What does this place mean to you and your history? You said you're from Tyler, can you talk about what this place means to you?**

It means a lot. It's like I told the news media, I have been interviewed several times this past year on television [and] articles [I] have been in the newspaper. A life lived is a life to be remembered. If you lived on this earth, you should be remembered someway somehow and so the fact that we have, if I'm not mistaken, 300 and something African Americans buried out there many of them are former slaves, World War 1 & 2 veterans, we have a notable educator [who has a] that a school named after, W.A.Peete (William Anderson Peete 1856 - 1914, W. A. Peete Elementary School). We have others [notable people] like Myles Anderson, an All-American running back he's buried out there and his brother was an All-American running back who just passed last year at the age

of 90 something. Both of these brothers were all American running backs, and his brother Alvin Anderson was a former teacher, coach, [and] assistant principal when I was in school, he later became an assistant superintendent here in Tyler Independent School District, he just passed last year. His wife is a notable teacher retired and so these Anderson brothers, Alvin is not buried out there, but Myles is (his headstone was not found at as of Fall 2021) buried out there, and their parents are buried out there and other relatives There's a section over (labeled on Figure 3-2) there just for their family. So, they're buried out there and the thing about abandon, people like that are abandoned and we have others, Maris Harvey always trying to locate where he's buried. He was a famous educator, musician, music instructor buried out there. We have World War 1 and World War 2 veterans buried out there. We had a memorial service months ago to commemorate those veterans of World War 1 & 2 in other Wars that are buried out there we put flags on their graves, and we have a speaker one of our city councils people Shirley McKellar (Councilmember District 3-Northwest Terms: 2019-2021) was our spokesperson and she's also on our National African American Historical Society board. All of these people out here are to be remembered, they have to be remembered, and the fact that the one who donated this land was a Black man, Ben Goss. In the late 1800s, this was when he was a wealthy man which today would be considered a millionaire and he was able to obtain about three hundred something acres back in the late 1800s. He was able to start a church, first in his home, a school, Universal School, Univers(ity) church, and then the cemetery, the land. He and some others went in together and they started this cemetery, church, and school in which the cemetery is the only thing that's left. So, Ben Goss, we have not found his grave, but we have found descendants there's a whole section of Goss's that are buried out there in the cemetery. Some have been there to help out with the clean-ups from in town and out of town and they know that Ben Goss was their ancestor that started this cemetery. For many years a major

denomination was in charge of this Cemetery until it was sold about 10-15 years ago to a private owner and for some reason the last several years it has been abandoned.

**AE: (12:32) Can you tell me what you hope will happen to the cemetery. As far as maintenance or public attention. What do you hope will come out of your efforts to preserve this history of African Americans in Tyler?**

LW: Well, I hope not only will we develop an ongoing maintenance and upkeep will never again get in disrepair like it is in the bad shape that it has been, but it would also inspire and it's already doing that and others to discover [other] Black cemeteries. Since we started cleaning up Universe, I have gotten so many calls and tips about the other abandoned Black cemeteries to the point to where now we have started on our second cemetery (Garrett Cemetery) clean-up we will be discussing that this evening we have already had one clean up last month and we are going to have another one this month and universe and so that the list is growing of abandoned Black cemeteries in this area of Tyler East Texas. I'm hoping that it [Black cemetery discovery and clean-ups] will catch on and we are getting calls from people out of state who have similar situations, in particular, a relative buried in this area and they want to see the cemeteries discovered. [Or] they have relatives buried in these cemeteries, so it is inspiring and I'm hoping it will be a national movement of [people who] would be inspired by this [volunteer efforts] where people all over this country will start taking note. We need to find them [cemeteries], we need to clean them up, and we need to maintain them.

**AE: (14:15) How do you feel about the location of the Universe Cemetery?**

LW: Yes, that is that is a concern it didn't happen overnight because of the fact that it was abandoned, housing develop[ments] and houses were built, the apartment, in a way to where it

seemed like they probably was either not aware of the significance of it and this is the thing I'm concerned about if we don't rescue these cemeteries now, the development and marginalization it will obscure them and this is what has happened. Commercial development and growth have caused so many to have vanished and many times development have been built on top of them not only around them but on top of them so that they were bulldozed over, and people will never have access to them. So now, they [developers and descendants] have to hit rewind and go back to see where [they] can put entrances that can be pleasing to homeowners, developers that everybody can respect the fact because by law (Health and Safety Code, Section 711.041 and Section 711.0521) you are supposed to have access. Once you [the property owner] realize a cemetery is there, the public is supposed to have access, particularly relatives to a cemetery by law. So, we need to find a way [to provide access to the cemetery].

[End of Interview]

## Universe Cemetery Committee Member Interview 2

Interviewee: Gloria Mays Washington

Interviewer: Anjelyque Easley

Date: October 15, 2021

Location: Tyler Texas African American Museum

309 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd Tyler, TX 75702

[Said before recording]

This is Anjelyque Easley. Today is the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. I'm interviewing Gloria Washington, a member of the Universe Cemetery Committee, for the first time. The interview is taking place at the Tyler Texas African American Museum located at 309 W Martin Luther King Jr Blvd Tyler, TX 75702. This interview is being conducted by a graduate student from the Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Texas at Arlington. It is part of a thesis project titled: *Cemeteries, Construction, And Complicity | Tyler's Universe Cemetery as a Black Burial Site Under Distress.*

[Start of Interview]

**AE: (0:00) Can you tell me what your name is and tell me about yourself.**

GW: Gloria Washington, I am the executive director for the Texas African American Museum here in Tyler Texas and I'm also a member of the universe Cemetery committee where we go in and clean up the different cemeteries that we have learned that they are no longer being kept up

that they are lost in that they are just in dire need of someone taking care of them so I'm a member of that

**AE: (0:38) Tell me more about your connection to the Universe Cemetery, how did you first get contact with people working on it.**

GW: Well, the Texas African American museum is in collaboration with the National African American Museum which is located as well here in Tyler Texas and so their director, [Larry Wade] and myself got together and we did a collaboration of project ideas things like that so we can connect it and once he's found out about these different cemeteries, [...] I'm just an assistant.

**AE: (1:17) What does it mean for the preservation of the [Universe] cemetery to you like why is it important?**

GW: It is so important because our ancestors from the past are buried there and most of their family individuals have also passed on so there's no one to keep up the different cemeteries and that means bushes growing up debris is thrown out and everything so it's as if our heritage is just going to waste even if it is in a cemetery, our heritage is going to waste if no one keeps it up and that's why it's so important to me. We need to keep the home fire burning from our ancestors.

**AE: (2:05) Are you're from Tyler?**

GW: No, I'm not. I'm from farther on down in East Texas I'm from a little town called Jasper Texas. I migrated here to Tyler Texas have been enjoying every moment.

**AE: (2:20) Tell me about what you hope to happen for the Universe Cemetery, do you hope that there will be more maintenance efforts and recognition for its existence.**



GW: Most definitely, we have received a lot of news media attention about the cemetery but a fence needs to be put up a memorial needs to be put up and I'm hoping that that's going to happen, and plus we would get more location of people in the community or people that have their little ones buried there that they would step up then also join in and help to keep the cemetery up [and] keeping the weeds out and things like that.

**AE: (3:03) As of right now who are the people that are going out there and helping clean the [Universe] cemetery?**

GW: We have a committee. The director and person that's in charge is Larry Wade, he's over the process of keeping it up and keeping it clean trying to get it in shape. Then there is a committee of young people and students to different people in the community that is assisting with this effort.

**AE: (3:30) How do you feel about access to the [Universe] cemetery? Do you feel that there should be more of a grand entrance to it?**

GW: Yes, and once you get out there and see you will see what I'm talking about [the cemetery is located] behind a residential neighborhood, and the residential neighborhood is per se like here [gesturing a line of homes and pointing to where the cemetery is] in the cemetery is back here so there needs to be a different way to get into the cemetery where we won't have to go through the neighborhood [meaning being the apartment building] and this [the cemetery] is outside of the city limits so the city doesn't have any desire to help with it because it's outside of the city limits and so that's why it's so imperative that community members get together and come out and help.

**AE: (4:27) Have you met any of the descendants they're related to the cemetery?**

GW: Yes, the Goss [relative (this is a reference to a recorded interview of a descendant of Benjamin Goss - the recording was unavailable at the time of this thesis)]. [There is] a principle that was buried out there, W. A. Peete (William Anderson Peete 1856 - 1914) I didn't know him, but I know that one of the schools here (W. A. Peete Elementary School) is named after him and so there were a lot of students that went to that school under him so it's a lot of people [important figures of the community buried there].

**AE: (4:54) Is there anything else that I didn't ask that you want to talk about in relation to Universe Cemetery?**

GW: It's an old Cemetery in the more knowledge and the more information that we learn about the cemetery that people learn about the cemetery you will be more apt to want to get out there and help assist in the cleanup and assist in keeping it up. So, we encourage each and every one if hearing about it or learning about it just call us, we will be so happy that if you decided to come out and help or make a financial donation to help because it takes work and [tools] to help keep that cemetery clean. You can't just go out there with your hand and do anything you have to have tools to work with. So, if you want to donate some tools to help and if you feel like you can do that donate some tools. [If you want to] donate a few dollars, donate a few dollars we are accepting donations. You can send them to the National African American Museum [in Tyler, Texas].

[End of Interview]

### Universe Cemetery Committee Member Interview 3

Interviewee: Vicki Betts

Interviewer: Anjelyque Easley

Date: October 20, 2021

Location: Phone call interview

[Said before recording]

This is Anjelyque Easley. Today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. I'm interviewing Vicki Betts, a member of the Universe Cemetery Committee for the first time. The interview is taking place on the phone. This interview is being conducted by a graduate student from the Landscape Architecture Program at the University of Texas at Arlington and is part of a thesis project titled: *Cemeteries, Construction, And Complicity | Tyler's Universe Cemetery as a Black Burial Site Under Distress.*

[Start of Interview]

**AE: (0:00) Tell me about yourself in your connection to the Universe Cemetery.**

VB: My name is Vicki Betts I'm a retired librarian at the University of Texas at Tyler library and a member of the Smith County Historical Society. I became involved with Universe Cemetery; I became aware of it a number of years ago. A couple of friends and I used to go around on Saturdays and visit historic sites around the county. They were also with the Historical Society and one of those trips took me to the Universe Cemetery that I had never even known it existed until then and we walked around, and I was really impressed with how big it was and how overgrown it was and

how it was just abandoned. And a number of years passed after that we just kept going to other different parts of the county. A few years ago, then I became aware of the Texas Freedom Colonies Project out of Texas A&M University, and they have an atlas that identifies where a lot of these freedom colonies were so of course I went to Smith County. I had already done a lot of research on the Rosenwald schools of Smith County so I had some idea of what the different rural communities might be that could be considered freedom colonies. So, when I got to the atlas, I noticed that there were several communities that I knew of that were not on the atlas, and I contacted the project and I said, "I'm not African American" but I can and I don't have any good stories, they really want personal stories and artifacts, and things I said, "I can't do that but what I can do is I can take photographs of the places and I can do some of the paper research like deeds and things like that since this information are accessible," takes a little digging but you know from the paper standpoint I can do that. I have a bachelor's degree in history, I've done library work all my life so I can research. They said, "Oh yeah, we'll take that, too". So, I went back out to Universe Cemetery, that was one of the communities that I knew of that was not on the atlas yet, so I went out to Universe and took a bunch of photographs. And I was concerned because when I went to do the deed research, initial, just initial deed research, I found that the cemetery itself had been sold within the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And was no longer any kind of church property or anything like that. And that the person they sold it to was someone, I was worried about him having it. So, then I decided that what I really needed to do, to do any level of protection was to get it a Texas State Historic Cemetery designation. And there is a form you have to fill out, you have to take certain photographs, you have to include deed research, you had to include historical narrative, there is a whole process to do this. And so, I got digging into it and that is when I found the background to of the original donor of the cemetery who was, Mr. [Benjamin] Goss. I forgot his first name. Ben,

Ben Goss and the more I found out about him, the more I was intrigued with the story. It was a really great story. So, I did a bunch of research for that, got all the paperwork everything I needed, had Andy Leach and Randy Gilbert and Matt Steads who's a professor at UT Tyler, we all went out there, and I had a little wheel that I could take measurements on and took notes and all. Cause the hardest thing to do in this process was to create a map. This was not a rectangular or square cemetery, it was not fenced off all the way around, it was over a ridge, it was heavily overgrown. So that map was the hardest part of it, and I got it all sent in, paid the fees. COVID hit, that delayed everything, and but they kept working, from the person who's in charge of cemeteries at the Texas Historical Commission continued to work from home. So, I was emailing back and forth with her, and it delayed a little bit, but not too awfully bad. And then they sent me the paperwork to go file in the county courthouse, and pay the fee over there to get it, the cemetery, registered in the deeds of Smith County so that anyone who ever might eventually get that property would definitely know that there was a cemetery there. They could not deny they knew about it and so that would hinder them just plowing the whole thing under. And I was real pleased with that, and I actually talked to several friends, particularly Clarence Shackelford and Larry Wade and so, we met out there with Gloria Washington to walk around and see it and they were all impressed with that cemetery and just horrified with the condition, and Larry in particular said, "we're just not, this cannot stay like this, we are going to have to get to work on it." So, I called a meeting and Randy Gilbert, one of the people have gone out to help with the measurements and all is an attorney here in town and he also knew the current owner at least, you know, not close friends, but to enough to be able to call him and talk to him. So, Randy called this guy and we got permission to be on the premises and to start clearing it out. We were concerned that we didn't want to get picked up by the police or the Sheriff's Department for Chris passing or for harvesting

timber off of his cemetery land, but he gave us permission that was very nice and then we started scheduling in work meetings. In the meantime to the two of the people that I went out there originally with died this last year and it's Andy Leach and James Wilkins and they were, you know, both major workers within the [Smith County] Historical Society and I was in this it sort of it's continued on because I care about the cemetery and I love the story and also partly because I work with it with them, you know, looked at what they did originally with James and Andy. As a result of having all the research already done, I did go ahead and write up articles on Ben Goss and the [Universe] Cemetery and the community we were able to get in contact with the descendant that was out of the Dallas area who had some photographs which will wonderful. I wrote a short piece on how to get a historic cemetery designation and we had that published in Chronicle Smith County Texas (Lacy, 2020) which is our annual publication, and after that we've also talked to another descendant who is around 100 years old and talk to a grandson or great grandson [who] came out to work with this a couple of times at it cemetery other people came into work family graves or just because they cared about you know kind of preserve the cemetery and we've had amazing publicity from the television stations and from the newspaper about the cemetery. So that's about where we are right now, you're working on it, the cemetery but it's it was so overgrown with the with things like Honey Locust in Greenbrier that you can cut it down but they're going to be right back so it will be a continuing long-term project.

**AE: (9:25) You already touched on this a bit, but what does the Universe Cemetery mean to you?**

VB: One of my major loves is local history. I have done local history on a lot of different projects whether it's civil war or I also volunteer with the Oakwood Cemetery Downtown. I would say in the last ten years or so I become a very interested in African American local history I know that

Clarence Shackelford I'd worked with him out of UT Tyler, and he was always wondering why we didn't have more black history in the [Smith County] Historical Society and published more Black history and so I started I run across stories that I just want to learn more about that. Universe I had known Universe well maybe as a cemetery, not as a church it was never a Rosenwald school but to have over 300 graves in an abandoned cemetery in one of our beings W.A. Peete (William Anderson Peete 1856 - 1914, W. A. Peete Elementary School) who was well known local educator. You walk into that cemetery and there are handmade markers and their funeral home [names] little metal markers that are rusting out, there's some impressive stones. And in the whole story of it, for Ben Goss to be able to buy hundreds of acres of land in 1871 which is like five years after Emancipation. How does he do that, and he hold on to that land and he then turns around and donates land to church and cemetery and like an later on in schools. Going into the census and finding out that in the 1870 census he had a white schoolteacher in his household I found him mentioned in CME (Christian Methodist Episcopal Church) memoirs of the earliest origins at the CME church in Smith County in East Texas. I found a family mentioned in a dissertation out of another state. The story just kept unfolding, and so from a historical standpoint I thought it was extremely significant it seemed to be the major Black cemetery East of Tyler. The story is of the cemetery and the family still is impressive to me and I do not want that cemetery to fall back into just total neglect and I'm still not sure how to guarantee that it it's going to be difficult.

**AE: (12:44) Can you tell me what your hope for the cemetery is as far as maintenance or public attention. What do you hope your efforts will do?**

VB: I would like for it to...ideally, there is a mobile home that the last time I knew nobody was living in immediately in front of cemetery (the house left of the apartment parking lot). One of the problems for that cemetery says it is in inaccessible from a road directly. Anybody who goes into

work there at the cemetery or to visit the cemetery usually parks in a small apartment parking lot (Figure 3-2). It's difficult to park along the road, the road the old road that goes down off of that parking lot (the possible processional road) you'd have to be 4 Wheelers even get down in there. If we could have purchased that mobile home lot and create an access from Nottingham Lane to the cemetery and have a little paved area of its own that would be great it would also enable us to probably be more likely to get it actual [National Register or State] Historical Marker because then the marker would be accessible to the public from a public street or from a public area. It [the cemetery] needs to have a long-term commitment from a number of groups in most likely that will need to be African American groups. I am thinking in terms of churches and organizations I know in my family the way the old cemeteries are cared for is that they raise funds every year, the money goes into a nonprofit organization fund, that then filled enough to be able to have some interest income coming off of it and they have someone hired to come in and take care of it and would be sort of a maintenance thing it wouldn't be every week but it would they would need to be in and do maintenance in association with volunteers. But the reason that cemetery fell into disrepair no it's not that anybody did anything to it, it is that nobody did anything for it. The people who lived in that area moved into Tyler or moved to Houston or move to Dallas or move to Chicago or Los Angeles or somewhere else [during the Great Migration] and they just didn't come back home that there was nobody left to take care of a cemetery. I know the Goss sisters who were mainstays have the Universe CME church they thought so that that church would stay alive because one of the reasons was, they knew when this church died there will be nobody left to take care of cemetery, and that's true, that's what happened. There's the CME Churches in Tyler have never stepped up to try to take care of that cemetery. I mean I'm sure they had many other calls on their commitments of their time and funds, and all that I understand that, but it would be good if they [the cemeteries



affiliated with CME churches] could be taken care of. Now the possibility is that whenever the city of Tyler gross out that far, there be a move and it [Universe] goes within the city limits there might be a possibility of the city taking care of that cemetery, as maintaining it. Oakwood Cemetery the main old city cemetery is maintained by the city of Tyler, but technically speaking the city of Tyler does not own all of that cemetery, but they still maintain it. Now Rose Hill cemetery is city owned and Westview Cemetery is city owned. I believe almost all of the other cemeteries in Tyler are privately owned, since nobody is really running Universe Cemetery as a business. We think of Cathedral in the Pines Cemetery [in Tyler] is run as a business. Memorial Cemetery [in Tyler] is run as a business. Evergreen Cemetery, which is currently the largest predominantly African American cemetery on the North Loop [in Tyler] is run as a business. So, the city is not going to take over that, but a cemetery that is not being run as a business [...] it's a possibility that the city might take over maintenance once it becomes inside the city limits. That would be great.

**AE: (18:09) How do you feel about the location of the [Universe] Cemetery as far as access? So, are there any other points that you want to talk about as far as the Universe Cemetery?**

VB: I do think it's definitely an important cemetery to local history, to African American local history, I just it's so sad to see the state that it is in right now. I do think that the local media really is making a big effort, I know what we've had tools donated by a local bank. I think lot of people want to see it get better, but a lot of people don't have the time to make that happen with their own labor and I'm not sure. I don't think Larry has it set up as a nonprofit organization yet, so they can track funding or raise funds that would be tax-exempt. That would be good, but that also takes time and money and [the knowledge of] how to do it. I think there's a lot of goodwill out there towards this it's just...it's just hard.

[End of Interview]