

African Cemetery No. 2, Inc.

(a 501c13 Corporation)

2023 Annual Report

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

It has been a pleasure serving another year as chair of African Cemetery No. 2, Inc. Each year brings new improvements to the cemetery and greater community awareness of the historical, cultural, and social roles African Cemetery No. 2 has for Lexington.

It has been a busy year. How can you tell? In addition to our Juneteenth event (Lexington's longest continuous celebration of this holiday) we had seven other events in the cemetery spanning the nine months from March to November. There were 18 different community work events, four school visits, three presentations, and two local events that noted the significance of the cemetery during the same period.

Our collaboration with Hoe 'N Hope Garden Club of Lexington and TreesLexington led to African Cemetery No. 2 being awarded a Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation Award for Landscaping.

We are in the midst of several important initiatives at the cemetery: replacing lost military markers for United States Colored Troops; updating signage; applying for certification as a Class I arboretum; transitioning to a 501c3 corporation. All these activities have benefitted from the assistance of numerous volunteers who have contributed to the mission of African Cemetery No. 2, Inc. in preserving and protecting the cemetery as a living history of the East End in Lexington.

Mark Coyne, Chair, African Cemetery No. 2, Inc.

A Word From the Archives

When African Cemetery No. 2 board was established in 1980, some biographical information about individuals buried on site was known. Since 1995, consistent archive research has expanded our knowledge.

The largest number of burials of African American men of the equine industry are here in this cemetery. Most of them lived in the East End and had worked at the Kentucky Association racetrack, built in 1828, very near this site. The labor and expertise of these men were critical to the foundation of the multi-billion-dollar industry in Kentucky. As of 2023, one-hundred-eighty-five men had been employed by leading breeding and racing operations.

To name a few:

John E. Madden - Hamburg Stud

T.C. McDowell - Ashland Stud

Chinn and Morgan Stables

Forsythe Stable

J.T. Williams Stable

Byron McClelland - McClelland Stable

R.A. Alexander - Woodburn Farm

H.P. McGrath - McGrathiana Farm

Elizabeth Daingerfield - Faraway Farm

E.R. Bradley - Idle Hour Farm

Abe Buford - Bosque Bonita Farm

John Harper - Nantura Farm

B.G. Thomas - Dixiana Farm

Dan Swigert - Stockwood and

Elmendorf Farms

Employers outside the state have included Oden Bowie of Maryland, Ed Corrigan of Chicago, Leonard Jerome of New York, James R. Keene of New York, and Ben Ali Haggin of California.

The other group of men at the forefront of our research are those who served in the military. In 1995, eighty-three men were identified by their military markers. A search of military records and death certificates increased the number to two hundred, a 41.5% increase. As of 2023, there are:

153 Civil War's United States Colored Troops

15 Indian Wars' Buffalo Soldiers / Spanish American War

30 World War I

2 World War II

Among Civil War veterans are three free men of color who joined the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Infantry regiments. During World War I, two men served overseas in the 369th Infantry, 93rd Division known as the 'Harlem Hellfighters'.

One hundred ten builders of our environment have caught our attention. They were house joiners, brick and stone masons, carpenters, plasterers, painters, and fresco artists. In 1995 we were unaware that a founder of an African American construction company had been buried in the cemetery. Albert Byrd's grave marker has a death date of 1909, which was confirmed by death certificate and obituaries. It was learned that he and Henry Tandy, in 1893, co-founded the Tandy and Byrd Construction Company. They built fifteen buildings during sixteen years of business. Of the nine standing are Miller Hall constructed on the

University of Kentucky's campus in 1897 and Lexington's Court House rebuilt after a fire in 1898. The edifice was renovated and repurposed in 2021.

A fourth group being researched are Notable Women. March 25th during Women's History Month, some who had attended a conference at the University of Kentucky came to the cemetery to participate in a hands-on workshop. In preparation for their visit, a list of women whose grave markers stood on site was made. Using soft brushes and water, the group cleaned a dozen markers. Biographies of these were developed into a self-guided Notable Women's Walking Tour. Research on other women has been added to our list.

During 2021, we received a request from a descendant about family members who had been buried in the cemetery in the early 1900s. This led to finding death certificates. Utilizing the resources of Ancestry.com, the family genealogy was constructed. It was discovered that the nationally and internationally known poet Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) was related to them. When asked, a casual comment was given "yes we know." It truly was a pleasant surprise for us! Matilda Burton Dunbar's siblings and their families lived in Lexington. They were aunts, uncles, and cousins of Paul Laurence Dunbar. His week-long sojourns in Lexington inspired a poem "After A Visit" published in 1896.

The home of the sexton of the cemetery and the burial records were destroyed by fire in 1906. Dr. Anne Butler, a 1995 board member, began creating a database of burials from archived death certificates. She passed before completing the task. Another board member, Allan Hetzel, began again and has created a database which confirms 7, 615 burials from 1894 to 1963. As other years of death certificates are released into public domain, they will be searched for additional burials. Ruth Jenkins' grave marker gives a death date of 1974. Using Ancestry.com, her internment as well as her husband's burial in 1976 have been confirmed. We have assumed that these would have been the last burials prior to 1980. Only time and diligent search will tell. Grave markers were surveyed in 2003. A list of 1,132 remaining was printed in 2009.

Yvonne Giles, Education Coordinator, 12/2023

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About African Cemetery No. 2, Inc.

OUR STORY

This is the earliest recorded cemetery in Lexington to be organized, owned, and managed by African Americans. It began in 1869 and burials continued until 1976. The people here were important leaders in Lexington. Like many private cemeteries it was not endowed and 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 and was declared abandoned on April 17, 1973. City government claimed ownership and surveyed graves in the cemetery in anticipation of planned development; the revelation of over 5000 burial sites precluded that use.

In March 1979, the Rev. H. H. Greene organized a nonprofit group as African Cemetery No. 2, Inc. to reclaim the landscape. The cemetery was cleared 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.

2023 Board of Directors

Chair: Mark Coyne, PhD

Secretary: Phaon Patton

Treasurer: Allan Hetzel

Education Coordinator: Yvonne Giles

Community Liaison: Charles Washington

Web Master: Theodora Salazar

Members At Large

Saunda Coleman

Laurella Lederer

Board Alumni

Gary Brown

Dr. Anne Butler†

Dr. Jim Cobb

Sonny Claiborne

Marilyn Dishman

Jim Embry

Elizabeth Lawson

Bruce Mundy

Thomas Mundy†

Alvin Seals

Stella Stewart†

†Deceased

Volunteers

Marilyn Dishman

Tyson Gregory

Bruce Mundy

Howard Myers

'B' Meade

Thomas Tolliver

Award

Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation - May 21, 2023

Dr. Coyne was presented with the Landscape Award for his leadership in improving the greenspace of the cemetery.

Programs

Derby Day

On Saturday, May 6, we conducted our first Derby Day Tour based on new information we have gathered about the jockeys and trainers associated with the Kentucky Derby.

Memorial Day (May 30)



In addition to placing flags at all veteran markers, we participated in “Taps Across America”.

Veterans buried in national and private cemeteries are remembered at 3:00 pm with the playing of Taps.



Juneteenth (June 10)

Juneteenth (Juneteenth National Independence Day) is our biggest event of the year, and 2023 was no exception. The event was held adjacent to our newly installed replacement markers for United States Colored Troop veterans. Re-enactors of the USCT 12th Heavy Artillery Regiment and the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War posted and retired the colors. Music provided by Yolanda Jackson was followed by a brief lecture on Kentucky’s United States Colored Troops given by Dr. Alicestyne Turley. The June 19th announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation by General Gordon Granger in Texas was read by re-enactor Bernie O’Bryan.

Pollinator Week (June 19-25)

Lexington held its 1st Pollinator Week in June and African Cemetery No. 2 was the site of one of the weekly events using our tree canopy as the background to explain the critical role of trees for pollinators.

Tree Week (October 6-15)

We closed the year of events over a three-day period during Tree Week by presenting “A History of the Cemetery in Eight Trees”.

Visitors

Living Arts and Science Center, 5th, 6th, 7th grades (March 27, 28, 29)
Transylvania University Freshmen (May 11)

Kentucky Tourism Bureau

The Kentucky Tourism Bureau is updating their website on cultural activities for Spring 2024. As part of that update, African Cemetery No. 2 was a location for a photoshoot.



Oliver Lewis Family

In collaboration with Phoenix Rising Lex and Keeneland Library the descendants of Oliver Lewis – winner of the 1st Kentucky Derby – visited Lexington over two days to learn more about their famous relative and visit his gravesite in African Cemetery No. 2.



Initiatives

Military Marker Replacement
Tree Plantings
Six Equine Professionals Archive Panels replaced
501(c)(3) transition

Collaborators

Hoe 'N Hope Garden Club of Lexington

Since 2021 members of the club have collaborated with African Cemetery No. 2 to improve the landscaping at the front gates and assist with other gardening projects. This included a grant from the Garden Clubs of America to upgrade the front gates with new plantings and gravel paving.

TreesLexington

TreesLexington 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 dump to provide residents in the East End with a ready source of landscaping materials for their gardens.

University of Kentucky Co-Operative Extension Service

UK Co-Operative Education Agents have assisted the cemetery in hosting 4-H visits, conducting our pollinator tree walks, and planting trees.

Presentations

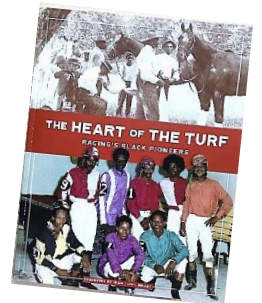
Volunteer Fair at UK (February 14)
Hoe 'N Hope Garden Club (May 2)
Faith Lutheran Church (August 7)

Community Service Events

Hoe 'N Hope Garden Club of Lexington: Monthly - March through October
UK Anthropology Department and Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies,
2023 Black Women's Conference (March 25)
TreesLexington Mulch Day (May 13)
UK Archaeology Ground Penetrating Radar Investigation (May 31)
UK Governor's Scholars for the Arts community service activity (June 3)
KY Co-Op Extension 4H (June 15)
UK Governor's Scholars for the Arts community service activity (June 22)
UK Governor's Scholars for the Arts community service activity (July 20)
Latter Day Saints community service (August 23 and September 6)
TreesLexington Tree Pruning Demonstration (September 23)
UK Undergraduate Research students, Special Collections (September 29)
UK Governor's Scholars for the Arts community service activity (September 30)
UK Pharmacy (Phi Lambda Sigma) (September 30)
UK Governor's Scholars for the Arts community service activity (October 7)
UK Wildcat Wranglers (October 8)
Faith Lutheran Church (October 12)
Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation community service day (October 13)
Alpha Kappa Alpha Service Sorority (October 14)
Latter Day Saints Boy Scout Group community service (November 11)

Other Local and Regional Involvement

Keeneland Library Exhibition "The Heart of the Turf: Racing's Black Pioneers"
(February 26)
KET Documentary "The Legacy of Black Horsemen" (November 20)



Donors, Sponsors and Grants

Anonymous Lee Nora Gray Janet Howard
Phoenix Rising Lex (PRLex) Unitarian Universalist Church
Lexington Fayette Urban County Government Parks and Recreation

In-Kind

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Bruce Mundy
Keeneland Library Howard Myers
Lexington Tree Service Robin Stroud
Oakland Farm Trees, Paris, Kentucky TreesLexington

The Year in Pictures

18th Annual Juneteenth Jubilee©



Service and Learning groups visit from March to November.



Governors Scholars for the Arts



H. Myers planting around Perkins' grave marker.



Weed and mulch around trees and shrubbery.

UK Faculty and students: Anthropology Department and Commonwealth Institute for Black Studies.



Pollinator Week



Stacy Borden,
Trees Lexington
Tyson Gregory, Coop.
Extension Service



Clean grave markers.

New Equine Sign: Perkins
Funded by Phoenix Rising Lex.



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority



For more photos and information:
Last Week in the Cemetery Blogs
by Dr. Mark Coyne.
[blog | African Cemetery No2](http://blog.AfricanCemeteryNo2)



Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation Community Service Day

