

African Cemetery No. 2 Inc.

- a 501(c)(3) Corporation -

2024 Annual Report



African Cemetery No. 2 Inc.
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A Word From the Chair

It has been a pleasure serving as chair of African Cemetery No. 2 Inc. 2024 was another busy year. In addition to our Juneteenth event (Lexington's longest continuous celebration of this holiday) we had ten other events in the cemetery or elsewhere spanning the nine months from March to November. There were 14 different volunteer groups, three videography visits, and five presentations. Our collaboration with Hoe & Hope Garden Club of Lexington and Trees Lexington! continues. With the support of Trees Lexington! we were funded for *ca* \$50,000 to plant trees, increase signage, and develop educational programming through a grant from Lex Grow Trees. With the support of the UK Legal Clinic our application for 501(c)(3) status was approved. We obtained a Farm Services Number to enable us to apply for potential USDA grants. We submitted an application to the ArbNet certification program (managed by Morton Arboretum) for Class I status and were approved for certification in December. We are continuing several important initiatives at the cemetery: replacing lost military markers for USCT troops and updating signage. These activities have benefitted from the assistance of numerous volunteers who are contributing to the mission of African Cemetery No. 2 Inc. in preserving and protecting the cemetery as living history and recreational space in Lexington's East End.

Mark Coyne
Chair
African Cemetery No. 2 Inc.

A Word From the Archives

This year, we developed programs, events and additional self-guided tours based on information gleaned from archive research. [Past Events | African Cemetery No2](#)

Alan Hetzel, a board member, for about five years, has been scanning death certificates from 1894 to 1963 to create a spreadsheet of 7,618 burials. Phase two of the project will be a searchable database.

Amy Moore Allen and Civil War veteran Humphrey Allen filed a declaration of their 1845 Louisiana marriage in Lexington. That document provided a history of this couple during their enslavement in Louisiana and Kentucky. How did this information become part of their marriage record? Mr. Shea Brown, Fayette County Deputy Clerk, presented the history and significance of the Colored Marriage Declarations act passed by the State Legislature, February 14, 1866.

A 1904 news article in the local paper, prompted a new research initiative for early African American educators in Lexington. “Thirty-five years ago (1869), colored men and women went from house to house at night after men and women came from their labors and taught them to read and write”. Martha Talbot, Amos Knox, Thomas J. McGee and James Washington were named. Martha Talbot was free as early as 1840. The Lexington census of 1860 listed her as a teacher. Are there other educators? Were these individuals buried in the cemetery?

From 1875 to 1902, African American jockeys won fifty-seven percent or sixteen of the first twenty-eight Kentucky Derby races. Equine industry programs centered on the record setting achievements of two jockeys. Both programs were news features of WLEX 18 TV. [Remembering Oliver Lewis 150 years after Derby win https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/lexingtons-african-american-cemetery-hosts-author-of-new-isaac-murphy-book](https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/lexingtons-african-american-cemetery-hosts-author-of-new-isaac-murphy-book)

Oliver Lewis Day was declared by Mayor Linda Gorton during a celebration on May 17, the actual day of the running of the first Kentucky Derby in 1875. Careful reading of records revealed that jockey Oliver Lewis turned eighteen years old on December 22, 1874. From May to July in 1875, he not only won the Kentucky Derby but also struck the board in seven other races during the season. His career record was updated on the archive panel in the cemetery and on our website.

Isaac Murphy, the most recognized of African American jockeys, set a 140-year record of winning the KY Derby, American Derby and Clark Handicap in 1884. These milestones were celebrated with a program featuring Dr. Katherine Mooney, author of *Isaac Murphy: The Rise and*

Fall of a Black Jockey. Over 100 attended the program at Fasig Tipton’ Sales Pavilion, on July 7, the Sunday before the first yearling sale. Other anniversaries of Lexington horsemen will be celebrated in 2025. One hundred forty years ago, in 1885, Abraham Perry, a trainer, conditioned Joe Cotton to win the Kentucky, Tennessee and Coney Island derbies. Jockey, Tommy Britton, in 1891 and 1892, won the Tennessee Derby. James ‘Soup’ Perkins, a fifteen-year-old jockey, won the Kentucky Derby in 1895, setting a 130-year record. [Horsemen of the Bluegrass | African Cemetery No2](#)

Just when you think you know it all, new information lets you know you have more to learn. In October, Dr. George C. Wright was asked to present his research about Robert Charles O’Hara Benjamin, attorney and Civil Rights activist. Dr. Wright has traveled the United States, England, France, and the Caribbean Islands to learn of Benjamin’s parents, his place of birth and his early education in Europe. Dr. Wright is planning to have his research published in the coming year.

For our 19th Juneteenth Jubilee© this year, featured speakers were Ranger Steve Phan, Camp Nelson National Monument Park and Mark Watkins, member of the Lexington Freedom Train: Memorial to Lewis and Harriet Hayden. The Haydens, born in Lexington, escaped their enslavement in 1844. This couple settled in Boston, Massachusetts in 1846. They became Station Masters for the Underground Railroad, sheltering and assisting 100 fugitive slaves. When the Civil War began, Hayden encouraged Governor John Andrew to seek permission to form a regiment of free Blacks. Hayden became a recruit for those regiments – 54th, 55th infantries and 5th Cavalry. Two veterans from Kentucky mustered into the 55th in 1863. One was from Lexington and the other from Garrard County.

Other information has been formatted as Self-guided Walking Tours [tours | African Cemetery No2](#)

Yvonne Giles
Education Coordinator, 12/2024

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About African Cemetery No. 2 Inc.

OUR STORY: African Cemetery No. 2 is the earliest recorded cemetery in Lexington to be organized, owned, and managed by African Americans. The land was purchased in 1869 and the cemetery was chartered in November, 1870. The cemetery was officially closed in 1973, but burials continued until 1976. The people here were important leaders in Lexington during the Reconstruction Era. Like many private cemeteries it was not endowed. With the death of its founding members in Union Benevolent Society No. 2 (from which the cemetery gets its name) the cemetery became urban wasteland; it was declared abandoned on April 17, 1973. City government claimed ownership and surveyed graves in the cemetery in 1973 in anticipation of planned development; the revelation of over 5000 burial sites precluded that use (there are at least 1,132 standing markers and more than 7,600 known burials). In March 1979, the Rev. H. Greene organized a nonprofit group as African Cemetery No. 2 Inc. to reclaim the landscape. The cemetery was cleaned and restored in 1980, and African Cemetery No. 2 Inc. was deeded the property in May 1981. The nonprofit was reorganized in 1995, and restoration, historic preservation, and cultural activities have continued since. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2004. It is the home of Lexington's longest running Juneteenth Celebration.

MISSION STATEMENT: To restore and maintain African Cemetery No. 2 as a memorial park that will become a regional center for African American Heritage and an example for urban conservation.

2024 Board of Directors

Chair: Mark Coyne, PhD

Archivist – Education and Outreach: Yvonne Giles

Secretary: Phaon Patton

Treasurer: Alan Hetzel

Web Master: Theodora Salazar

2024 Board Members

Saunda Coleman

David Jackson

Martina Martin

Delphine Ridgeway

Charles Washington

Board Alumni (notify us about missing names)

Gary Brown

Dr. Anne Butler[†]

Dr. Jim Cobb

Sonny Claiborne

Marilyn Dishman

Jim Embry

Bruce Mundy

Thomas Mundy[†]

Alvin Seals

Stella Stewart[†]

[†]Deceased

Finances

Cash On Hand

Opening Balance (as of 1/1/2024) **\$ 7,623.10**

Closing Balance (as of 11/9/2024) **\$ 8,394.72**

Revenues (to December 15)

Direct Grants \$ 5,490.00

Contributions \$ 1,106.70

In-Kind Donations \$ 4,400.35

Donated Services \$ 0.00

Sales \$ 2,247.00

Volunteer Labor - 299.6 hours

Total \$ 13,244.05

Expenses (to December 31)

Programming \$ 6,871.88

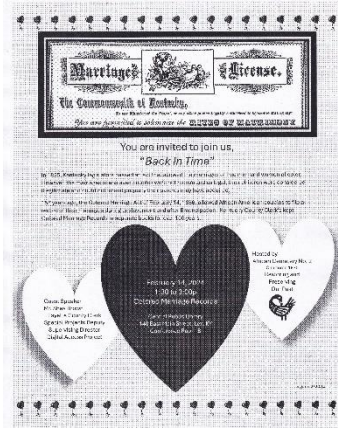
Maintenance \$ 571.85

Infrastructure \$ 1,202.00

Total \$ 8,645.73

Programs

Colored Marriage Records



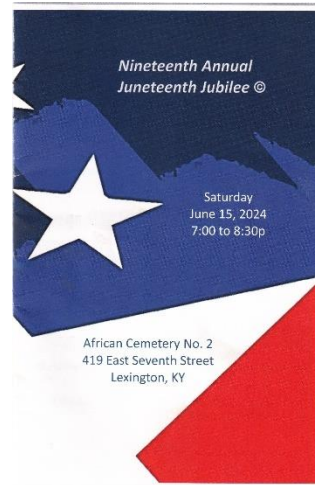
Pre-Derby Day Tour (April 27)



Mt. Brilliant Farm Talk (May 14)

Oliver Lewis 100th Anniversary (May 17)

19th Annual Juneteenth Celebration (June 15)

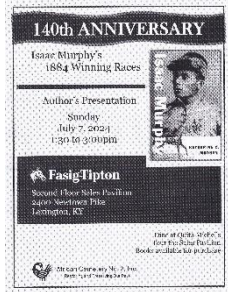


(February 14)

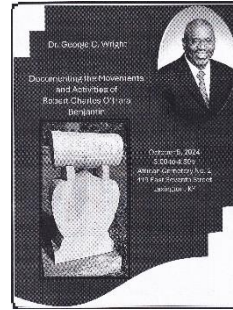
Women's Month Virtual Walking Tour (March 25)

Mulching Event with Trees Lexington! (April 20)

Katherine Mooney Receptions July 7 and November 21)

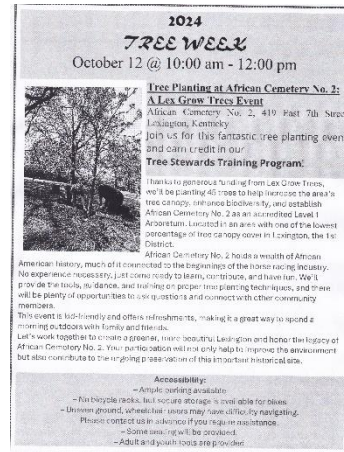
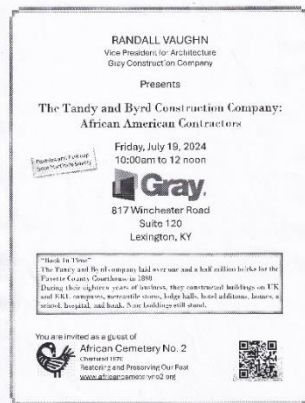


George Wright – R.C.O. Benjamin (October 5)

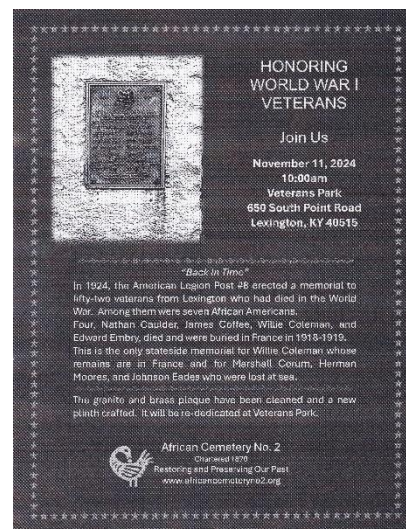


Tree Week Events (October 12-18)

Randall Vaughn - Tandy & Byrd Co. (July 19)



Veterans Day Re-Dedication (November 1)



Collaborators

Hoe & Hope Garden Club of Lexington

Since 2021 Hoe & Hope Garden Club of Lexington has collaborated with African Cemetery No. 2 to improve the landscaping at the front gates and assist with other gardening projects. This has included a grant to the Garden Clubs of America to upgrade the front gates with new plantings and gravel paving.



Trees Lexington!

Trees Lexington! has been an active collaborator through providing new tree species to populate African Cemetery No. 2 as well as conduct annual mulching and pruning demonstrations in the cemetery to help maintain the tree canopy. African Cemetery No. 2 has also become the location of a community wood chip drop to provide residents in the east end with a ready source of landscaping materials for their gardens.

Phoenix Rising of Lexington

In addition to supporting production of new archival panels recognizing individuals in the Equine Industry, Phoenix Rising has been annually planting flowers around these panels to improve their landscaping.

Presentations

Hoe 'N Hope Garden Club (May 7) – M.S. Coyne
Mt. Brilliant Farm (May 14) – Y. Giles
Caden Town (June 4) – Y. Giles
Down to Earth Garden Club (July 1) – M.S. Coyne
Camp Nelson Panel (July 14) – Y. Giles



Community Service Events

It was another busy year for service events, which occurred from March to November:

Hoe & Hope Garden Club of Lexington: Monthly - March through October

Trees Lexington! Mulch Day (April 20)
SGA Community Service Days (April 6)
Boy Scout Troop #382 (April 16)
The Ed Brown Group (April 20)
Alpha Kappa Alpha (June 8)
KY Co-Op Extension 4H teen conference (June 13)
Governor's Scholars for the Arts Community Service Day (June 20)
UK SGA Community service activity (June 20)
Down to Earth Garden Club (July 1)
Governor's Scholars for the Arts Community Service Day (July 17)
Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Human
Services (August 31)
UK Pharmacy (Phi Lambda Sigma) (October 1)
Alpha Kappa Alpha (October 12)
King Solomon #8 Masonic Lodge (October 12)
Trees Lexington! Tree Week Tree Planting
(October 12)
UK Wildcat Wranglers (November 2)
LDS Boy Scout Group (November 9)



Visitors

The cemetery often has visitors on a scheduled and unscheduled basis. This year we had educational sessions with the UK Monuments Group (June 3) and Churchill Downs Education Group (July 29). The Monuments Group was organized to protect monuments directly related to African Americans in Kentucky. Churchill Downs was interested in the potential for educational programming and developing an awareness of the cemetery with respect to the Kentucky Derby.

Film crews were in the cemetery collecting background footage for various documentaries. One group was there for a documentary on black athletes in sport featuring Harry Edwards (UC Berkeley Sociologist) (February 9)

Brennon Hoskins (October) (Harrison Co. Schools and GSA Scholar) produced a Videography Project in the cemetery.

Initiatives

Military Marker Replacement

Since 2022 we have been replacing military markers for USCT veterans known to be buried in African Cemetery No. 2 for whom the original marker was lost or damaged. To date we have replaced 13 markers. This year we replaced six markers. In conjunction with this effort, we are creating a database for all USCT veterans buried in the cemetery with the goal of developing a memorial plaque listing all individuals. There are currently 168 USCT veterans buried in the cemetery based on archival research. Only Lexington Cemetery has more USCT burials. In addition there are 15 Buffalo Soldier/Spanish American War, 30 WW I, and 2 WW II veterans buried in the cemetery.



Equine Recognition

For the past three years Howard Myers, a member of Phoenix Rising, has planted flowers by our markers recognizing notable individuals in the equine industry. Additional markers are in the process of installation. The Down To Earth Garden Club provided a grant to plant Blackeyed Susans in the cemetery for any individuals associated with the Preakness.



Tree Plantings

African Cemetery No. 2 has embarked on an ambitious plan to significantly replant the cemetery with native tree species and apply for classification as a Class I arboretum (see below). There are almost 400 mature trees and saplings in the cemetery at present, which includes at least 96 unique tree species and 14 species of bushes and shrubs. Seventy-four of these species are native to Kentucky. Much of this work has been performed in collaboration with Trees Lexington! and UK Co-operative Extension, which have provided materials and assisted with planting.

501(c)(3) Transition

To take advantage of greater grant and funding opportunities the Cemetery Board collaborated with the UK Legal Clinic to change our tax-exempt status from (c)(13) (nonprofit cemetery) to (c)(3). This effort was spearheaded by Treasurer Alan Hetzel. We are pleased to announce that as of 10/02/2024 we were awarded that status.

Farm Services Number

Although African Cemetery No. 2 is within the LFUCG urban service area, it is still an agricultural landscape. With that in mind, we applied for and received a Farm Services Number that allows the

Cemetery Board to apply for matching grants from the USDA for infrastructure initiatives and tree plantings. As the benefits of the cemetery for improved environmental quality manifest themselves, the cemetery board can take advantage of its expanded mission and apply for funding.

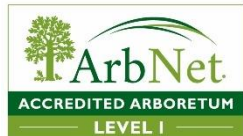
Artisanal Bench

In late September the remnants of Hurricane Helene swept through Lexington and toppled a large Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) that had been planted in the cemetery by Thomas Munday *ca.* 1995. With the assistance of Phi Sigma Lambda – the Service Fraternity of UK Pharmacy – the debris was cleared leaving a large 14’ long trunk. Rather than dispose of this trunk we are attempting create an *in situ* bench with the support of local artists in Lexington. We hope the project will be completed in 2025.



Arboretum Accreditation

In November we applied for and were accredited by ArbNet (The Interactive Community of Arboreta)(ArbNet.org) as a Class I Arboretum. The criteria we met were as follows: having an arboretum plan; having an organizational group; having at least 25 or more labeled tree or woody plant taxa; having volunteer staff; providing public access and at least one event each year. Signage will be in place by 2025 to acknowledge the change in status. The certification can be viewed at: <https://arbnet.org/morton-register/african-cemetery-no-2>.



2024 Donors and Sponsors

Grants

Down to Earth Garden Club
Lexington Parks and Recreation
Lex Grow Trees (under the umbrella of Trees Lexington!)

Donations

Anonymous	Michael Coyne & Victoria Merlo
Robert Bell	Thomas Coyne & Phyllis Erikson
Marcia Bloxsom	Lee Nora Gray
Marie Bradshaw	Kaelin Hadley
Bill Cane	Hoe & Hope Garden Club
Annette Castle	Janet Howard
Unitarian Universalist Church	Mary Malone
Mark & Sharon Coyne	Thomas Newton

In-Kind

Alpha Kappa Alpha Service Sorority	Howard Myers
Down to Earth Garden Club	Bruce Mundy
Ann Freytag	Oakland Farm Trees, Paris KY
Keeneland Library	Trees Lexington!
Lexington Tree Service	UK Legal Clinic

Volunteers

JaCorey Brown	Gavin Lincoln
Saunda Coleman	'B' Meade
Marilyn Dishman	Bruce Mundy
Tyson Gregory	Howard Myers
Jacob Kauer	Thomas Tolliver
Laurella Lederer	

(If you know of individuals or groups that have been left off this list please let us know.)

The Year in Pictures



Archive records



On a sunny but chilly April 20th, adults, young people and children from Latter Day Saints and Trees Lexington came to plant and mulch trees and the Ed Brown Society gathered to clean monuments.



In honor of Oliver Lewis's inaugural win in the Kentucky Derby a limited edition of Rye Whiskey was released and available in time for the May celebration of his win.



On July 7, over 125 people came to Fasig Tipton Sales Pavilion to hear Dr. Katherine Mooney speak about her newest book, *Isaac Murphy: The Rise and Fall of a Black Jockey*. It was one of three nominated for the 2024 Dr. Tony Ryan Book Award.

Nineteenth Annual Juneteenth Jubilee©

Following the presentation of Ranger Steve Phan, Camp Nelson National Monument, six replacement military headstones for United States Colored Troops veterans were dedicated. Through the end of the year, we have 175 USCT veterans in the cemetery.

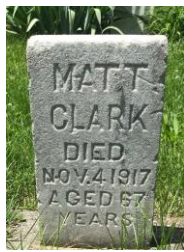


Summer is a good time to visit the cemetery and see the Crape Myrtles in Bloom.



Tree Week 2024 in Lexington started on Saturday, October 12 with a tree planting event followed the rest of the week by tours of cemetery trees and their relation to its history.

On Veteran's Day (November 1) a marker honoring veterans from WW I was re-dedicated at Veteran's Park in Lexington. Nathan Caulder, who is buried in the cemetery, is one of those noted.



Cleaning markers has been an ongoing restoration and preservation project for the cemetery. Individuals who come for Work/Service Learning have done a great job. Soft bristle brushes and toothbrushes, gallons of tap water, plus lots of gentle brushing, works wonders. Thank you!