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Finding Lost Voices: An Archaeological Study of Historic, African American Burial Sites in North Georgia

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Finding Lost Voices: An Archaeological Study of Historic, African American Burial Sites in

North Georgia

by

Ayesha Khan

Under the Direction of Jeffrey Barron Glover, PhD

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

As the city of Atlanta rapidly expands, burial grounds that have been lost in history are being rapidly rediscovered. This project surveyed three historic, African American burial sites in North Georgia with the aim of documenting the sites for preservation purposes. Survey methodologies included ground-penetrating radar and ground probing. Site histories were compiled using archival data, oral history collection, and the analysis of historic maps. Ground-penetrating radar results were compared with previous surveys for verification. This work has been conducted through the framework of archaeological praxis, where the project design and implementation was conducted in consultation with local stakeholders with the ultimate goal of benefitting community members and stakeholders. Additionally, this research provides a case study for the benefits of community-based archaeological projects. Deliverables included georeferenced maps, processed GPR data, and comprehensive site histories built upon both archival data and the unwritten, oral histories provided by individual, community members and community-based organizations.

INDEX WORDS: African American Cemeteries, Applied Anthropology, Archaeological Geophysics, Archaeological Praxis, Historical Archaeology

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DEDICATION

For Nana – I hope you like it.

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1   INTRODUCTION

African American burial grounds in the Southern United States have been historically neglected and mistreated, including those that are located within well-maintained, white cemeteries. This lack of maintenance is due to a combination of factors including the migration of founding communities due to chronic, socioeconomic inequity and racism experienced by African Americans in the antebellum, post-civil war, and Jim Crow eras (Barrell 2016; Bigman 2013; Borg 2018; Brooks 2011; Jones 2011; Joseph 2004; Ozga 2015; Suggs 2017; Wright 2019). In some cases, African American burial sites have been erased from the collective memories of the communities surrounding them, often causing them to fall into disrepair or resulting in them being inadvertently, and sometimes purposefully, damaged or destroyed during the processes of urban expansion. As the city of Atlanta rapidly develops and expands, historic African American burial grounds are being re-discovered in urban, suburban, and rural locations creating an opportunity to survey and map them while documenting the cultural themes, symbols, and practices embedded within them.

The mass migration of black communities out of the South resulted in the abandonment of burial sites that had been established in urban and rural post-emancipation communities. African Americans shared a particularly close relationship with the natural environment due to Western African spiritual beliefs and a physical connection to the lands that they intensively worked not just during slavery but also during the sharecropping practices that followed (Joseph et al. 2004). White enslavers typically established burial grounds for their enslaved populations in areas that were not considered arable land. This placement inadvertently provided the interred populations with the added benefit of burial grounds that were less likely to be disturbed, in comparison to land that had the potential to be planted during future farming seasons (Bigman

2013; Brooks 2011; Glover et al. 2010; Jones 2011; Ozga et al. 2015). These sites, in some cases, have remained on the fringes of the urban expanse for decades without disturbance while others are hidden in plain sight in constant danger of being impacted by urban development. However, even their existence in liminal and peripheral spaces cannot outlast the rapid development in the Southeast that has taken place over the last few decades.

From 1990 to 2020, the Atlanta regional population increased by nearly 200% jumping from approximately two and a half million people to just below five million. With this population explosion came the expansion of metro Atlanta suburbs and an accompanying boom in housing and commercial development over the same period (Skinner 2021). As metro Atlanta continues to develop and expand, cemetery sites are being uncovered in urban and suburban neighborhoods at an alarming rate. This rapid expansion has created a situation where sites must be documented to ensure the preservation of these sacred spaces along with their associated cultural themes, practices, and symbols. The three sites chosen for study are historically significant for local Atlanta and Georgia history as well as African American history pertaining to enslaved peoples and their descendant communities. Collectively, the site histories, the populations buried there, the stories surrounding them, and the documentation and dissemination of these materials will contribute to and help shape the discourse surrounding historic, African American burial sites in and around Atlanta and the Southeastern United States. Additionally, this research provides insight into how these sites can be documented and preserved for future generations.

1.1   Brief Site Descriptions

Each of the burial sites surveyed in this study represented a different type of historic, African American burial site that is either poorly known or undocumented. The Cohentown

cemetery represents a cemetery established by a freedman community on privately owned land where the exact location was previously lost due to the community's forced abandonment of their settlement due to economic hardship during the great depression. The Farmer Street Cemetery represents a city-owned and maintained site that has remained in the consciousness of descendant community members, but over time became unknown to the municipal administration of the city until an elderly member of the community came forward at a time when the cemetery was in danger of being impacted by development. This cemetery is potentially the final resting place of enslaved populations from several area plantations as well as freedmen from the historic, African American Chalk Level neighborhood. Lastly, the Historic Utoy Cemetery exemplifies a site type where the portion of the cemetery interred with the white population is more visible and therefore better documented than the unknown, fieldstone marked portion, which is thought to be associated with members of the African American community buried there. Utoy is owned and maintained by a board of trustees composed of descendants of the white, interred population.

In each instance, the burial site requires archaeological methodologies to document and verify the site histories to fulfill various needs of the descendants and community organization. The verification of the presence of grave shafts in the given areas aid both in the protection of the burials as well as helping community organizations, city administration, and family members maintain the sites for future generations. Additionally, The stakeholders for the Farmer Street and Cohentown Cemetery intend to use the information collected to aid in their applications for the National Register of Historic Places. The Utoy Cemetery is already listed but hopes to use the located burial information to construct more visible grave markers in the cemetery. Detailed

site histories, site maps, research methodologies, and data analyses will be covered in detail in subsequent chapters.
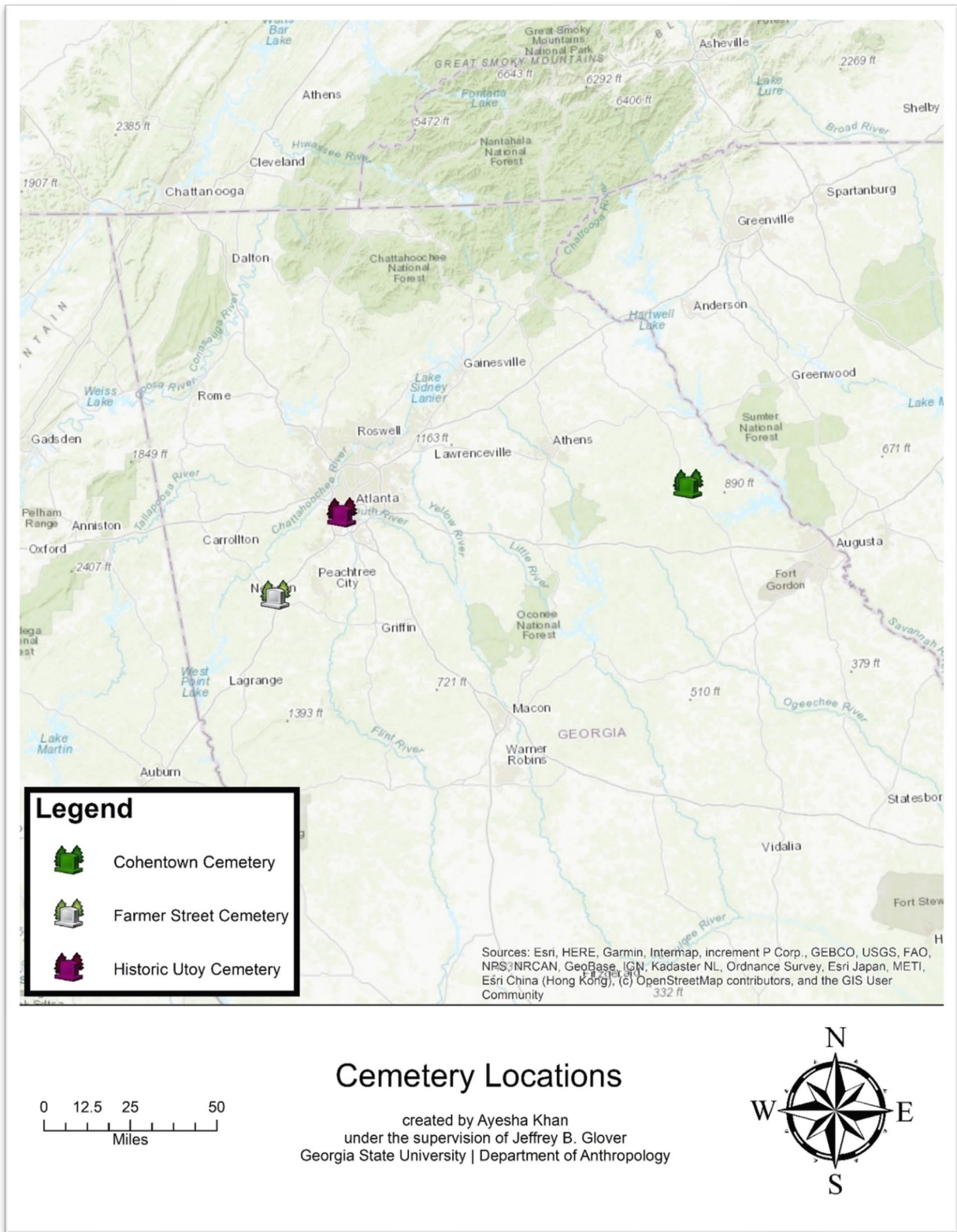
Figure 1.1 Map of North Georgia with the three cemetery locations marked with headstone icons

1.2   Project Background

The Cohentown Cemetery, Farmer Street Cemetery, and Historic Utoy Cemetery projects all began at varying times between 2019 and 2020. The survey for each site was requested by either community stakeholders or descendant family members. Preliminary site visits were conducted at each cemetery after the initial communication of the need for work. During these site visits the environment was observed to determine whether or not ground-penetrating radar would be a feasible option for effectively searching for burials at the site or if an alternative methodology needed to be utilized.

After the preliminary visit, each site had between one and four subsequent visits where the cemeteries were mapped using a combination of collecting total station points, surveying ground-penetrating radar grids, and performing ground probing. Ground-penetrating radar grids were laid out according to environmental conditions where the grids covered the largest, and most unobstructed area possible within the cemetery. On-site research at the Cohentown Cemetery was conducted in a single day with the help of numerous volunteers due to its distance from Atlanta approximately five miles northeast of Washington, Georgia. The Farmer Street Cemetery survey, conducted in Newnan, Georgia approximately 35 miles southwest of Atlanta, spanned six, full-day visits with a rotation of volunteer help from Georgia State University and members of the Coweta County African American Alliance. Finally, the Historic Utoy Cemetery, in southwest Atlanta, took four visits to survey with the help of additional volunteers from Georgia State University and a member of the Utoy Cemetery Board of Trustees.

1.3   Research Questions

This project serves, in part as a preservation tool for the historic knowledge embedded within the three cemetery sites. It also provides a comparative perspective on burial practices within and around a large, growing urban location, and allows for the comparison of the effectiveness of ground-penetrating radar methodologies according to varying environmental site conditions. In addition to survey and mapping, this project consolidates the existing archival research and documentation related to each cemetery to build a unique site history. When possible, oral histories are collected from community and descendant family members, although in some cases this work has already been done by community members. The data collected, the historic records, newly created maps, and photographs taken during the process of research will all be included within the deliverables presented to the community and family stakeholders for these projects.

This research has been consciously conducted through the framework of archaeological praxis as the individual sites are being documented at the request of community and family members. With their help and support, this research adds to existing knowledge of enslaved and post-emancipated peoples' burial sites in the American South and the metro-Atlanta area, as well as compiling the unique histories of each individual cemetery.

1.4   Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 begins with an in-depth analysis of cultural factors and frameworks used to situate archival history, oral history, project design, and analysis of the GPR data. Situating the histories of the sites within their general, cultural contexts provides a lens for understanding the sociohistorical factors that contributed to each cemetery's present-day status. The chapter begins with an overview of African American cultural history in the Southeast as well as sociohistorical

factors that resulted in the mass abandonment of cemetery sites. From there it continues to describe how sites are being uncovered and re-discovered during development across the American South. This chapter also discusses types of grave markers typically encountered in historic, African American burial grounds, and finally discusses the connection between environmental stewardship, memorial parks, and African American burial grounds.

Chapter 3 addresses the theoretical frameworks of archaeological praxis and community archaeology, which provided a base for project's research design. Additionally, in this chapter I discuss archaeology as a form of social justice and discusses how a project based in African American diasporic archaeology was developed with aid and input from community and family stakeholders with preservation and research interests at each cemetery.

Chapter 4 begins with a general overview of the survey methodologies utilized for mapping cemeteries. This overview segues into a discussion of the various methodologies used for site surveys and the compilation of site histories. This chapter includes sections for ground-penetrating radar, ground probing, and mapping using GIS to visualize the collected data. The individual sections include case studies consulted during literature review, technical information on each archaeological method, and environmental justifications for each method used.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are each dedicated to a cemetery site and detail the site histories created from a combination of archival research, oral histories, and previous survey data. These chapters are broken down into sections on site history, survey methodologies chosen, and challenges faced at each site. At the end of each chapter are each site's survey results. These sections also contain site maps and ground-penetrating radar grid images showing the processed data.

Chapters 8 discusses the survey results at each site and situates the findings within the current discourse surrounding African American burial sites, site preservation, and community archaeology. Chapter 9 provides site-tailored recommendations for preservation, documentation, and memorialization at each of the historic cemeteries. Finally, Chapter 10 provides some final thoughts about the broader implications of my research.

2   CULTURAL HISTORY

2.1   The Great Migration and Historic Neglect

Following the Civil War, members of African-American communities began migrating in search of better living conditions both to escape poor socio-economic circumstances and in search of physical safety. Jim Crow era laws and physical violence against African-Americans were increasingly occurring in rural, Southern communities. These horrific acts included shootings, rapes, beatings, and lynching which scared black communities into evacuating their settled communities. These massive migratory movements increased following World War I, when restrictive and discriminatory southern laws pushed southern black workers north, where the loss of immigrant workers allowed southern migrants higher wages in manufacturing plants. The pursuit of better living conditions drove rural, African-American communities from the South to the North, from rural to urban settings, and from violent southern states into states with less violence (Figure 2.1) (Tolnay 1992).

Over time, the memory of the existence of these burial sites was lost to the surrounding communities, and since they were utilized by a population of low-socioeconomic status, the spaces that they occupied were not always documented in official city or county records. In the case of the Flat Rock community, their still-active community was removed from area maps, and it can be deduced that racial biases of the time played a role in the community's removal from official documents (Glover et al. 2010; Glover et al. 2012). As is the case for multiple sites researched for this paper, despite knowing of the potential existence of a burial site in the vicinity, construction companies and developers continued building regardless of potential site presence which ultimately led to destruction of burials (Borg 2018; Bigman 2017; Ozga et al. 2015; Schwarz 2013; Shaw 2019; Suggs 2017).

Figure 2.1 An African American family leaves Florida for the North during the Great Depression - date unknown (Getty Images, 2021)

Adding to the challenge of recognizing unmarked graves is the removal of field stones by private developers and public work crews for the purpose of cleaning-up land. Municipal crews conducting clean-up surveys removed head and foot stones at Newnan's Farmer Street Cemetery (Bentley 2019), the Piney Grove Cemetery in Atlanta, Georgia (Suggs 2017), and the Prior Family Cemetery in Morgan County, Georgia (Bigman 2013. Additionally, racist sentiments carried into the present day have resulted in known grave sites and memorials being purposefully desecrated in the form of grave markers being knocked down and broken, headstones removed or displaced from the associated burial, and death memorials being shot at and vandalized, such as the one memorializing the burial site of Emmett Till (Bentley 2019; Shares 2020; Suggs 2017). Protection against the destruction of grave sites is an act that can be prevented through proper

site categorization and documentation aided by archaeological work aimed at registering these

sites so that they are protected under the scope of state laws.

Figure 2.2 A Civil War map used by the Union army showing the communities of Flat Rock and Utoy (wikipedia.org 2021)

2.2   Unmarked Burials and Cemetery Sites

Now and in the recent past, African American cemeteries, especially those established in

the 19th century, have been more susceptible to looting and damage than the cemeteries of their

white counterparts. America's history of systemic racism is a contributing factor to the

devaluation of non-white historic sites. These sentiments have persisted into the 21st century and

manifested themselves in the conscious, and subconscious, disregard for the cultural and historic value embedded in African American cemeteries. These racial sentiments have affected burial sites in multiple ways. In the past, this has been observed in the actions of individuals actively removing fieldstone grave markers from cemeteries in the name of cleaning up the land for use as park and agricultural land.

In the 1930s, when the city of Newnan, Georgia decided to repurpose the cemetery land as a city park, the cemetery was walled off and a new location was established in the eastern portion of the city and the fieldstone and home-made grave markers were removed as part of an effort to clean the park (Bentley 2019). The Prior Family Cemetery in North Georgia had the fieldstones removed by a maintenance crew in the 1970s, who also failed to inform the property owner of their removal (Bigman 2013: 18). And a historic cemetery in Northern Virginia had its fieldstones removed when a farmer relocated the stones to the base of a tree to prevent his cattle from tripping over them while grazing (Rainville 2009: 201). Additionally, in situ fieldstone grave markers can be disregarded by surveyors not taking the time to properly identify a newly discovered graveyard, and this can be exacerbated by dense ground vegetation making it difficult to discern the presence of *in situ* fieldstones (Rainville 2009: 200).

Figure 2.3 A quartz, fieldstone grave marker with a pin flag marking grave depressions at the Cohentown Cemetery in Washington, Georgia (photo taken by author)

In other cases, commercial and residential developers have chosen to continue construction on sites that may potentially be on or near historic cemeteries. An unidentified cemetery in Fort Bend County, Texas was encroached upon by construction crews that were initially unaware of its presence. After a local judge granted the developer permission to continue construction despite having become aware of a cemetery containing one hundred unmarked graves in close proximity to the project (Borg 2018). Rainville (2008) describes three out of the four cemeteries in her research area in Virginia as having been negatively affected or damaged by new construction projects over the past twenty years.

In Atlanta, Georgia, the Piney Grove Cemetery located in the affluent Buckhead neighborhood was damaged during a residential construction project when an archaeological firm only partially surveyed the area and failed to delineate the limits of the cemetery causing several burials to be destroyed and constructed over (Suggs 2017). Adding to the proclivity for destruction, the lack of demarcation for African American burials means that the sites are often omitted from United States Geodetic Survey (USGS) maps and property deeds making their identification and protection more difficult (Rainville 2009: 196). A primary example of this is the African American burial grounds in New York City where twenty thousand burials were located after a Manhattan construction project had already begun damaging some of the graves, despite the cemetery's presence on historic maps of the area shown in Figure 2.4 (LaRoche and Blakey 1997).

Figure 2.4 A Maerschiack map of the City of New York made in 1754 that clearly shows the African Burial Grounds and the surrounding neighborhoods (Library of Congress: 2021)

2.3   Traditional Grave Markers and the Significance of Fieldstones

Not all African American cemeteries are defined by unmarked burials. There are many examples of sites with grave markers representing a variety of cultural and religious beliefs. The African American Burial grounds in New York City produced a wide variety of grave goods and grave markers representing religious symbolism from Muslim, East African, and West African traditions on headstones, coffin lids, and grave goods all of which were only identified when analyzed by archaeologists specializing in African and Islamic cultures. These symbols include crescent star iconography and heart-shapes significant in West African cultures (LaRoche and Blakey 1997).

Brooks (2011) also identifies a wide variety of West African, South American, and Islamic traditions represented in the markers present at her coastal South Carolina sites. She makes the argument that the grave markers and grave goods present are not only representative of the various cultures represented by the enslaved African community interred at her burial sites, but the mortuary practices observed in those cemeteries are a synthesis of European, Muslim, and African burial traditions including grave goods, orientation, and funerary rituals. Similar observations of synthesized burial practices have also been documented at the Mount Auburn Cemetery and African Burial Grounds in New York reflected both in marker selections, grave orientation, and types of grave goods recovered from the internments (Jones 2011; La Roche & Blakey 1997). No fieldstones were found in relation to any of the burials, however she observed strategically placed stones, metal name plates, uninscribed wooden posts, palmetto and yucca plants, bleached seashells, porcelain and tin containers, and glassware examples of which are depicted in Figure 2.5 (Brooks 2011: 180-181). A similar combination of metal plaque and fieldstone markers have also been observed at the Flat Rock Cemetery in Lithonia, Georgia (Glover et al. 2010: 96).

Figure 2.5 An African American Cemetery from the Beaufort County, South Carolina area in the early 20ᵗʰ century showing an array of grave goods - including bottles, plates, and bowls (The Chicora Foundation: 1996)

Fieldstone markers in African American cemeteries seem to be the most common form of demarcating burials; however, this type of marking is not exclusively found at African American cemeteries. Fieldstones have also been observed as grave markers in rural, white cemeteries. Often, these were opportunistically obtained granite or quartz stones already present in the environment surrounding the cemetery or burial site that were placed at the head and foot of the burial. Occasionally stones were anthropomorphically altered to resemble the shape of an eye, pointed on the edges and round in the middle, to symbolize the eyes of the dead watching over the living (Brown 2018: 4). Rainville (1999) argues that in some African American burial sites, the type of field stone utilized can be indicative of certain social factors such as an individual's status within their community, a child burial, or an individual with elevated socioeconomic

status. This concept is reinforced in Brown (2018) where the suspected child burials have been marked with pink quartz (Figure 2.3).

Inscribed headstones or fieldstones are a rarity in African American cemeteries accounting for only approximately five percent of grave markers present in the material record (Rainville quoted in Brown 2018). The headstones may have names and occasionally dates, but more than likely are inscribed with symbols or reversed letters indicating some kind of code being used as a cultural adaptation against the institution of slavery. During the antebellum period, Nat Turner's slave rebellion directly resulted in the criminalization of African American literacy, therefore following that event few individuals attempted any type of detailed nomenclature on grave markers to avoid retribution by enslavers. Additionally, inscribed headstones in the antebellum and postbellum periods were pricey and could only be afforded by a select few with access to additional financial resources or those who were of elevated community status (Rainville 2008). Hand-shaped concrete markers have also been observed as grave markers and have occasionally been identified with significant symbols, initials, or dates (Rainville 2014). In later, 20th century burials, African American funeral homes would provide cast cement headstones (Figure 3.1 below) or metal plaques that held the name of the deceased on a piece of paper. While more visible and, therefore, durable than fieldstones, these markers can still be easily moved and do not compare to the marble and granite headstones found in more affluent, Euro-American cemeteries.

2.4 Memorial Parks and Environmental Stewardship

It was not uncommon for African American cemeteries in the ante- and postbellum periods to be located in areas considered to be peripheral or unusable. Brooks (2011) places emphasis on the intentional placement of the Bellefield and Alderiey cemeteries on swamp land

where the enslaved peoples' remains could remain undisturbed due to both physical inaccessibility and the inability to use swamp land for agriculture. Similarly, Jones (2011) describes the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland as a "place of environmental and cultural sustainability and an expression of an attitude toward nature and environment unique to African-American culture," (Jones 2011: 226). Both of these descriptions support the notion that enslaved African Americans and their descendants maintained a unique and nuanced relationship to the lands they were brought to live and work on which was maintained both in life, through their forced labor, and in death where their descendants were charged with the responsibility of maintaining their peripheral burial grounds. Furthermore, it is in these cemetery lands that enslaved communities could finally assert themselves in a way that was not dictated by white enslavers who aimed to constantly remind them of their subservient position in society.

Place-making systems of African Americans embraced disordered and free-flowing development around the natural world, which in a cemetery would present itself as unsymmetrical burials, shown in Figure 2.6, and the absence of headstones as grave markers (Chicora Foundation 2004; Jones 2011). This approach is a stark juxtaposition to the manicured lawns of European-garden style cemeteries maintained by the country's white population. This African American connection to the land and nature is supported by nature's consistent thematic appearance in slave spirituals where hills and valleys represent the highs and lows of life, and the recurring concept that both the land and the people must be free (Jones 2011: 233). It was also the peripheral placement of the cemeteries that contributed to both the loss of these places from collective memories. They are not in central places within communities and in many cases the descendant communities migrated from their homes in the 1920s and 1930s in search of social and financial betterment leaving sites unmaintained and abandoned. Their peripheral location,

however has conversely led to their preservation until recent times, because of their placement

on marginal lands.

Map of the Mount Pleasant cemetery, showing the location and orientation of recovered graves.
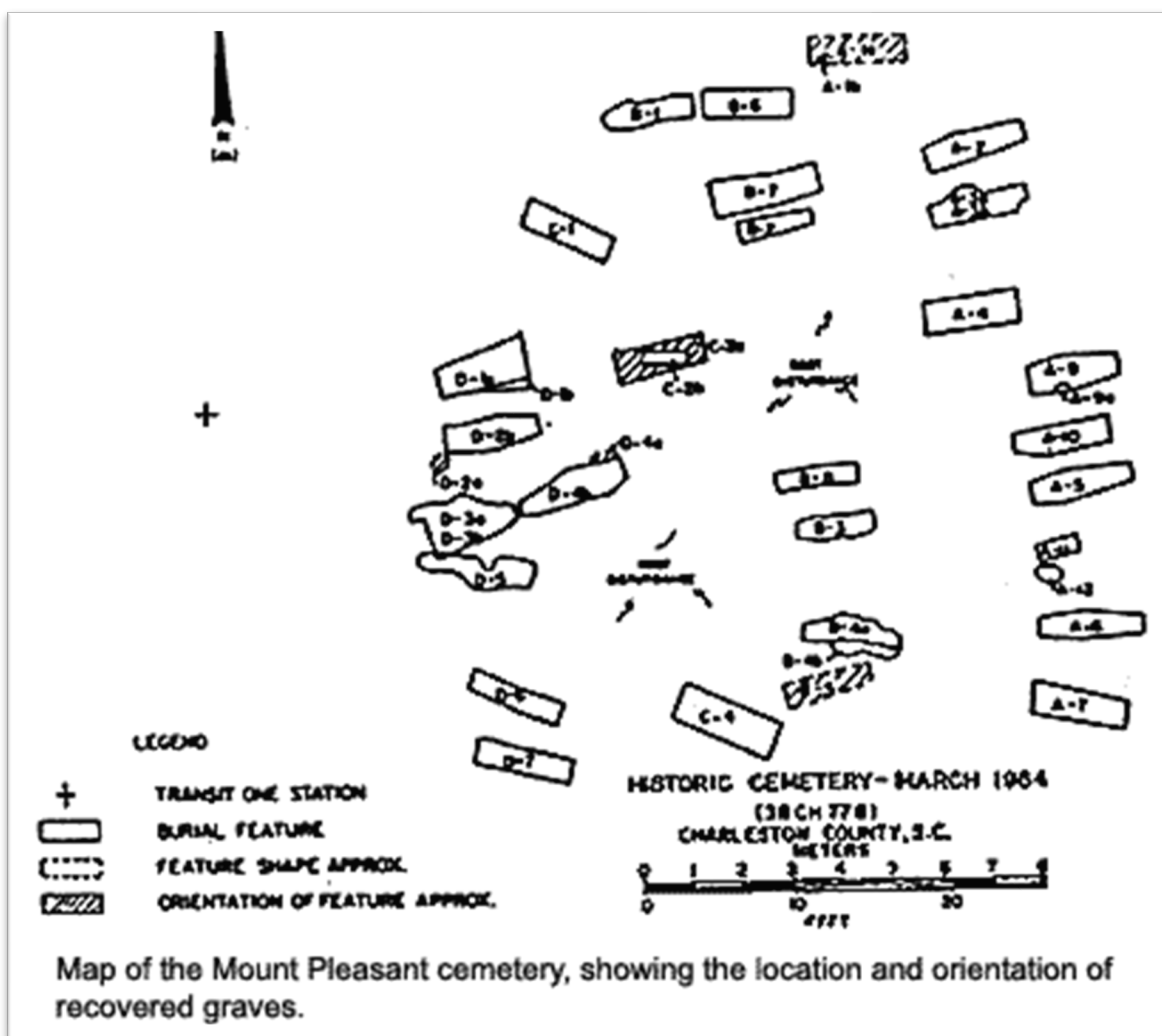
Figure 2.6 A map of the Mount Pleasant Cemetery, showing the location and orientation of recovered graves (The Chicora Foundation: 2020)

2.5 Legislative Protections for African American Burial Grounds

The cultural and historic value of cemeteries is the reason why these sites need extensive

and efficient research, documentation, and state and federal protection. Registered grave sites are

protected by both federal and state laws. Due to the historic exploitation of native communities,

the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) takes these protections for Native Americans a step further by affording additional protections to any grave goods, remains, or cultural items associated with Native American remains with mandatory repatriation of these items to the federally recognized nations from where they were stolen and looted (Kirsch 2018). No additional protections have been given to historic African-American remains or grave goods despite similar circumstances of bodily exploitation and grave looting. The protection of remains at historic burial sites is subsumed under common law pertaining to cemeteries and burials without distinction for historic African-American burials. However, several Georgia laws pertaining to protection of graves, grave objects, interred subjects, grave markers, and protection of archaeological sites were passed in the mid to late 1960's, following the civil rights movement (Society for Historical Archaeology 2015; American University 2020).

There is a caveat to these protections, however, in that archaeological sites must be registered. Therefore, sites that are unregistered (i.e. sites that have not yet been discovered, assessed, and mapped) fall outside of this protective jurisdiction. In the process of urban and suburban expansion, landowners are required to follow local and state laws pertaining to burials on their land. While private landowners hold rights to their own property, they do not own rights to people interred within that property. Even in death, individuals are given bodily agency that legally cannot be violated. According to common law, deceased individuals have the legal right to rest in peace, their families and communities maintain the legal right to visit and maintain their grave sites (despite their location on private property), and landowners cannot legally hinder or violate these protections or right to access (Brophy 2005).

In 2019 congressional representatives from North Carolina and Virginia aimed to change the lack of legislature specifically pertaining to African-American historic burial sites by

proposing a bill that would protect these sites under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The bill was supported by the Society for Historical Archaeology, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Coalition for American Heritage, and the Association for the Study of African-American Life History (Anderson 2019). In December 2020, the African American Burial Grounds Act was officially passed. The bill provides an outlet for private landowners to register sites present on their property through a National Park Service (NPS) database, but participation in the registration is elective and requires submissions from private landowners. While the bill is still new, it will lead to the creation of a nationwide database of African-American burial grounds, provide resources and assistance in surveying and evaluating sites, provide educational materials on sites for communities, and make grants available for research on sites registered in the network.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Archaeological Praxis and Community Archaeology

Over the last two decades, there has been a collective push for anthropology to be more active in not only addressing structural factors that create social issues, but also in alleviating the burden of those structural issues from affected communities by creating, developing, and implementing culturally tailored solutions (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). In order to start addressing societal problems, steps must be taken not only by theorists within academic anthropology, but also from practitioners of anthropology who aim to resolve issues through collaboration with community stakeholders (Kozaitis 2000). The synthesis of theory and practice is implemented through culturally tailored models that benefit subjugated communities and alleviate the stressors caused by structural violence. These actions with the intent of betterment and doing good are the driving forces behind anthropological praxis, and it is only through praxis that the field of anthropology can begin to recognize and reconcile its racist and colonial roots of exploitation through subjugation and othering.

This push for praxis has not just naturally developed over the course of time; it is the result of years of protest and lobbying conducted by descendent communities and their desire for the needs of vulnerable social groups to be included in research matters pertaining to themselves and their histories. These social movements aim to re-establish, define, and assert the identities of communities historically affected by structural violence (Ervin 2016). This reinforces the concept that ethically conducted anthropological research must involve and remain accountable to host communities, clients, the profession of anthropology itself, and the general public (Ervin 2005). In doing so, anthropologists are truly able to engage themselves with communities in a way that they are able to effectively identify and address the larger issues caused by structural

violence and social justice that have been historically rooted in colonialism and intensified through the processes of globalization (Kirsch 2018).

McGuire (2008) argues that the key to archaeological praxis lies in combining archaeological ideologies from multiple archaeological perspectives, e.g. Anglo-American, Marxist, feminist, African American, indigenous, etc. in order to address historic subjectivities in the process of generating new knowledge. This critical and re-evaluative process allows praxis and practicing archaeologists to test their critique of existing knowledge by acknowledging the past histories that contribute to modern theoretical outcomes and interpretation of data. The critical outlook and re-evaluation of existing knowledge and theories also translates into the creation of research methodologies and generation of research questions. Thereby identifying and avoiding biases that would have translated into research outcomes reinforcing themes of colonization can be acknowledged and consciously avoided. Additionally, maintaining descendant community and family members as stakeholders in research avoids reinforcing the notion of take-it-and-run archaeology where researchers enter a community for the sole purpose of continuing exploitative practices, which in this case would be conducting research for their own benefit without contributing benefits for the community, family, and general public.

Existing research on recent burial site excavations reflect a variety of project formats both based on and lacking in praxis. Brooks (2011) states that the research that is being conducted on two sites in South Carolina is under the imperative that it is of absolute importance to identify, document, and record the existence of these types of burial sites before they are damaged or destroyed due to lack of record keeping by the state while reinforcing African-American burial grounds as sites of cultural significance. This view of the site as a cultural repository is mirrored by Bigman (2013) and La Roche & Blakey (1997). This reflects an

understanding of the large-scale implications and importance of conducting research on these types of sites. Several of the case-studies reviewed for this project are research projects that were planned and implemented based on requests by descendent families or community members or carried out with the help of community members (Bigman 2013; Glover et al. 2012; Green 2005; Kimmerle 2014; La Roche & Blakey 1997; Ozga 2015; Schwarz 2013). In the case of Kimmerle (2014), the researchers were also aided by state police officers who thought it was important to contribute to the social justice imperatives being implemented on the project.

3.2   Archaeology as a Form of Social Justice

Ervin (2005) argues that social justice movements create agency for communities that have otherwise been marginalized by social, global, and political forces. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has gained force and following since its establishment in 2013 following George Zimmerman's acquittal for the murder of Trayvon Martin, and is now considered the largest social justice movement in American history (Wortham 2020). This movement has aimed to hold social and political actors accountable for actions previously deemed prejudicial and exploitative by dismantling institutions that reinforce systemic violence against black, indigenous, and minority groups.

It is a known fact within the anthropological community that the study of anthropology, and all subfields including archaeology, were initially purposed with gaining knowledge of indigenous practices so that those groups could be exploited by colonial powers (Rylko-Bauer et al. 2006). This reputation has carried over to the modern-era where groups across the world are weary of archaeologists practicing in their regions for the continued fear of exploitation and the negative impacts of globalization that follow. It is for this reason, that archaeologists in the 21st century must focus on developing research projects that work with community members to

create projects that actively benefit communities; and, where the information being gathered is being applied in those spaces with the intent of betterment and direct benefit for the community (Ervin 2005; Flewellen et al. 2020; Glover et al. 2012).

The ability of archaeologists to connect the past with the present is the field's most redeeming feature. By reconnecting marginalized, subjugated, and underrepresented communities with their cultural heritage archaeologists are able to empower communities with the knowledge of their past while simultaneously reconnecting them with their ancestors. In southern communities where African Americans were driven out of their ancestral homes by racial violence and socioeconomic factors, this act of reconnection is how archaeology can act as mode of social justice.

In order to reconcile with communities, researchers must acknowledge that practicing African American archaeology is inherently political and that research in this subfield not only requires collaboration with descendant communities, but also that research questions and interpretation of collected data must be framed by the African American experience (Ervin 2005). This means that from fruition to completion, researchers must ensure that the community's concerns and needs are considered first and foremost before any academic or theoretical outcomes, and that the spirituality embedded in African American archaeological sites is not undermined by scientific inquiry (Flewellen et al. 2020:229; La Roache & Blakey 1997).

3.3   Recurring Themes of Subjugation and Bodily Exploitation in Life and After Death

African Americans have historically and chronically been subjugated and faced extraordinary exploitation in the United States, since the days of the North Atlantic slave trade. Southern port cities like Savannah and Charleston were bustling points of bodily exchange not

only for African-American people, but also for their body parts and organs (Kenny 2013). Kenny (2013) analyzes networks of bodily exchange and how these systems fed into the development of Southern medical institutions and medical museums. These global exchange networks specifically preyed on enslaved peoples, especially black bodies, in an effort to undermine their humanity while appealing to prejudicial and discriminatory practices all conducted in the name of "science" and "knowledge". Kenny's (2013) study examines relationships between medical practitioners, enslaved peoples, and slave owners. His analysis examines how these power relations fed into the southern medical establishment's dependence on the exploitation of slave bodies for its development.

While this form of exploitation was not isolated to the Southern environment and was occurring on a global scale, Southern institutions were often criticized for the practice of procuring black bodily anatomy on a large scale while learning institutions in the Northern states implemented the same practice without critique. Southern providers maintained systems of exchange with prominent biological archaeologists such as Samuel Morton, Louis Agassiz, and Josiah Nott who used southern collections to support their theories of polygenism and the focus of proving biological racial differences in support of white racial superiority (Kenny 2013: 57). These biological anthropologists praised Southern medical collections for their plentiful "learning materials" and accumulation of rare, medical anomalies.

While the skeletal collections of Morton, Agassiz, and Nott are well documented and catalogued, the document records and physical specimens from the Southern collections are long gone, either from loss or destruction, due to the negative critique that institutions received for their use. The written evidence of these collections only exists in Southern medical journals and lab reports written by practitioners and their students. If not for these documents, all evidence of

this exploitative practice would have disappeared along with the specimens themselves (Kenny 2013). This form of bodily exploitation was yet another form of abuse endured by enslaved Africans in the American south along brutal dehumanizing practices associated with chattel slave trade including rape, family separations, and corporal punishment.

3.4   Mortuary Practices as an Expression of Freedom

In the face of these abuses and exploitation, enslaved African peoples created unique and novel ways of defining, creating, and imprinting their cultural identities into their surrounding landscapes. These assertions of identity translated directly onto their mortuary practices from funeral processions to burial orientations and grave goods. This also creates the opportunity to study cultural ideals and historic practices of enslaved Africans despite the slave owners' attempts of cultural homogenization and erasure during their lifetimes. Cultural ideals are imprinted onto coffins, contained within and upon burials, evident in types of grave markers used, in the locations chosen to bury bodies, and in the body's cardinal orientation (Brooks 2011; Jones 2011; Joseph 2004; Schwarz 2013; Shaw 2019). Burials of enslaved people were often delegated to peripheral plantation lands that could not be used for field crops. These included heavily wooded areas, or areas bordering swamp lands (Barrell 2016; Bigman 2013; Borg 2018; Brooks 2011; Jones 2011; Joseph 2004; Shaw 2019; Suggs 2017; Wright 2019). Funeral preparations and processions of the enslaved often took place at night, at the end of the day's work, and often involved feasting, singing, and dancing (Rainville 2014: 52-53). Additionally, midnight funerals were believed to follow West African traditions (Rainville 2014:57).

Funerals presented the rare opportunity for enslaved families to gather together despite restrictions on large gatherings and families being split between several area plantations. Often, families would take up to a week to make the announcement across plantations and to procure

the burial shroud or coffin. In many cases, funerals were the only form of community gathering permitted to enslaved communities and families (Rainville 2014: 56). Though enslaved communities were allowed the freedom of gathering and self-expression for these acts of remembrance, plantation owners often attended the funerals themselves or sent overseers to keep an eye on the gathering (Rainville 2014).

The peripheral burial sites and unusable lands gave these burial locations an added aspect of protection through the lack of usability of the land and the heavy tree cover which allowed these ephemeral sites to remain undiscovered for years after their founding communities were forced to abandon them. The values embedded in these burial sites are what makes them of utmost historic and cultural importance to modern-day United States African-American communities and Southern history.

3.5   Case Studies for Archaeological Praxis and Community Archaeology

The case-study of the African-American Burial Grounds in New York City provides a prime example of praxis in action at a historic burial site. Located in lower Manhattan, the site was in use from 1712 to 1794 but was obscured by 30 feet of backfill. Its historic significance lay in the fact that it was the United States' earliest and largest African burial ground. Analysis of the site showed presences of more than 400 burials contained within the 6 acre site. Initially, a forensic team from Historic Conservation Incorporated was commissioned to carry out excavations on the site, until community members, congressional leaders, and academic researchers protested the lack of historic and cultural significance being considered in the site's analysis (La Roche & Blakey 1997). The overhaul of the project design resulted in African-American scholars specializing in cultural, biological, and historic research taking over project research, allowing nuanced analysis of the burials and grave goods found at the site. This

culturally tailored analysis of remains and grave goods allowed for the discovery of regional artifacts, themes, and symbols of cultural significance to be considered within the burial context. The progression from practice to praxis surrounding the site provides insight into what can happen due to lack of praxis during a research project and the benefits and positive outcomes associated with implementing an application of praxis through community involvement and the eventual creation of a public space where all people can learn about and understand the embedded history and cultural concepts within the site. (La Roche & Blakey 1997).

In 2008 Ozga et al. (2015) were contacted by New South Associates, Inc. to conduct DNA analysis on remains interred at the Avondale Burial place in Bibb County, Georgia. This site was forgotten in collective memory due to the founding community migrating from the surrounding area at some point, most likely during the Great Migration. The cemetery site was not associated with any church, burial society, or specific landowner and was discovered during a Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) road-expansion near the Middle Georgia Regional Airport. There were no archival maps associated with the site nor were any headstones found associated with any of the burials. The cemetery was located in the corner of an agricultural field bordering wetlands, similar to other historic African-American burial sites.

Grave goods at the site suggest that it was in use from 1820-1950 with the greatest internment of individuals following the Civil War. Cultural practices represented at the site include coastal African-American funerary practices synthesized with Anglo-American funerary traditions. Due to a lack of documentation of Bibb County's historic African-American community there was a great push from living community members to learn more about the history of those interred at the site, especially from individuals who suspected that they may have hereditary links to the interred population. DNA analysis confirmed that the individuals in the

Avondale Burial Place were of African descent while osteological analysis confirmed a high

amount of occupational stress associated with chronic, hard labor. Of the community members

who submitted DNA samples for comparative analysis, eight were found to have been descended

from the interred population (Ozga et al. 2015). This project fostered a connection between a

historic, interred population and their descendant community, created an official record of an

abandoned burial ground, and associated historical and cultural value to a previously lost and

forgotten site.

Suggs (2016) records the plight of the Piney Grove Cemetery located in Buckhead,

Atlanta. This cemetery site is thought to be the oldest, historic cemetery in Buckhead and dates

to 1820. It is believed to hold remains of enslaved peoples and was used well into the 1990s. The

existence of the cemetery was in the public eye during the construction of the Bluffs at Lenox

where the property development has stretched up to, and most likely into, the cemetery

perimeter. The representative from the development company for the neighboring property

development insists that no graves were built over during their construction process; however,

since the outer limits of the cemetery were not well defined, it is not known whether or not the

graves were disturbed or paved over during the process of development in the area.

Figure 3.1 Broken and displaced headstones in Buckhead's Piney Grove Cemetery (FindAGrave.com 2021)

Family members of the individuals interred at the site expressed disappointment over not being able to locate grave locations of their loved ones due to headstones being missing, displaced and/or broken, and covered in vegetation and trash (Figure 3.1) (Suggs 2016). While an archaeological survey was conducted in 2006, it was implemented without community or family participation. Marker flags were used to identify 330 burials but no follow up was conducted on these surveys. The developer of the property left the onus of site maintenance on the homeowners' association, which was supposed to implement a maintenance program for maintaining the site (Suggs 2016). However, this plan for maintaining the site does not resolve the issue of the missing headstones and burial plots. This article exemplifies what can happen after an archaeological survey is conducted without praxis. While data were collected, the

descendant community and family members were not involved and the issues surrounding the disrepair at the site have not been resolved.

Schwarz (2013) details the struggle behind maintenance of the Hamilton City Cemetery in Hamilton, Georgia which was established in 1828. While the white side of the cemetery is well maintained and manicured, the African-American side has been left in disrepair allowing vegetation to be overgrown and covering grave sites. Its lack of maintenance results from a lack of ownership or community association. While the white side of the cemetery is regularly maintained by the Hamilton Cemetery Association, no one has taken responsibility for the African-American side. While Georgia state law allows cities to maintain cemeteries, this maintenance is costly and if no one admits ownership, a city is not legally responsible for the site's maintenance. It was not until a local resident made an appeal to the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization (VFW) that military veterans took it upon themselves to clear trees, undergrowth, and debris covering the graves of potential military veterans. A project rooted in archaeological praxis could potentially activate the surrounding African-American community of 6,000 people to have a greater connection to the burial site. As of now, the cemetery awaits a family or historical society to step up and claim responsibility for its long-term maintenance and care.

Borg (2018) details a construction project in Fort Bend County, Texas where a $59 million construction project is being allowed to continue development despite the grounds that it is located on being deemed an active archaeological site. The site is believed to be situated on lands that were previously part of a sugar plantation and later used as a prison work camp. Biological remains and artifacts have been found on-site, but this has not hindered the on-site construction progress. Local historians and residents have expressed concern with the rapid

progression at the construction site which is in the suburban neighborhood of Sugar Land, Texas (near Houston). Remains found so far are to be relocated to a dedicated cemetery, however nothing has been said about potential remains that are likely present under already built houses and in private backyards. It could not be more obvious that this project is proceeding without any praxis applications. It seems that forensic analysis of remains is being conducted for informative purposes, without any kind of linkage or connections being formed with the disinterred population and community residents (Borg 2018).

Brooks (2011) conducted surveys of two African-American burial sites in coastal South Carolina which were formerly part of two separate plantations owned by the same individual. South Carolina's population of enslaved people greatly outnumbered the white population when slavery driven agriculture was at its peak. Brooks' study surveyed burials, burial goods, and burial markers in an effort to examine African-American ideologies surrounding death, burials, and grave good symbolism. Brooks' survey consisted of compiling a record of all above-ground grave goods and markers, grave orientation, and cemetery landscape. These factors were all mapped and input into a geographic information system (GIS), which helped her analyze cemetery layouts and build a database of the burials in each cemetery (Brooks 2011:178).
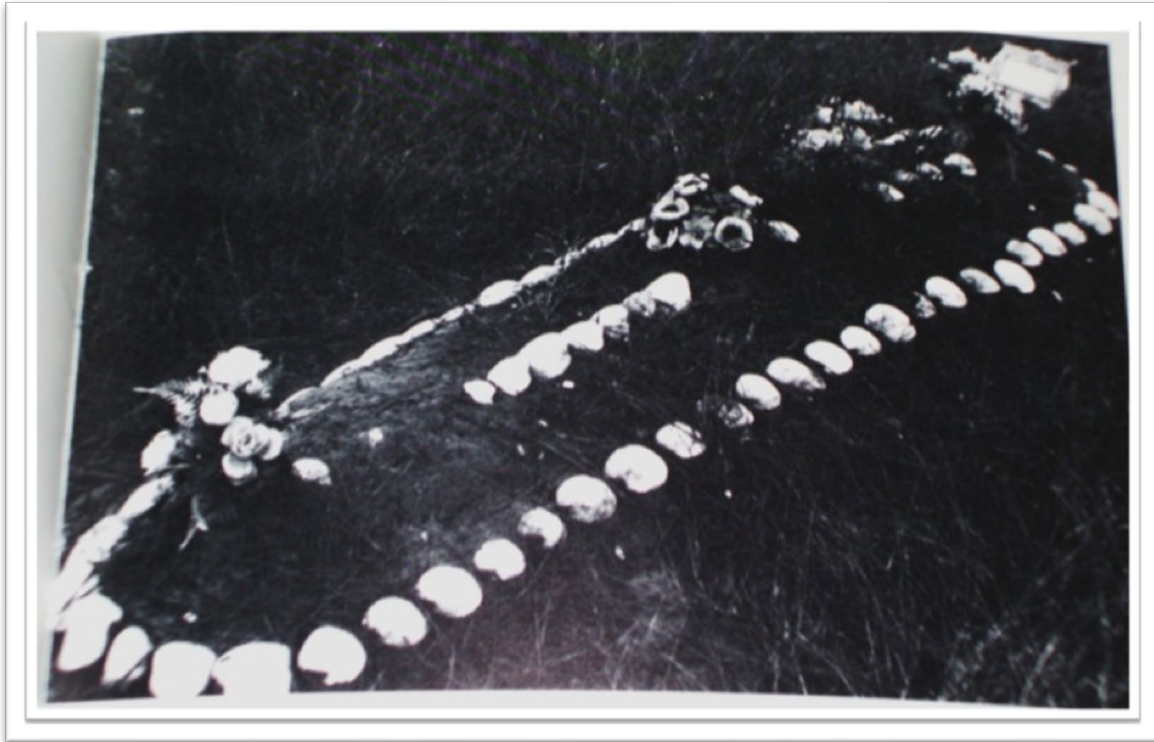
Figure 3.2 An African American burial enclosed in Seashells, 1975, South Carolina (Stephens 2014)

Similar to other sites, the cemeteries were located in peripheral areas near swamp lands, which would not have typically been used for agriculture, however in South Carolina these areas were used for growing rice. The slave cemeteries were located in liminal areas, between tobacco and rice fields, which were too heavily wooded to be cleared for farming. Fieldstones are not a commonly utilized marker at coastal sites and all burials were either marked with shells, broken glass and ceramic, plants, or metal markers. Brooks' (2011) praxis application lies in her goal of compiling this data to add to discourse surrounding African-American burial sites and making this information available to the greater public. The project also informs understandings of African American burial culture by identifying contexts in which enslaved people asserted their own cultural and ethnic identities that overlapped with Anglo-American practices, but which go

un-noticed by individuals who are not trained in African cultural practices. An example of this is the BaKongo tradition of easterly facing graves as well as maintained care and decoration of graves. This emulates the duality of the heart-symbolism found on a coffin in the African American burial grounds in New York. Through her study, Brooks aims to contribute to ethnohistorical studies on enslaved people and offer insight into practices associated with death from African cultures that were typically overlooked or subsumed under Anglo-American practices.

4   METHODS

The goal of my research is to survey, identify, map, and mark unmarked burials at the three field sites. The collected information will be used to create publicly accessible geographic information system (GIS) databases where community stakeholders can share the gathered data with the community and public at large. Each location contains nuanced features that require a site-tailored approach to collection and study. A combination of ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey, ground probe, and electronic total station (ETS) data are used to survey and map each site while the collection of oral site histories and archival data will construct the site's history and its representation of African American cultural heritage. These research methods are synthesized to generate comprehensive site histories that contextualize the identified burials. Each research methodology was chosen for its proven efficacy in cemetery survey and historic documentation and chosen on a site-tailored basis.

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) as a survey and mapping tool for cemeteries has been proven as an effective method through numerous case studies with its application for both identifying unmarked burials as well as confirming marked burials (Bigman 2013; Conyers 2013; Rainville 2009; Rainville 2014). Ground probing is an effective option for when the GPR data needs confirmation or when GPR is unusable due to environmental conditions. As the case studies will demonstrate, if this work is not conducted properly the implications for damage and loss of preservation are huge. This potential impact reinforces the importance of correctly surveying, identifying, and mapping sites when using GPR to ensure that sites remain undamaged and maintain their protection under state and federal historic preservation laws. Collected site histories provide historic context to the data gathered through the various surveying methods employed.

4.1   A Brief History of GPR, its Development, and Applications

Archaeological geophysics is a suite of data collection methods that allow practicing field archaeologists to identify and map subsurface archaeological features and can be applied in situations both preceding and in lieu of excavation. Ground-penetrating radar is a non-invasive, geophysical surveying method where electromagnetic waves are transmitted into the ground at preset, timed intervals using a 10-to-1500-megahertz antenna (Figure 4.1). If a subsurface anomaly is present, the wave is reflected back to the antenna and the rate of return is recorded. It there is no anomaly present, then no data are gathered at that point. The amount of time it takes for the wave to return to the ground surface is converted to distance and provides the surveyor with a depth for the potential anomaly. Data are collected along transects spaced at a predetermined interval within an established grid; in the case of cemeteries, 0.25-0.5 meters is the common interval used (Leech 2019). Once the radar reflections have been measured and recorded within the grid, a three-dimensional picture of soil, sediment, and feature changes can be created. The success of GPR is highly dependent on soil and sediment minerology, clay content, ground moisture, depth of burial, surface topography, and vegetation (Conyers 2013).

Ground-penetrating radar, as it is utilized in the 21st century, was originally developed for the United States space program to map the depth and variation of lunar deposits. The techniques utilized in the lunar environment have been modified and adapted for terrestrial geotechnical applications, including for work in archaeology. This survey methodology is most effective at buried sites, located below a non-rocky surface, where artifacts and features are located within two to five meters of the topsoil, however this range varies according to the strength of the antenna. However, it can still be used for mapping more deeply buried deposits. These maps can be applied as primary data to guide the placement of excavations or define sensitive areas

Figure 4.1 A Photograph of GSU's SIR-3000 GPR being utilized to survey a grid at the Farmer Street Cemetery

containing archaeological features that need to be avoided. The development of this technique

has now become so accurate that it is possible to test multiple hypotheses with anthropological,

geological, and environmental implications in a completely non-invasive way that can be

corroborated through ground truthing methods such as aerial photography and comparison with

historic maps (Conyers 2013).

4.2   Case Studies in GPR

The application of ground-penetrating radar in the survey and mapping of cemeteries has

been an effective and accurate tool that is widely used for its environmentally adaptive and non-

invasive capabilities (Bigman 2013; Brooks 2011; Rainville 2008). In many cases, unmarked

cemeteries are not being excavated but are simply being mapped for the sake of preservation and legal protection under the National Historic Preservation Act (Rainville 2008). This umbrella of protection allows unmarked cemeteries and burials legal protection under federal laws protecting cultural and archaeological features, with hefty fines and prison times associated with violation of those laws. There are also state laws that vary on a state-by-state basis that aim to protect known cemeteries and protections are given to the deceased and their right to remain undisturbed after internment (Brophy 2006).

The Historic Sugar Hill Cemetery in Sugar Hill, Georgia was organized in 1886 by descendants of the area's founding families who settled there in the 1830s. In 2019, the cemetery hired a cultural resource management firm to perform ground-penetrating radar surveys on the grounds to identify unmarked burials. The survey identified a total of 130 unmarked burials throughout the cemetery, but primarily concentrated in the oldest section of the cemetery which had been in use since the cemetery was first established. Near the peripheral fence line, 14 smaller burials were identified, clustered together, and at a shallower depth than the burials in the old section. The smaller size and shallow depth suggest that these burials contained children. Another section of the cemetery contained roughly 20 unmarked burials separate from the family plots. Due to the city's economic struggles during the Great Depression, it is believed that these twenty burials are pauper graves of individuals who were unable to purchase cemetery plots or grave markers. The city of Sugar Hill is now fundraising to purchase markers for the unmarked burials within the cemetery grounds (Payne 2019).

The Piney Grove Cemetery is located in the affluent neighborhood of Buckhead in Atlanta, Georgia. The cemetery was established in 1826 and was one of six historic cemeteries located in the neighborhood. The cemetery extends from the top of a hill down a heavily wooded

slope ending near Lenox Road at the intersection of Canterbury Road. Its association with the

Piney Grove Baptist Church dictated its use as the final resting place for the church's

congregation into the 1990s until the church was damaged and demolished in 1996. An

archaeological survey was commissioned in 2006 when a developer purchased the neighboring

land for a residential project. Their GPR survey identified 330 burials, some of which coincided

with headstones while others were unmarked. At the time of the survey, the cemetery had fallen

into disrepair and was overgrown with trees and underbrush. Due to its lack of use, the cemetery

became a trash dumping ground and teen hangout resulting in the desecration of grave sites and

damage to the headstones (Suggs 2017).

Visitors reported not being able to discern the cemetery from its environmental

surroundings and difficulty finding burial plots of family members. When another residential

project started in 2017, the developer worked closely with the City of Atlanta and the Buckhead

Coalition to ensure that the development did not encroach into the limits of the cemetery. The

developer studied deeds and survey plats to delineate the cemetery boundaries before

construction started. It was not until after the project had started that they realized that they GPR

survey had not been done effectively and the boundaries of the cemetery had not been identified,

as discussed above. While the developer insists that the cemetery had not been encroached upon,

descendant family members of the individuals interred claim that they cannot located the graves

of their loved ones. Family members have stated that they can find neither the plot nor

headstones of their loved ones, while others have been able to identify headstones which have

been moved or damaged and are no longer located in the area where the burial would have been

(Suggs 2017). This case study demonstrates why due diligence in GPR surveys is critical and

why the mapping of these sites must be done properly to avoid damage and destruction of grave sites.

Rainville (2008) performed a GPR survey on two historic cemeteries in Virginia, the Sweet Briar Cemetery and Fletcher Family Cemeteries, as an add-on to the visual survey that they were conducting to map the cemeteries. The cemeteries were not believed to contain unmarked burials, but the GPR work was done to confirm the presence of burials while avoiding the disturbance of the human remains in the cemetery. The GPR unit had a 400-megahertz antenna, with a range of 60 nanoseconds, and was attached to a GSSI SIR-3000 computer. Their data was analyzed using the RADAN 6.0 software.

The two areas surveyed were a 29 meter by 49 meter grid on the southern side of the cemetery, and a 29 meter by 19 meter grid in the northern portion. Rainville states that interpretation was difficult due to regular, oblong disturbances present at a North/South orientation located 5.35 feet below the surface. West of the oblong patterning, the indicated grave shafts did not form until a depth of 9.84 feet. Rainville attributes this depth to different periods of use where the environment eroded at different rates causing the shafts to appear at different depths on the GPR survey. The regular, oblong anomalies were determined to be potential tree roots. Rainville concludes that these data would have been better gathered and achieved more success if the survey had been conducted with a 900-megahertz antenna at closer, 0.25, meter intervals. This case study demonstrates that even with suitable environmental conditions, it is possible for the data to be difficult to interpret due to obstruction by unidentifiable subsurface anomalies and/or a GPR with an antenna that is not suitable for the specific environmental conditions (Rainville 2008).

The Prior Family cemetery is located in Morgan County, Georgia. The cemetery is located within a short distance, across the street, from a still-in-use community cemetery. The family cemetery was established as a plantation burial ground where the plantation owners lived in close proximity to their enslaved peoples and buried those who passed within their own family cemetery. In the 1970s a maintenance worker cleaned up the fieldstone grave markers from the cemetery, unbeknownst to the property owner. In 2012, the owner contacted Bigman Geophysical to conduct a GPR survey of the area believed to contain the burials so that they could properly mark the graves for identification and protection from further damage. Bigman was also made aware of potentially unmarked burials outside the limits of the family cemetery.

Bigman positioned his grids perpendicular to the visible graves to increase the chances of locating the potentially unmarked graves outside of the family cemetery and 12 meter by 27 meter grid was demarcated. Surveys were conducted using a GSSI SIR-3000 with a 500-megahertz antenna. Twenty-four transects were collected in a snake, or dual directional, line. The GPR collected 512 samples per scan and 32 scans per 1 meter unit. The transect interval was .5 m with the first transect located at .25m and the last at 11.75 m. Data was processed with Reflex 2D software where Bigman removed horizontal banding with a background filter. The GPR analysis suggested that loosely packed grave shafts began at the ground surface and continue until a transition at the bottom of the pit. Several additional anomalies were also identified in the unmarked area. All anomalies identified in the survey were attributed to possible grave shafts oriented in the same direction suggesting patterned burials. The linear succession suggests that the Prior family buried their enslaved peoples in a row, parallel to the orientation of the family's graves. This placement of enslaved burials is unique in the sense that typically in the 19th century, burials like most other social spaces, maintained segregation between African and

white populations. In total, 21 graves were identified with 11 unmarked burials where the fieldstones had previous been removed (Bigman 2013).

This collection of case studies illustrates the efficacy of GPR for identifying subsurface anomalies or grave shafts in unmarked or partially marked cemeteries. Additionally, the case studies show that GPR can be used in a variety of environmental conditions and physical landscapes with accurate results. By collecting gridded data along equally spaced transects, both Rainville (2008) and Bigman (2013) were able to successfully identify burials that could be verified with visible above-ground depressions or other geophysical methods.
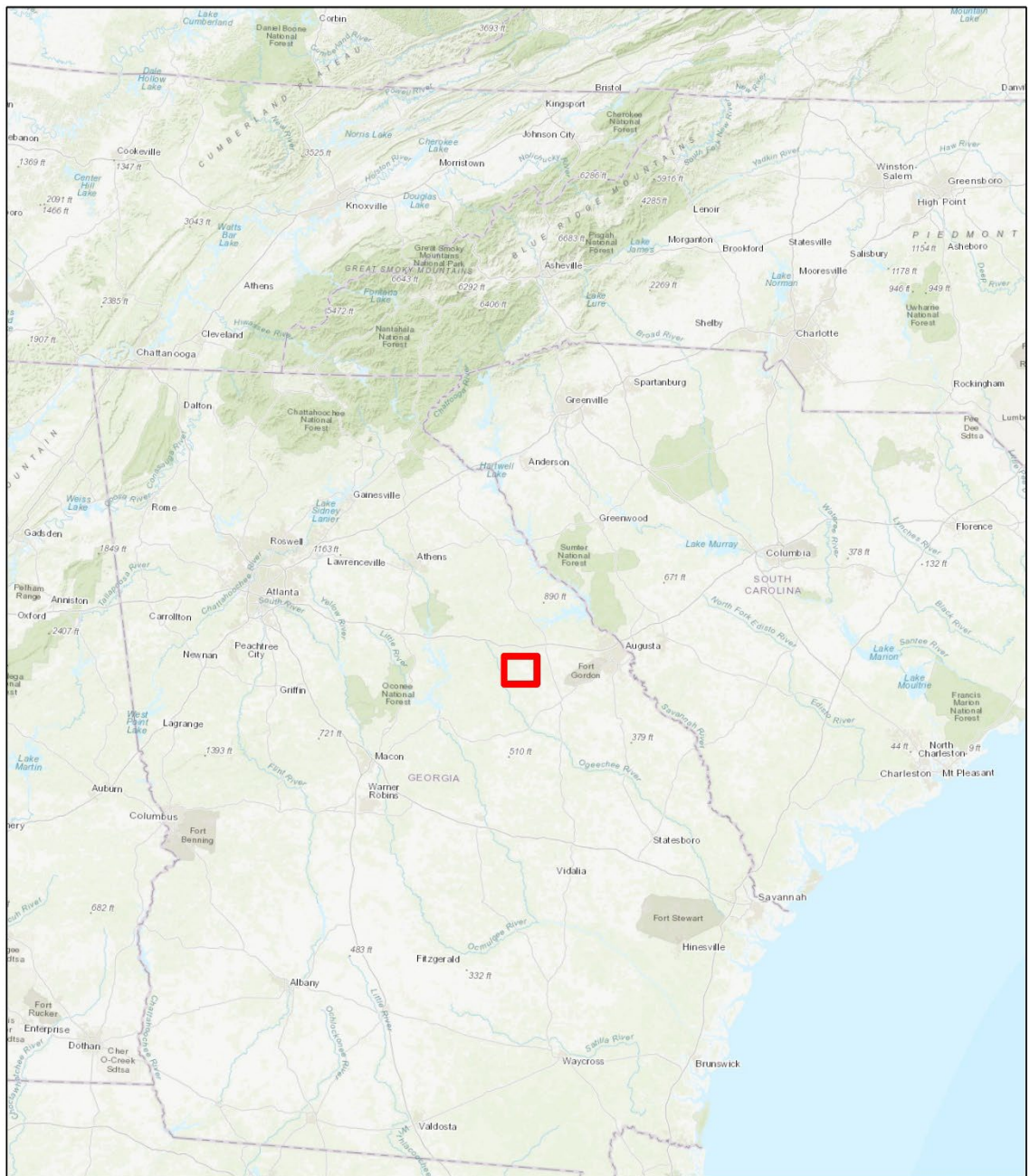
5 THE COHENTOWN CEMETERY
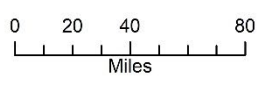
Figure 5.1 A map with the location of the Cohentown settlement with the cemetery outlined with the red square

5.1   Site History

Wilkes County was established in 1777 from land ceded by the Creek and Cherokee indigenous tribes in 1773. The county served as a strategically important area both during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The Battle of Kettle Creek during the Revolutionary War marked the retreat of the British troops from northeastern Georgia and hosted the final cabinet meeting of Confederate generals during the Civil War (Washington-Wilkes Historic Foundation 2019). The county prospered owing to its agricultural industry; cotton was the staple crop for the area, as it was in much of Georgia at the time. The scale of agricultural industry in the area was additionally reflected in a flourishing central-city market where enslaved Africans were bought and sold to local plantation owners (Auslander 2008). Following the Civil War and emancipation of Southern enslaved peoples, many of the freedmen and women chose to stay on the plantations as tenant farmers.

Cohentown was an African American farming community located in Wilkes County approximately five miles north of Washington, Georgia where its location between Fork Creek and Fishing Creek provided a steady water supply for agricultural activities. It was at this settlement founded by Peter Arnett that the Cohen, Hanson, Wingfield, Lockhart, Gladman, Anderson, Charlton, and Curry families established their homes following their emancipation from enslavement. This community is particularly notable because it was the only economically independent, black-owned farming group in all of Wilkes County. At a time when most of the county's population was locked into a cycle of perpetual sharecropping debt, this financial independence was especially unique. Sole ownership of the land in the hands of community members allowed the homestead to stay in the families until they were forced to abandon their land following major financial setbacks caused first by World War I then by the 1920s boll

weevil plight. Due to the loss of their staple crop, cotton, and a lack of a farming labor force the

homesteading community was forced to abandon their property by the 1930s.

Following the abandonment of the homestead, members of each family scattered to the

winds with some heading toward the big city of Atlanta, while others migrated north in search of

economic stability. The location of the cemetery was lost to history until February 2018, when

descendant family member Barrett Hanson attended a Washington city council meeting where he

met an individual who was a member of a local hunting club. This gentleman, Mr. Karl Hughey,

had stumbled upon a cemetery in the middle of the woods a few weeks earlier and was able to

return to the exact location with Barrett where he quickly identified the names of Mary Hanson

and Lula Hanson on the only two inscribed headstones in the cemetery. Barrett had finally

located the long-lost cemetery of his ancestors (Hanson 2020).

Figure 5.2 (left to right) Barrett Hanson, Ed Anderson, and Tom Hanson stand with the headstone of their great-great-great-grandmother, Mary Hanson

Currently, the Cohentown settlement is visible on USGS topographic maps from the 1980

publication onward. However, in the preceding publications it is only indicated with the standard

USGS symbol for an educational building. The 1906 topographic map (Figure 5.3) depicts a series of nine houses lining Billy Lindsey Road in the area labeled Cohentown on future maps but is not labeled with the community's name. These structures are no longer visible on the subsequently released 1953 topographic map of the area (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.3 A 1906 USGS Topographic Map with the Location of the Cohentown Settlement Marked with a Red Square Depicting Nine Historic Structures (USGS.gov 1906)

Figure 5.4 A 1953 USGS topographic map with the Cohentown community marked with the USGS map symbol for an educational building

5.2   Research Plan

The Cohentown Cemetery is situated in the middle of a private, 1000-acre heavily wooded property. The land is currently leased out to two groups: a private, hunting club and a logging company practicing silviculture on portions of the property. Due to the area's use by the hunting club and our dependence on local guides to locate the site, potential fieldwork days were also restricted to mid-January until late-February which falls between hunting seasons. Access to the cemetery is limited to a single dirt road that winds between dense clusters of forest. At the time of my visit, there is a significant mud on these roads, and it was necessary to utilize a 4-

wheel drive vehicle to drive to the cemetery's entry point. The access point for the cemetery is approximately one mile up the dirt road with a short, five-minute hike to the limits of the site. A preliminary walkthrough of the site on February 29, 2020 determined that Cohentown could potentially be surveyed over the course of a single day, contingent on good weather and available assistance in completing the necessary tasks.

Site background and archival research was conducted using USGS topographic maps and historic aerial photographs. Cohentown is located approximately 5.5 miles outside the city of Washington, so it is not included on Sanborn Maps of area. Barrett Hanson (2020), the great-great-great grandson of Mary Hanson (a founding member of the Cohentown Community) published a book entitled "High Priest in Tall Cotton — A Historic Narrative of Cohentown, Wilkes County, Georgia". This publication provided background information on the community and its members, as well as helping to define the historic context for the founding of the cemetery. Mr. Hanson, along with his cousins Ed Anderson and Tom Hanson, all agreed to share the information that they collected from family members about the history of the cemetery's founding and subsequent use until its abandonment in the 1920s (Figure 5.2).

To map the burials, all visible depressions were marked with pin flags (Figure 4.2) and a 48 inch, 3/8 thickness Mighty Probe was utilized for ground truthing of all grave depressions. A Leica total station was used to collect Electronic Total Station (ETS) points from the four corners of the cemetery, the remnants of the old road leading to the church, and the fieldstone markers so that they could be plotted using ArcGIS. While gridded ground-penetrating radar data collection was not possible due to the dense tree cover, the GPR was run opportunistically in areas without visible depressions to determine whether ground probing was needed to verify any anomalies in those areas of the cemetery.

Figure 5.5 Red pin flags mark grave depressions at the Cohentown Cemetery. A granite fieldstone grave marker is also visible in the foreground.

Since the goal of this research was to aid in a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) application, this information was consolidated into a Georgia Archaeological Site Form (GASF) that can be submitted to the archaeological site database maintained at the University of Georgia. Submitting this form will add the Cohentown Cemetery as an archaeological site on the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNARGHIS) which will prevent it from being overlooked during any desktop reviews being conducted in the area. Currently, the cemetery only shows up on one USGS topographic layer and has not been previously recorded as an archaeological site.

5.3   Results

The ground probe survey verified that the 56 visible depressions located within 40 meter by 60 meter site boundaries belong to grave shafts. The burials are organized into recognizable rows in some areas while others seem to be clustered closely together but not following an orthogonal pattern. All the mapped burials are oriented east-west. Most depressions were marked with either head and foot stones, just headstones, or just footstones. There were three depressions that were verified with the ground probe to be burial shafts that were not associated with any fieldstones. The types of stone varied from granite rocks to vibrant white and pink quartz. While some burials had paired, quartz stones, a few of them only had either a single head or foot stone as quarts while the other was a fieldstone.

The ground-penetrating radar was run opportunistically in the southeastern section of the cemetery where there were no visible depressions. The GPR did not identify any anomalies in the southeastern portion that required verification with the probe. While graves of individuals could not be verified without inscribed headstones, the variations in depression size ranging from one to two and a half meters illustrate that the individuals interred represent a variety of statures suggesting that children are also interred at the cemetery.

Four of the depressions probed were determined to be the result of fallen trees that had been removed or rotted away at some point. Approximately 120 meters of road were identified and mapped with the total station. The road runs southeast out of the cemetery.
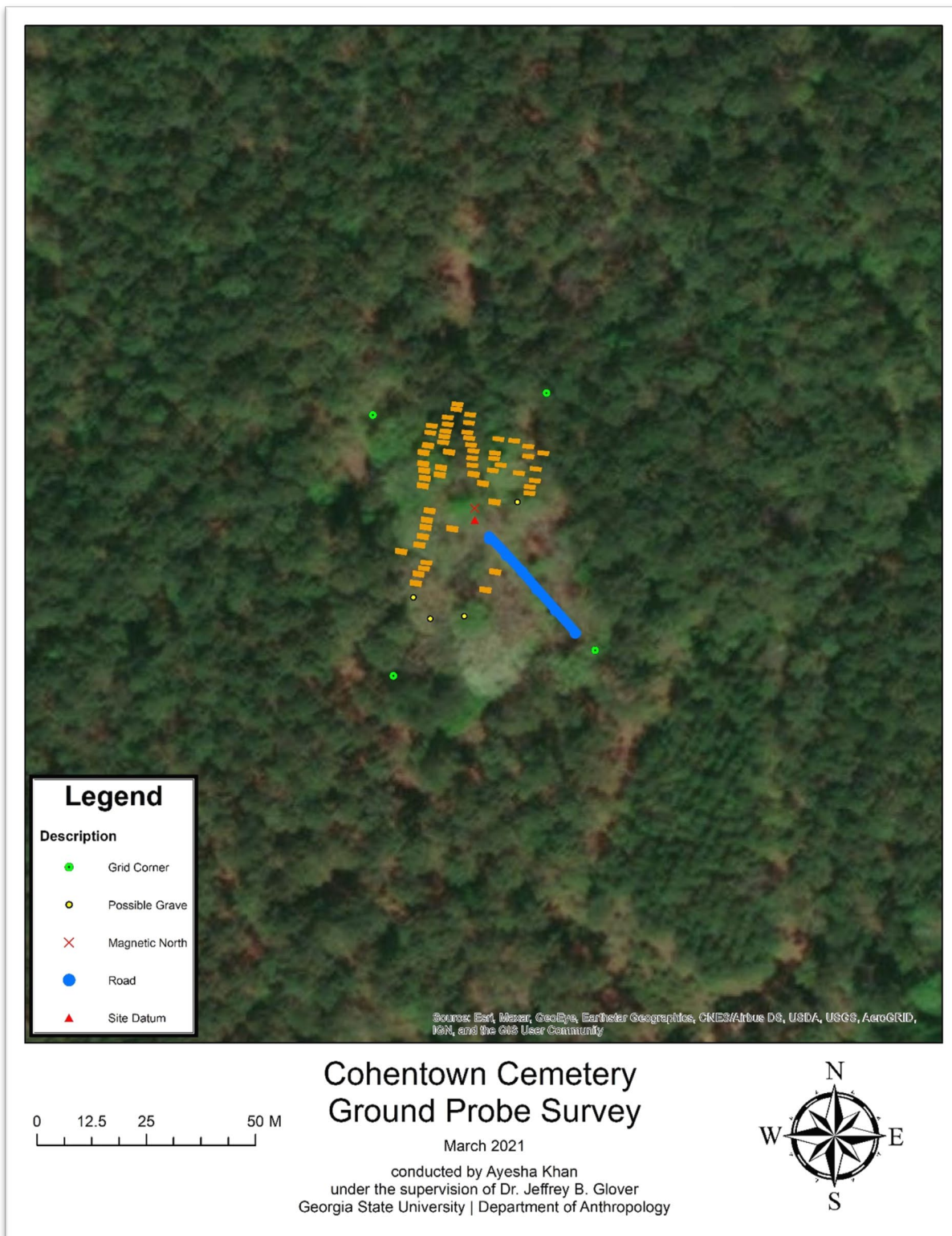
Figure 5.6 Map of the Cohentown Cemetery with burials marked by orange polygons

5.4   Research Summary

Through visual survey and verification by ground probe, 56 graves were identified at the Cohentown Cemetery. The next step for the cemetery is the submission of a site form to the Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) repository at the University of Georgia. The submission of this form will ensure that the map of the cemetery is on record so that if any work is conducted in the area the project planners are aware of the cemetery's location so that negative effects can be avoided. In the meantime, the boundaries of the cemetery should be marked with something that has high visibility so that logging companies and hunting groups do not unknowingly damage the site.

6   THE FARMER STREET CEMETERY

6.1   Site History

The Farmer Street Cemetery, referred to in historic documentation as "Newnan's Colored Cemetery", was established in 1828 on Lot #88 (Figure 6.1), a plot of land owned by A.J. Berry. At the time of its establishment, seven families in the area reported "ownership" of enslaved Africans and shared the plot of land as a final resting place for enslaved Africans after their passing. The two oldest established African American congregations in Newnan were the Newnan Methodist Episcopalian Church and the Mount Vernon Baptist Church, founded in the 1840s and 1860s respectively (GAAHPN 2003). County records show that neither church maintained graveyards at their established locations, but printed documentation in historic newspapers indicate that both churches paid a sexton to dig graves for congregation members at the "colored cemetery". The headstone of Charlie Burch, son of the deacon of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, was recovered in 1999 during the R.S. Webb and Associates survey of the Farmer Street cemetery, reinforcing the relationship between the church and cemetery (Elliott and Dean 2001).

After the passing of A.J. Berry, the land was deeded to his son who eventually sold it to the Newnan Cotton Mills. The land eventually made its way into the hands of the city, where in the 1930s the city repurposed A.J. Berry's former landholdings into a park. Lots 88 and 89 remained undeveloped as green space while lots 98 and 99 were developed into a baseball diamond. The land associated with the cemetery was cleaned up, walkways were created, and eventually an asphalt ATV trail was constructed. The trail has since been removed, but remnants of it can still be found throughout the cemetery.

A ground probe survey was conducted in 1999 by R.S. Webb and Associates after Mr. Bobby Olmstead, an elderly member of the Chalk Level Community, brought it to the city's attention that the park land was in fact the old African American cemetery. In 2003 the city established the African American Heritage Museum with the help of the newly founded Coweta County African American Alliance (GAAHPN 2003). The Alliance and the city have since worked hand in hand to preserve the cemetery site.

Figure 6.1 1888 Lot map of Newnan, Georgia showing the Farmer Street Cemetery, labeled Negro Grave Yard, in lot No. 88 (Newnan Historic Society 1999)

The cemetery is referenced throughout the late 19th century in Newnan newspapers in various contexts from advertising family plots to death and burial announcements and finally in 1893 when the city announced that it would be closing off the cemetery for burials due to space no longer being available. The obituaries for interments at Farmer Street referred to in these news releases were exclusively those of Newnan's African American population. By 1906, the land was considered "abandoned" by the community and is depicted in Sanborn maps as empty land (Figure 6.2).
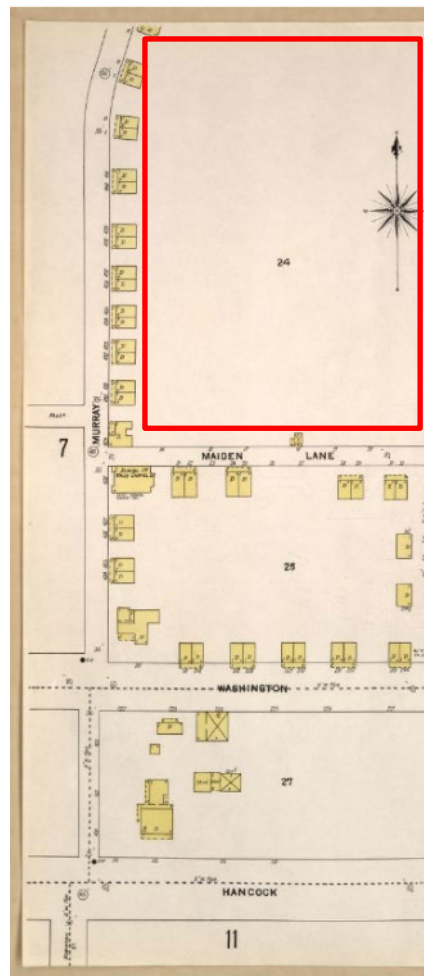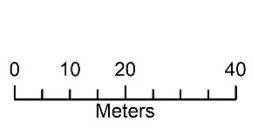

Figure 6.2 A portion of a 1906 Sanborn map showing the Farmer Street Cemetery area (marked with a red square) shown as unoccupied land

6.2   Research Plan

The Farmer Street Cemetery sits on four acres of land approximately 1 mile east of downtown Newnan. It is located on the top of a hill formerly owned by the Newnan Cotton Mill. The site is bordered by the CJ Smith Park to the north, Murray Street to the west, and Farmer Street on the East with the southern limits defined by Cole Street and Washington Street. The cemetery drive that connects to Farmer Street can easily be missed due to the lack of proper signage; the wooden sign is placed slightly up the driveway making it easy to miss. Additionally, when the address is entered into any GPS program, it takes the driver to the northern corner of CJ Smith Park by the playground rather than the entrance of the cemetery. The Coweta County African American Heritage Museum occupies a small 1940s shotgun-style house which has been relocated to a grassy area on the north end of the property, between the park and cemetery.

Aerial imagery shows that the area is heavily wooded, but upon arrival one can observe that at ground level there are several areas with enough space between the trees to plot abutting grids so that the surveys cover a large portion of the cemetery. Grid corners were initially marked with wooden stakes, then replaced by PVC pipes after they were run over and removed multiple times by the city's landscaping crews. The corner markers were tied with flagging tape which served as labels for the grid number and cardinal direction of the corner (e.g. Grid 1 SW corner, Grid 3 NE corner, etc.). These markers were shot-in with the Leica total station to ensure that they were recorded for mapping. The GPR was run unidirectionally starting in the southwest corner of each grid. All environmental obstructions, including trees, granite stones, and bushes were mapped on graph paper to create sketch maps of grids with environmental obstructions (see Appendix A). Visible grave depressions were pin flagged and shot in with the total station.

Farmer Street Cemetery, previously identified as one of the oldest African American Cemeteries in Newnan, has been documented in numerous articles in archived newspapers with articles written about its existence, usage, and subsequent discontinuation of use. This archival research was complimented with oral history of the site shared by the leadership of the Coweta County African American Alliance and the African American Heritage Museum's site genealogist, as well as local, Chalk Level community members with family history and personal experiences related to the site. Both the City of Newnan and the Alliance have shared graciously all their collected resources, research, and existing surveys of the area. The Webb (1999) survey served as a reference map and provided a comparative perspective for the ground-penetrating radar data that has been collected (Figure 6.3). In addition to the Webb survey, the Southern Research report from 2001 will provide historic background and context for the cemetery.

Figure 6.3 A map of the ground probe survey of the Farmer Street Cemetery conducted by R.S. Webb and Associates (Webb 1999)

6.3 Results

Figure 6.4 Farmer Street Cemetery survey results

Investigations at Farmer Street took place over the course of six visits between October 2019 and June 2021. A total of 50 hours of investigation time occurred over those six days. Investigations included ground-penetrating radar surveys, mapping points with the Leica electronic total station, discussions with members of the Coweta County African American Alliance, discussions with members of the Newnan city council and city administration, and troweling the root balls of several large trees that were downed on the east side of the cemetery during the 2021 tornado. The ground beneath the uprooted trees was also examined for grave stains. Ground scrapes were initially planned to verify the presence of burial shafts but were not completed due to time constraints.

While eight GPR grids were planned, a total of seven grids were surveyed. These grids cover approximately 0.7 acres of the 4.4 acre cemetery, or approximately 16% of the cemetery. Grid information including numbers, grid measurements in meters, GPR file numbers, and number of burials identified by GPR are detailed in Table 6.1. GPR data was collected with a SIR-3000 manufactured by GSSI with a 400-mHz antenna. To increase accuracy and ease of interpretability, the transects were run unidirectionally moving north starting in the southwest corner of the designated grid with a 0.5 m transect interval. The GPR collected 120 samples per scan and 80 scans per one meter unit. In each grid, the first scan was located at x = 0 and the last transect offset from the eastern limit of the grid by 0.25 m. The collected data was then imported into Radan 7.0 as a 3D batch file for processing. Filters applied included time-zero, IIR, noise band removal, gain restoration followed by gain adjustment, and finally migration of the data (Leech 2019).

Burials were identified through determining the depth of the top of the burial shaft, comparing the burial locations to features on hand drawn maps, and referencing notations in field

notes. Burial shafts across the Farmer Street Cemetery start approximately .5 to .7 meters below the surface. Several grids have small anomalies between 0 and .5 m below surface and these anomalies were determined to be tree roots. Post-processing time slices were taken at .5 meters below surface.
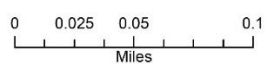

Figure 6.5 A map of the Farmer Street Cemetery with the georeferenced 1828 lot map boundaries

In order to address concerns that the construction of the baseball diamond and subsequent skate park potentially being built on portions of the cemetery, the 1828 lot map was also georeferenced in ArcGIS. Georeferencing was conducted manually due to the map not being drawn to scale. Murray Street and Washington Street were both used as reference points since both are still in existence today. The lot map was stretched to fit the modern day locations and intersections of the two streets and was successfully georeferenced onto a current map of the Farmer Street area. The cemetery spans the areas of Lots 88 and 89, while the baseball diamond/skate park area spans lots 98 and 99, which also belonged to A.J. Barry. The georeferenced lots are visible in Figure 6.5.

Table 6.1 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid Information

Grid No.	Width (m, E/W)	Length (m, N/S)	File Numbers	No. of Burials	Total m²
1	15	25	120-150	52	375
2	8	15	168-184	9	120
3	23	13	202-247	0	299
4	Under asphalt driveway, did not survey due to time constraints				
5	33	29	248-314	58	957
6	10	36	315-335	32	360
7	12	18	336-362	12	216
8	30	16	363-395	0	480

6.3.1   Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 1
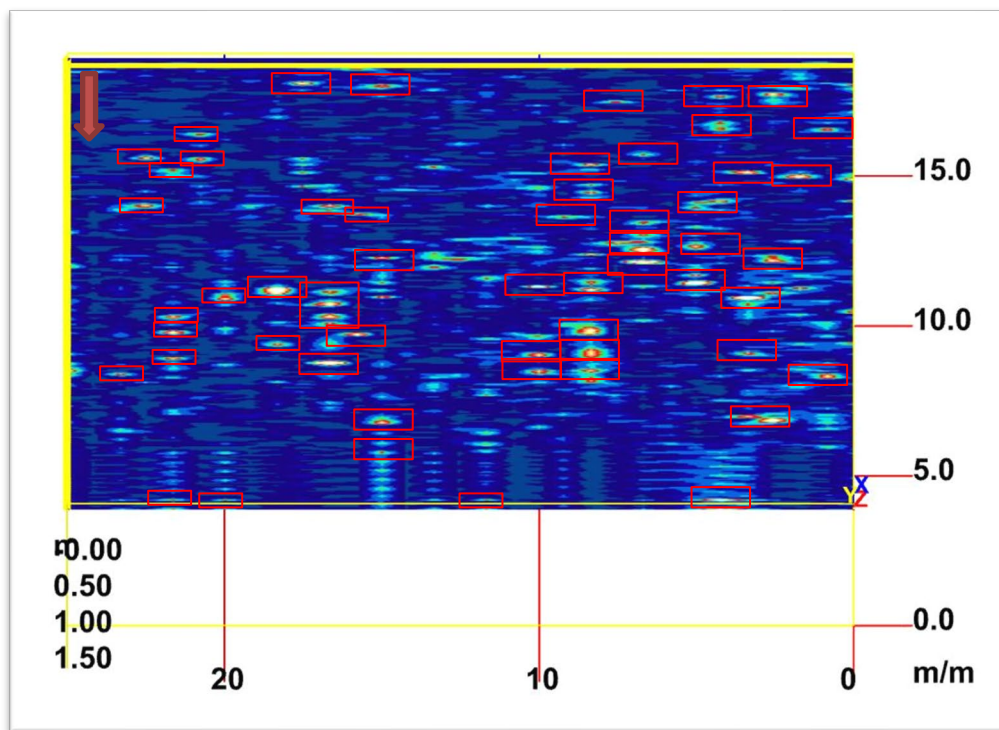
Figure 6.6 Farmer Street Grid 1 depicting 52 anomalies. This time slice is at 0.5 m below surface

Grid 1 (Figure 6.6) is located in the middle of the cemetery hill and spans an area of 375 m^2. The GPR survey identified 52 potential graves. Figure 6.4 shows that these burials are organized into distinct rows with burials oriented east-west and are spread out throughout the grid. Grave shafts appear in the processed data starting at approximately 0.5 m below surface. While some anomolies are distinctly large in the processed image, others are much smaller in size. This differnce in anomoly sizes can be attributed to the tendancy of grave shafts to start collapsing after approximately one hundred years (Rainville 2008). Additionally, some of the burials are clustered together, possibly in family plots, reflecting the information gathered during archival research that the Newnan residents were able to purchase family plots in addition to individual plots (Elliott and Dean 2001).

6.3.2 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 2
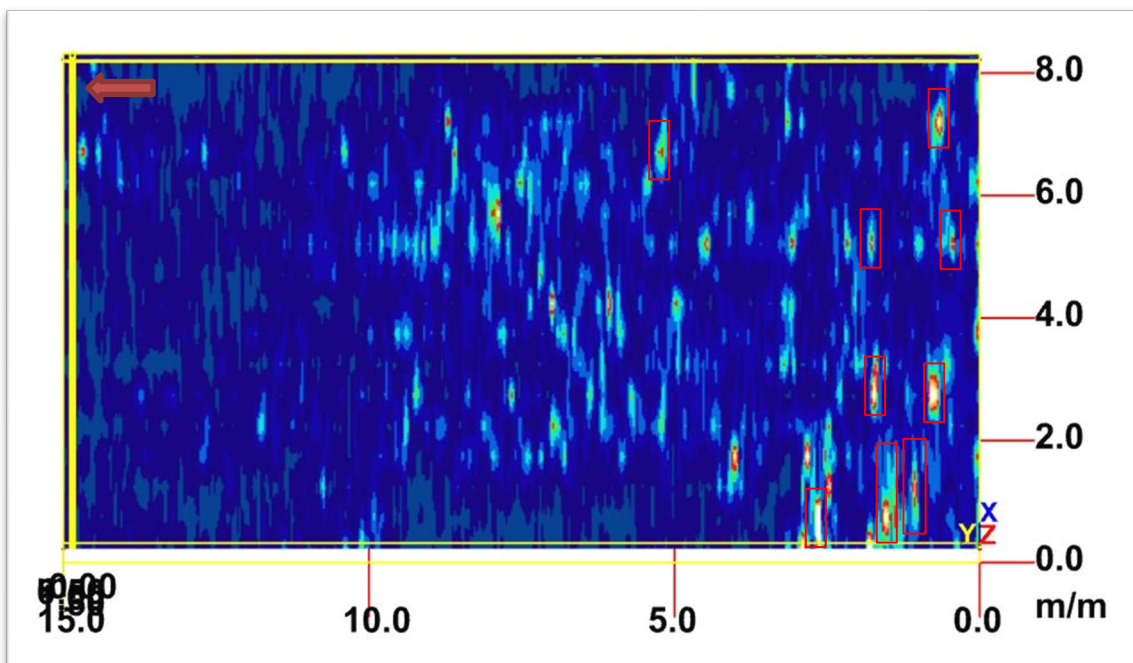
Figure 6.7 Farmer Street Grid 2 depicting 9 potential burials

Grid 2 (Figure 6.7) is situated close to the southern limit of the cemetery and covers an area of 120 m². The processed grid image shows 9 potential graves with anomalies organized in rows with burials oriented east to west throughout the grid. Burial shafts appear 0.5 m below the surface. Anomalies in Grid 2 appear much smaller than those in Grid 1. It is possible that this grid has older burials with more grave shafts that have begun to collapse over time. This is supported by the presence of more compacted anomalies that are indicated as light blue rectangles compared to the deep, red grave shafts indicative of a definitive grave shaft. It is possible that the cluster of anomalies in the southeast corner of the grid represent a family plot, however there are no other plots indicated within this grid based upon the wider spacing between burials. A large, rectangular piece of stone was present in the grid but does not seem to be associated with any GPR anomalies.

6.3.3 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 3

Figure 6.8 Farmer Street Grid 3 depicting the absence of burials with an old walking path transecting the eastern corner
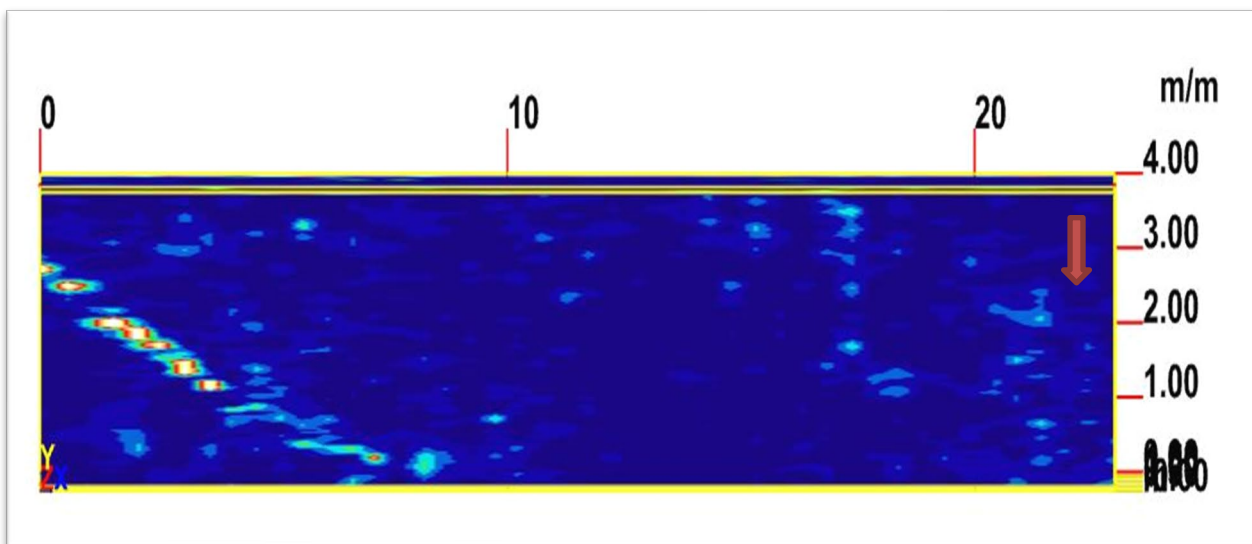
Grid 3 (Figure 6.8) is located north of the Coweta County African American Heritage Museum between the museum and the hill leading down to the skate park. The grid covers an area of 299 m². This grid contains no burials. An old walking path is seen transecting the grid starting in the southeast corner.

6.3.4 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 5
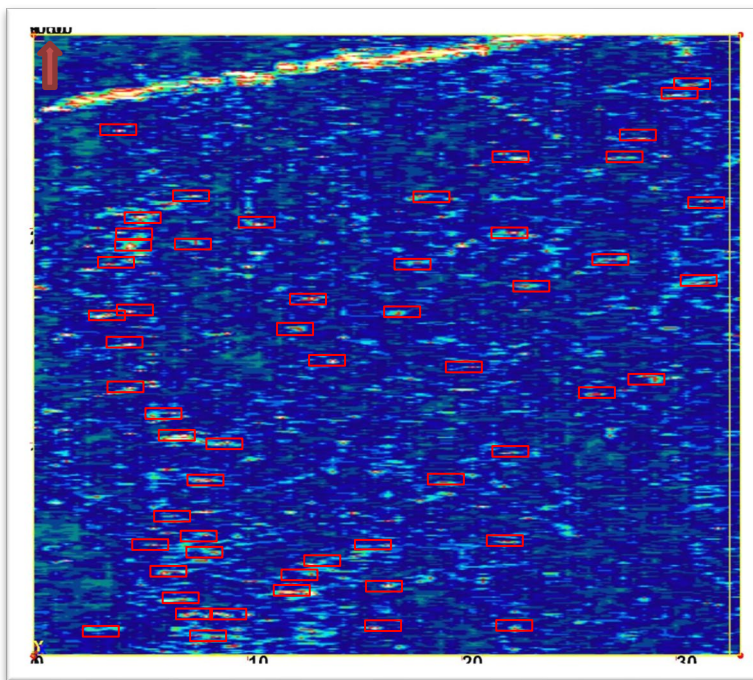
Figure 6.9 Farmer Streeet Cemetery grid 5 depicting 58 burial shafts with a large utility line transecting the northwest corner

Grid 5 (Figure 6.9) is situated on the northwestern corner of the cemetery hill, directly uphill from the turnaround at the end of the cemetery drive. It was the largest grid surveyed measuring 33 meters east/west by 29 meters north/south covering 957 square meters. Within the grid there are 58 potential grave shafts reflected by deep red and white signatures. While the burials are not organized into rows, there are several, large clusters of burials possibly reflecting family groupings or plots. A utility line created a strong reflection transecting the northwestern corner of the grid and continues to just short of the northeastern corner. The line is bordered on both sides by grave shafts visible at five and fifteen meters on the x-axis of the grid, suggesting that burials may potentially have been disturbed during its construction.

6.3.5 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 6
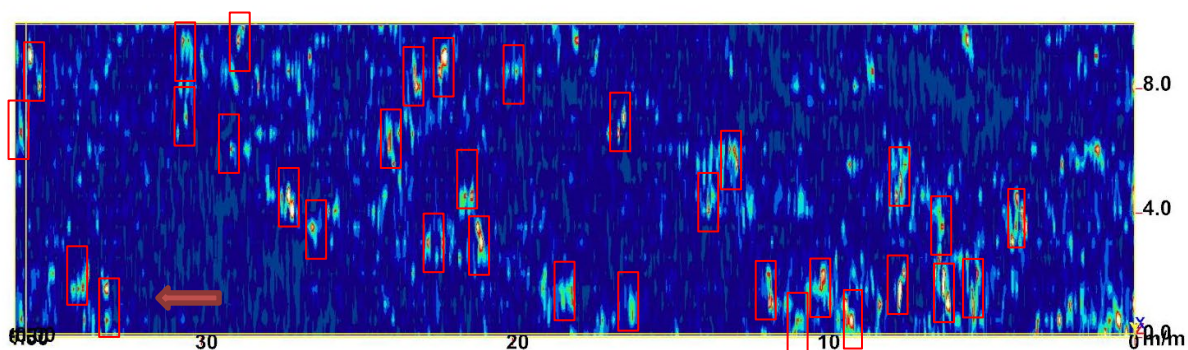
Figure 6.10 Farmer Street Cemetery grid 6 showing 32 potential graves

Grid 6 (Figure 6.10) is situated in the center of the cemetery hill. The grid measures 10 meters east/west by 36 meters north/south. Within the grid, 32 burials have been identified. The southwest corner exhibits a high concentration of grouped burials potentially reflecting several family plots. There is also a potential family plot in the northwest corner. Individual and paired burials are visible throughout the grid.

6.3.6   Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 7
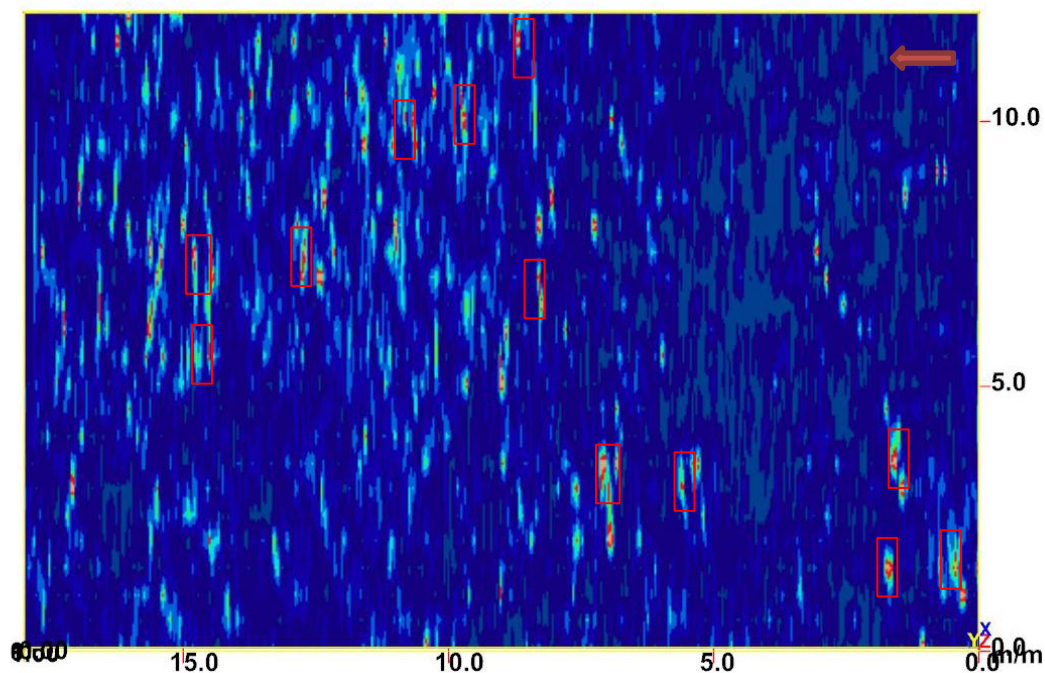
Figure 6.11 Farmer Street Cemetery grid 7 showing 12 anomalies with a red arrow pointing north

Grid 7 (Figure 6.11) abuts Grid 5 on its northern border. Burials are concentrated in the southwestern portion of the grid. There are no pairs or family plots indicated within this grid. The area surrounding this grid is heavily wooded with several large trees. The tree roots account for the abundance of small, shallow anomalies indicated by small red squares. Burials are differentiated from tree roots by their rectangular shape and the presence of white in the middle of the red which suggests a stronger reflection to the GPR antenna. The Webb map depicts the ATV trail running through this general area, but there are no anomalies to suggest that any part of that trail was located within the limits of Grid 7.

6.3.7   Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 8
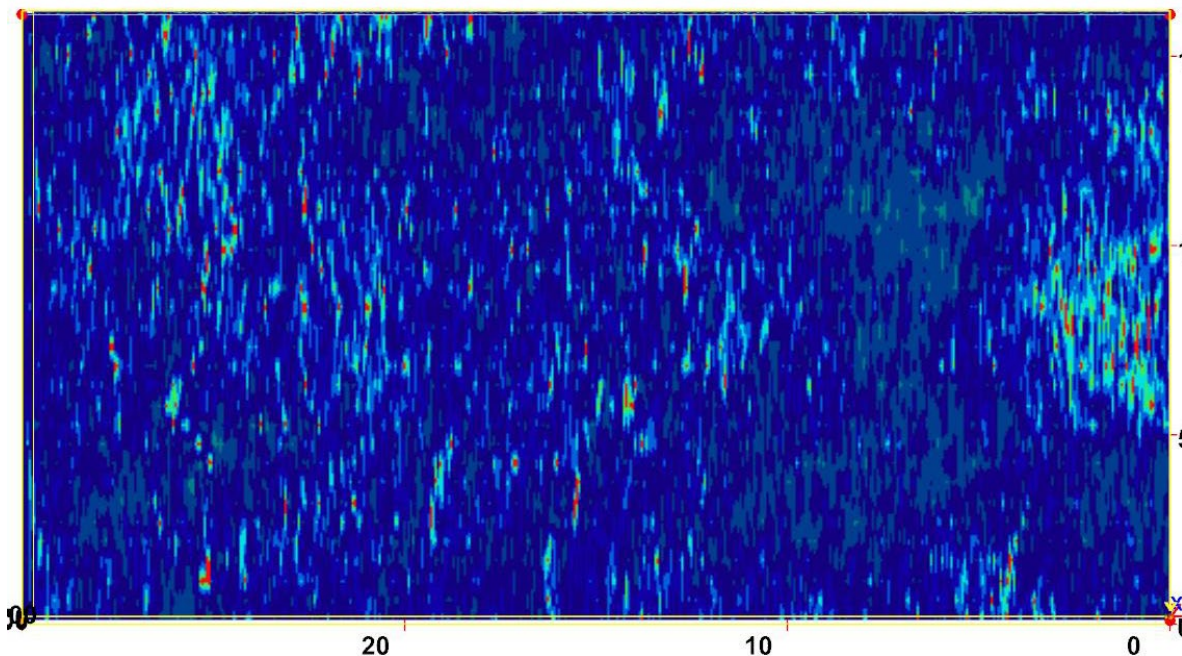
Figure 6.12 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 8 showing several shallow anomalies interpreted as the extensive root systems of several large trees surrounding the grid

Grid 8 (Figure 6.12) is located on the eastern portion of the cemetery hill, just before the hill drops down toward Farmer Street. The grid is bordered by large, old trees with extensive root systems that extend into the grid. No burials were identified within this grid. The abundance of small red squares reflects the extensive root systems of the old trees that border the grid. A large, circular depression is located in the center of the grid and was believed to be the former location of a tree that was previously removed from the property. This assumption is supported by the small, shallow anomalies located in the center of the grid. There were no visible depressions in this area reinforcing the interpretation that this part of the cemetery was not utilized for burials.

6.4   Research Summary

    The GPR survey of approximately one acre of the Farmer Street Cemetery resulted in identification of 163 burials. The Webb survey in 1999 identified 159 depressions across the entire cemetery. Grid 5 was the largest grid surveyed and contained the greatest number of burials of the grids surveyed. There were no burials identified in grids three and eight which were located north of the museum and east of the cemetery hill, respectively. It is my hope that the GPR results demonstrate the need for a more comprehensive GPR survey of the cemetery, as it is very likely that the Webb map underreported the number of graves at the site.

7   THE HISTORIC UTOY CEMETERY

7.1   Site History

The Historic Utoy Cemetery is the oldest established cemetery in the city of Atlanta. It is situated in the historic Venetian Hills neighborhood of Southwest Atlanta approximately one mile west of Fort McPherson in a residential neighborhood. The cemetery is associated with the Utoy Primitive Baptist Church which was established in 1824 and moved to its current location adjacent to the cemetery in 1828. There are 189 marked burials in the front, eastern, portion of the cemetery with 150 unmarked burials identified by Southeastern Archaeology in the same area. The western, or rear, portion of the cemetery has numerous unmarked burials which can be visually identified by grave depressions and fieldstone markers.

The cemetery sits on four acres of which approximately one acre contains burials. Unfortunately, the physical records for the early cemetery burials were destroyed when the church caught fire in the late 19th century. However, records of the historic congregation indicate that there was a mixed demographic of attendees, including both white and African American members. Due to the lack of surviving of burial records, we are unable to verify if the western burials represent this mixed population or if they are exclusively African American. All marked burials within the cemetery are oriented in east-west rows, with heads placed to the west and feet to the east.

The cemetery includes graves of veterans from the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. These graves are indicated by traditional, government-issued marble headstones with cast metal insignias and identification plates. While the cemetery is still the final resting place of the Confederate soldiers, the Union soldiers' remains have been relocated to the national cemetery in

Kennesaw, Georgia. A trench from the Battle of Utoy Creek cuts through the edge of the northern boundary of the cemetery.

7.2   Research Plan

The Utoy Cemetery occupies a 4-acre parcel in the Venetian Hills neighborhood of Southwest Atlanta. It was previously surveyed using ground-penetrating radar in 2015. This survey covered most of the cemetery, except the western portion which is populated by numerous fieldstone-marked burials. The 2015 survey identified 150 unmarked burials, subsequently marked with stainless steel, in-ground pins, in the Eastern portion of the cemetery and mapped 189 marked burials (Figure 7.1). The goal of the current survey was to identify the burials in the western portion so that the cemetery will have been surveyed almost in its entirety.
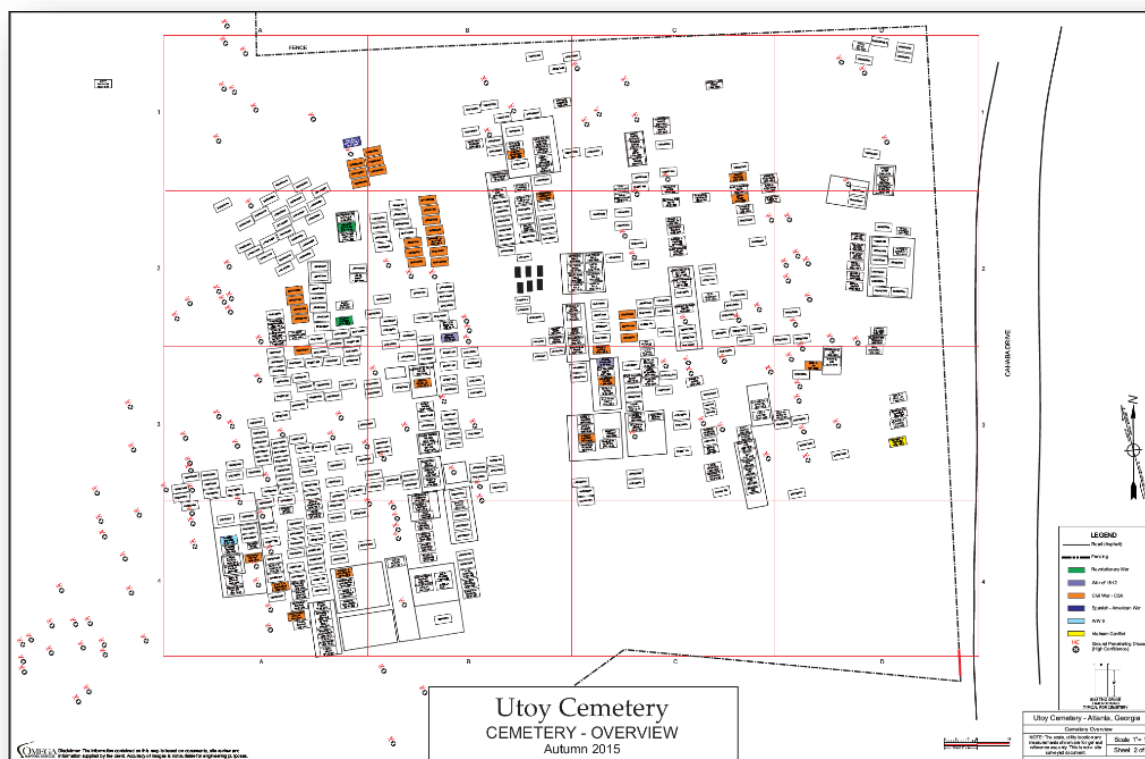
Figure 7.1 A map of Utoy Cemetery's GPR survey from Southeastern Archaeology Services in 2015

In addition to the GPR survey, a Leica total station was used to map points throughout the cemetery including marked graves, the fence on the northern boundary of the cemetery, the GPR grid corners. The marked graves along with the identified steel pins from the 2015 survey were used as reference points to georeference the previous survey with the newly obtained ETS points.

7.3   Results
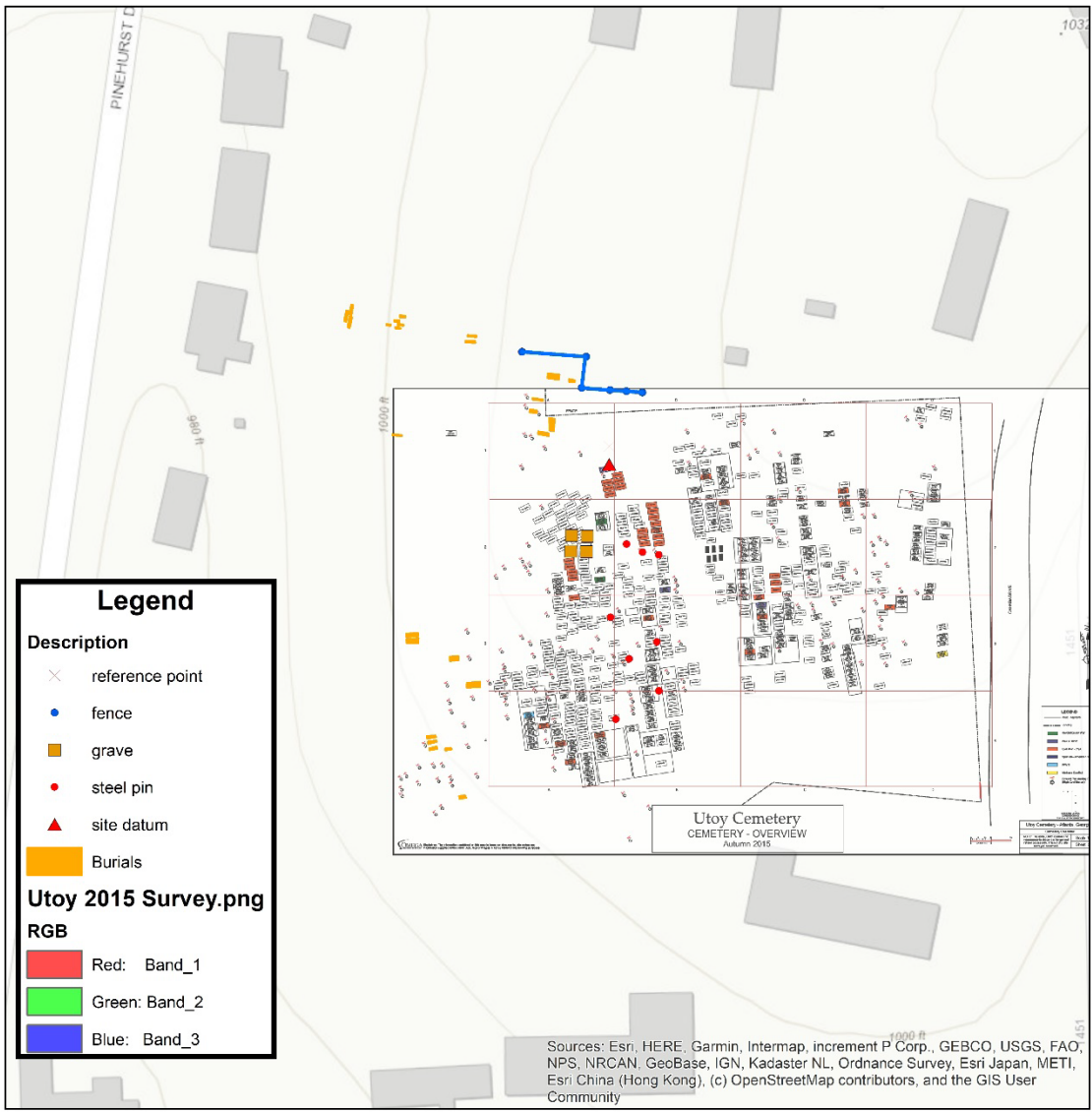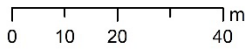
Figure 7.2 Survey results from the Utoy Cemetery

Investigations at Utoy took place over the course of four visits between January 2021 and May 2021. A total of 32 hours of investigation time occurred over those four days. Investigations included ground-penetrating radar surveys, mapping points with the Leica electronic total station, and metal detection. Seven GPR grids were established and surveyed via unidirectional transects starting in the southwest corner. These grids cover approximately 0.2 acres of the 4 acre cemetery resulting in 5% of the cemetery being covered by these surveys. Grid information including numbers, grid measurements in meters, GPR file numbers, and number of burials identified by GPR are detailed in Table 6.1. GPR data was collected with a SIR-3000 manufactured by GSSI with a 400-mHz antenna. To increase accuracy and ease of interpretability, the transects were run unidirectionally moving north starting in the southwest corner of the designated grid with a 0.5 m transect interval. The GPR collected 120 samples per scan and 80 scans per one meter unit. In each grid, the first scan was located at x = 0 and the last transect offset from the eastern limit of the grid by 0.25 m.

The collected data was then imported into Radan 7.0 as a 3D batch file for processing. Prior to processing, grid data was observed for anomalies or patterns that would potentially get filtered out during processing. Horizontal banding at 1 m below surface was observed in all grids. This banding can be attributed to wet clay or standing water. Filters applied included time-zero, IIR, noise band removal, gain restoration followed by gain adjustment, and finally migration of the data (Leech 2019). Radan experienced a glitch during processing that caused horizontal banding to occur starting at x=0, y=0. This was able to be rectified through various means in all grids except Grid 1, where the bands could not be removed despite re-processing on a different computer. This grid was then processed as all the others, but anomalies in the band-

obstructed area were noted so that they could be marked within the grid even though they were

not visible through the distortion.

Table 7.1 Utoy Cemetery Grid Information

Grid No.	Width (m, E/W)	Length (m, N/S)	File Numbers	No. of Burials	Total m^2
1	6	13	543-556	3	78
2	7	28	511-542	5	196
3	10	8	486-450	5	80
4	7	19	469-485	6	133
5	13	8	063-080	1	104
6	13	7	016-062	4	91
7	7	15	001-015	5	105

Burials were identified through determining the depth of the top of the burial shaft,

comparing the burial locations to features on hand drawn maps, and referencing notations in field

notes. Burial shafts across the Farmer Street Cemetery start approximately .6 to .7 meters below

the surface. Several burials show as clusters of circular anomalies. This is potentially due to

grave shafts collapsing from age and due to the water saturated soils. There is also a possibility

that these small, clustered anomalies are child burials.

7.3.1 Utoy Cemetery Grid 1
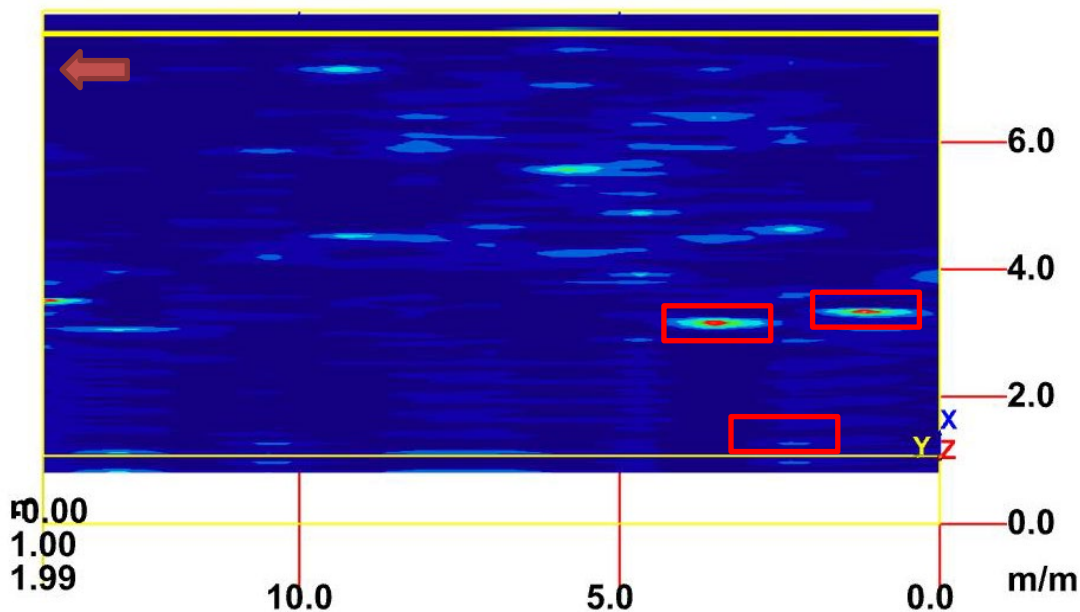
Figure 7.3 Utoy Cemetery Grid 1 with three burials marked with red polygons. The red arrow is pointing north

Grid 1 (Figure 7.3) is located in the northwest area of the cemetery and covers approximately 78 square meters. Three burials were identified in this grid, indicated by the large red rectangles visible in Figure 7.2. This grid shows bands of distortion, due to a glitch in Radan, that were not able to be resolved through re-processing on a different computer. There are three burials in this grid with one burial not visible because it is underneath the distortion banding. The anomaly indicative of a burial was observed in the raw data before filters were applied. Anomalies are oriented North-South, which differs from most burials observed at Utoy. The last transect collected in Grid 1 was at 7.5 m on the x-axis, rather than at 8 m. The presence of concrete pavers for the entire length of the grid, indicative of family plots, prevented collection of the final transect. The paver plots extend into the western portion of Grid 2 and can be observed in the first transect collected in that grid. Despite there being heavy tree cover around

the perimeter of the grid, the collected data does not reflect any anomalies that can be identified

as tree roots or root pockets.

7.3.2   Utoy Cemetery Grid 2

Figure 7.4 Utoy Cemetery Grid 2 with 5 potential burials marked with red polygons and a red arrow pointing north

Grid 2 (Figure 7.4) abuts Grid 1 and covers 196 square meters. The first transect collected in grid 2 ran parallel to Grid 1, where the final transect had to be eliminated due to the concrete pavers. These pavers were also avoided in the first transect of Grid 2, so the first transect was collected at x = 0.5 meters. Several small anomalies clustered in the western portion of the grid reflect fieldstones that were visible at the site. There are five anomalies indicative of burial shafts, reflected as rectangular, red anomalies on Figure 7.4. Three anomalies are small in size and are potential child burials. This grid contains several field stones that do not have corresponding anomalies that would indicate burials. There are two field stones matching up with the potential burials that may have been used as head or foot stones. The southeastern corner also reflects the presence of more fieldstones at y = 0. The southern boundary of Grid 2 abuts the northern boundary of Grid 3.
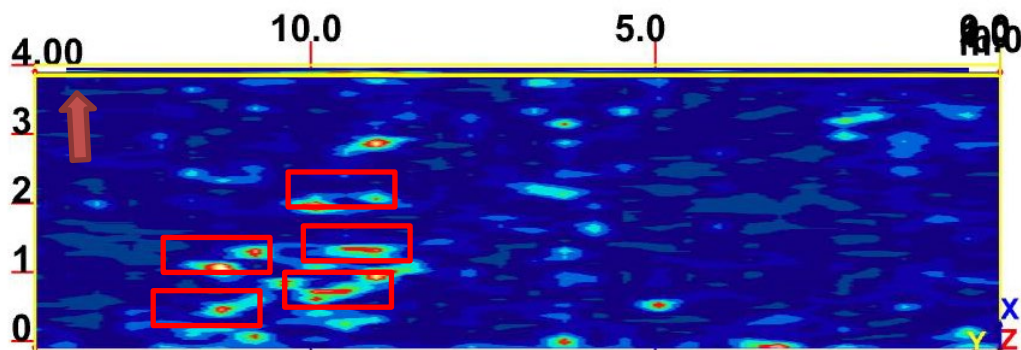
7.3.3 Utoy Cemetery Grid 3

Figure 7.5 Utoy Cemetery Grid 3 showing 2 potential burials marked with red polygons and a red arrow pointing north

Grid 3 (Figure 7.5) is also located in the northern portion of the cemetery abutting the southern boundary of Grid 2. The processed data shows two potential burials reflected as small clusters of anomalies with a larger rectangular shadow with one larger, distinctly rectangular anomaly. This grid showed a significant amount of horizontal banding throughout the entirety of the grid. As mentioned above, horizontal banding in this area is indicative of wet clay in this area. It is possible that these wet conditions have contributed to the collapse of the three grave shafts clustered together in the northwest corner of the grid, and the single, rectangular anomaly in the southwest corner. The small, circular anomalies have been interpreted as tree roots. There are several large trees on three sides of the grid that would cause small, clustered anomalies as seen in the southeast and northwest corners of the grid.

7.3.4 Utoy Cemetery Grid 4
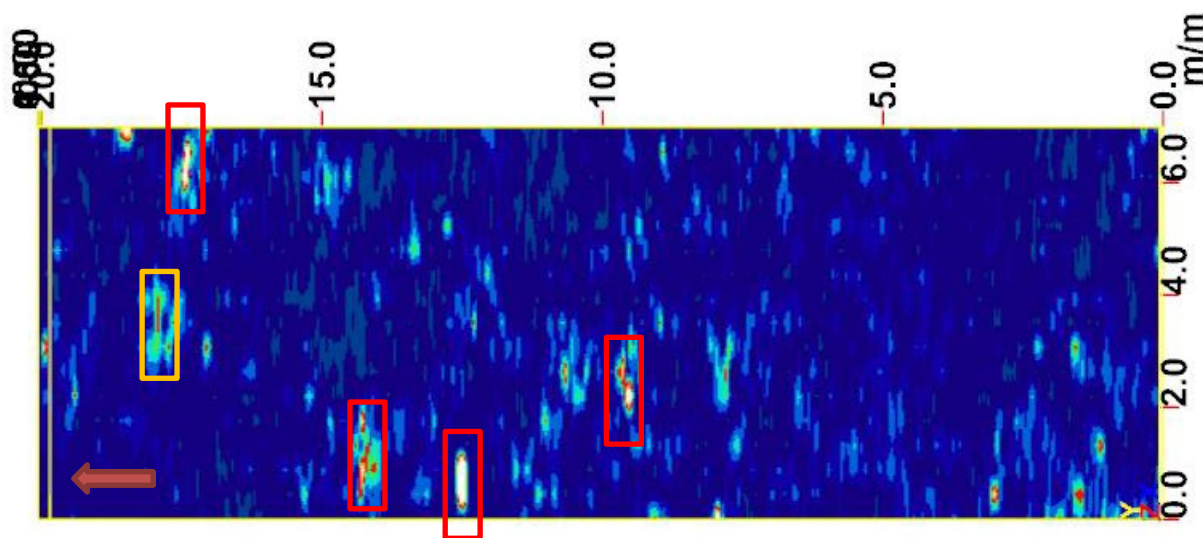
Figure 7.6 Utoy Cemetery Grid 4 showing 4 potential burials marked by red polygons and a red arrow pointing north; a low probability burial is marked with an orange polygon

Grid 4 (Figure 7.6) covers 133 square meters and is located just west of the marked burials confederate burials and site datum. The northern boundary of the grid stops just short of the fence that borders the Battle of Utoy Creek civil war trench. The southwest corner of the grid shows anomalies created by shallow tree roots. Four burials are present in this grid. Three have potentially collapsing grave shafts as their reflection is separated into several small but deep anomalies. A fifth burial has been marked in Figure 7.5 with an orange polygon, however this has been determined with low probability since the width of the anomaly is significantly more narrow than what would be typically seen with a burial. Again, this could be caused by a collapsed grave shaft. Anomalies similar to the size and shape of this were also observed in Grid 1.

7.3.5 Utoy Cemetery Grid 5

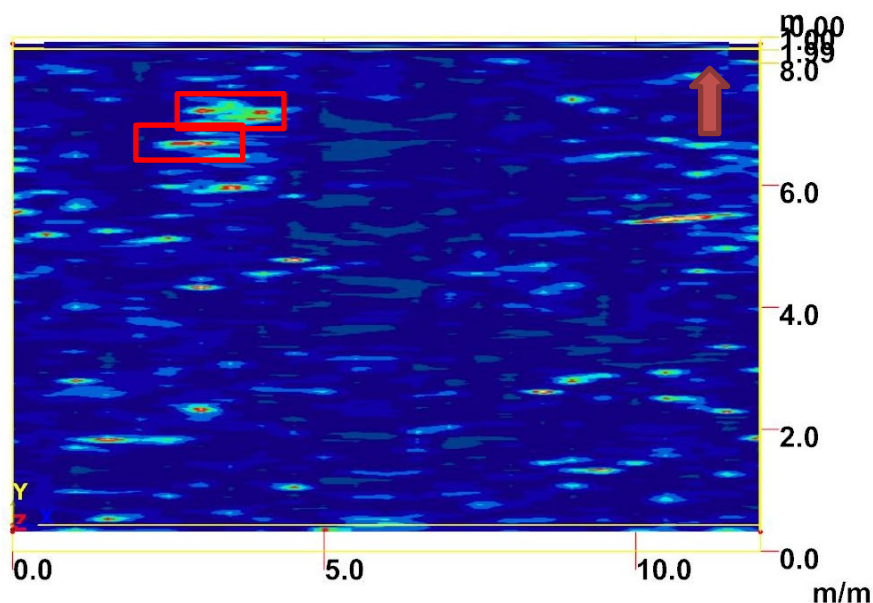*Figure 7.7 Utoy Cemetery Grid 5 with one potential burial marked with red polygons and a red arrow pointing north*

Grid 5 (Figure 7.7) is in the west-central area of the cemetery and covers 104 square meters. Its western boundary is shared by a raised family plot with marked burials. This grid is surrounded on all four sides by trees and was significantly overgrown, requiring significantly more time to machete through the undergrowth than the other grids. Interestingly, there are no shallow tree roots encroaching into the boundaries of the grid. One potential burial shaft has been identified in this grid. There were no fieldstones or markers of any kind uncovered in this area.

7.3.6   Utoy Cemetery Grid 6
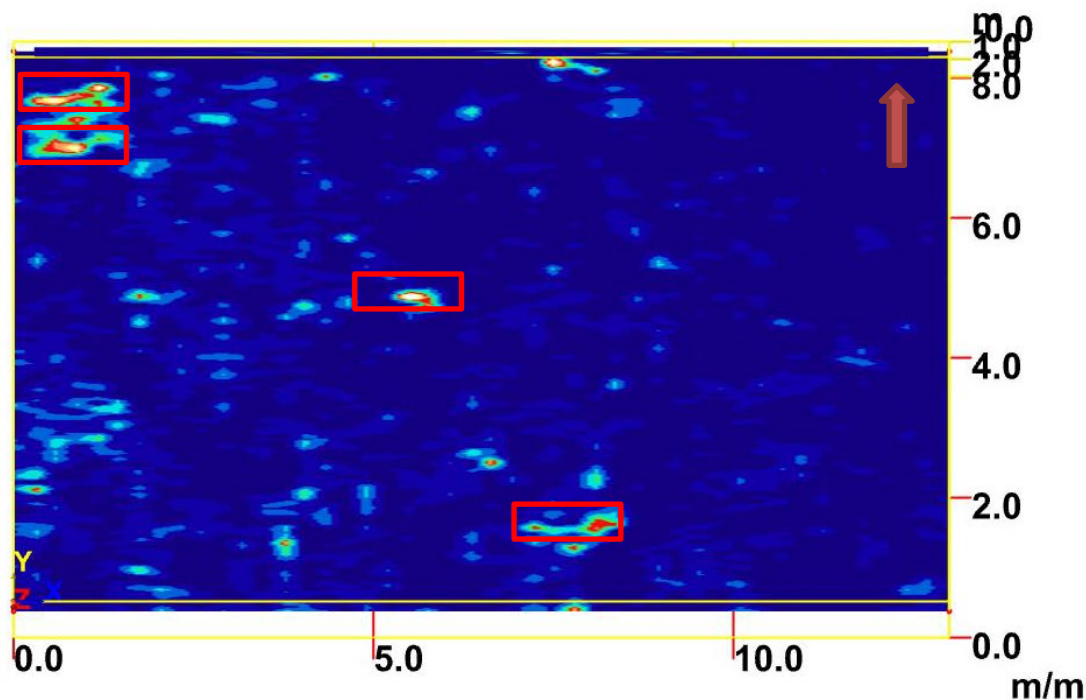
Figure 7.8 Utoy Cemetery Grid 6 showing four anomalies marked with red polygons; a red arrow points north

Grid 6 (Figure 7.8) is in the southwestern area of the cemetery. Initially grid 6 was measured out as two small grids but was later combined into a single medium sized grid. It covers an area of 96 square meters. 4 potential burial shafts have been identified with one being a potential child burial. The remaining three shafts seem to have collapsed over time. The anomaly located at x = 7, y = 1.5 is marked at the surface with a mature yucca plant which had to be maneuvered around to collect data in that area. This grid also had fieldstones on the eastern portion on the surface, but these fieldstones do not have any corresponding anomalies in the areas where they were located. The anomaly at x = 7, y = 8 was determined to be a tree root after being cross checked with the hand-drawn map of the grid and field notes.
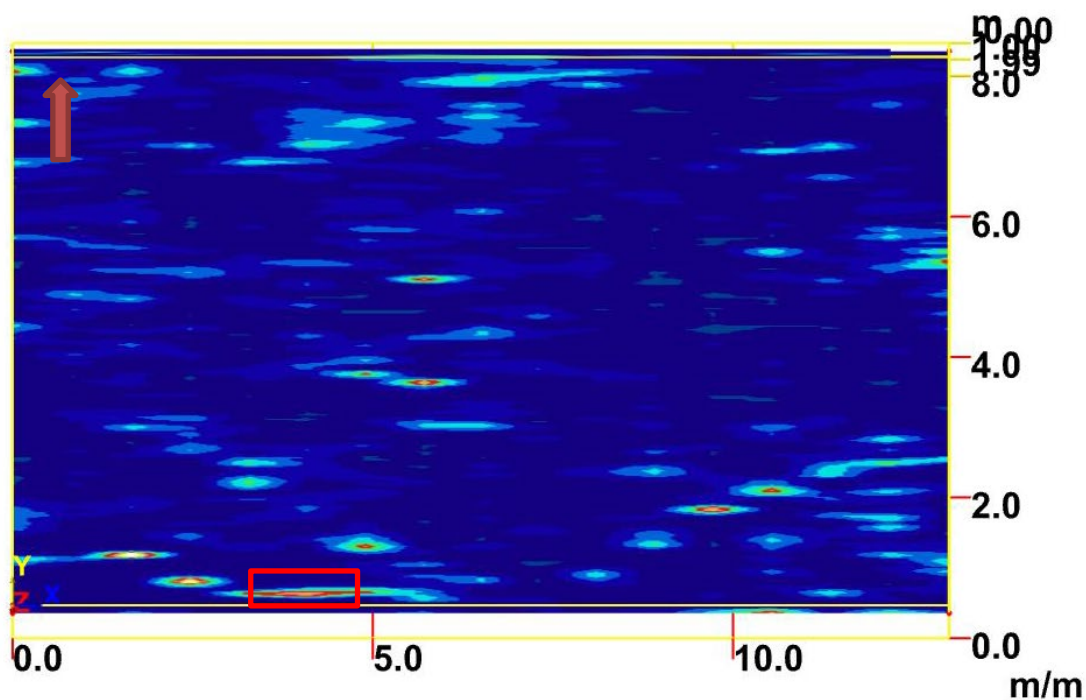
7.3.7   Utoy Cemetery Grid 7
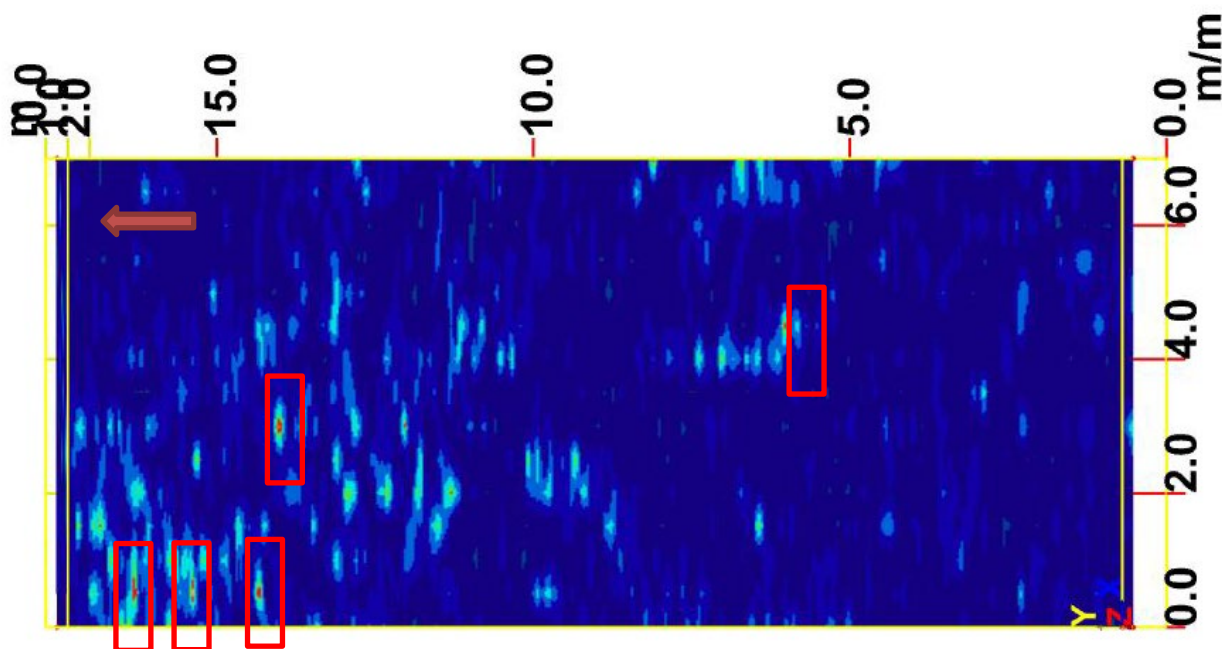
Figure 7.9 Utoy Cemetery Grid 7 with five anomalies marked with red polygons and a red arrow pointing north

Grid 7 (Figure 7.9) is located in the southwest corner of the cemetery and covers 105 square meters. The western boundary of the grid was occupied by a large, landscaping discard pile which was overgrown with poison ivy and had to be trimmed down using machetes along with the high grass growing inside the grid. Five anomalies were identified as potential grave shafts. Steel pins from the 2015 Southern Archaeology survey were not identified within this grid, despite the 2015 map suggesting that there may be some located in the eastern portion. Pins were identified just uphill from the eastern boundary and 2 were located behind the landscape discard pile, however these were outside of the grid boundaries, so the GPR was not used to identify any anomalies associated with those pins. A small accumulation of historic trash was also identified with the metal detector just outside the southern boundary of the grid which contained some pieces of clay pipe, broken amber glass, metal bottle caps, and metal wire.

7.4   Research Summary

Seven grids of data were collected at the Utoy Cemetery covering a substantial portion of the western area which had not been surveyed in 2015. A total of 24 burials were identified within the grids. The entire cemetery had a substantial quantity of undergrowth due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under normal circumstances, volunteer workdays would have been coordinated to trim back grasses and newly seeded trees, but social distancing and COVID quarantines prevented those events from occurring between 2020-2021 when this research was conducted. Machetes and patience were all the surveying team needed to chop through dense ivy, high grass, and tree seedlings to create the optimal conditions for GPR surveys. Without cutting through the underbrush and ivy, the GPR would get stuck and the transect would have to be re-collected. The only areas left un-surveyed were those with too much undergrowth or dense tree cover.

8   DISCUSSION

This project aimed to add to current knowledge about African American burial grounds in Georgia and the American South. The three sites that were surveyed represent points on a continuum of African American burial ground typologies. There were distinct differences between rural and urban locations and how this affected the population demography, and also in how the community interacted with the cemetery. The Cohentown cemetery is a rural cemetery established by freedmen and the internments include Cohentown community members and their descendants. The Farmer Street cemetery is in a more urban environment, but in a quiet suburban town. The interments at the cemetery are thought to include enslaved individuals, freedmen, and their descendants. The Chalk Level community is intrinsically connected to the cemetery. Members of the community have childhood memories linked to the cemetery and knowledge of family members who were buried there long ago, though the exact graves can no longer be located due to the markers having been removed. The Utoy cemetery is a semi-urban cemetery of mixed demography where the African American members of the Utoy Primitive Baptist Church were buried in a separated space from the white members of the same church that they attended together. The cemetery is maintained by descendants of the white population who are currently aiming to properly memorialize the burials of the African American population interred there.

Each cemetery had its own privileges and challenges related to research at the site. The COVID-19 pandemic had an obvious effect on the timeline for the project. Since all work was being conducted in open, outside areas with few people, I was still able to continue my research after an eight month hiatus. Proper precautions were taken where even when working outside everyone wore masks when in close proximity to each other. We were open and communicative

about symptoms and exposure, and work was able to continue without risk of infection or transmission.

The Cohentown Cemetery research was closely conducted with descendant family members of the Cohentown community who need the cemetery to be mapped so that they can apply for it to be added to the National Register of Historic Places alongside the Cherry Grove School House. The completed survey will provide the information that they need for their application. With the completion and submittal of the GASF form, the cemetery will be designated an official site number and the survey information will be available to archaeologists and project planners through the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources Geographic Information System (GNAHRGIS). This will ensure that the site will be visible in any desktop reviews preceding development so that impacts on the site can be avoided.

The Utoy Cemetery project was developed along with Ashley Shares, a historic preservationist for the Oakland Cemetery who also works closely with the Utoy Cemetery Board of Trustees. The board is attempting to gain funding to help them maintain the cemetery, which has been privately funded until this point. The cemetery is already listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There was not much interaction between me and the board aside from the preliminary visit, but this work will ensure that the board has the information that they need to secure the funding for future site maintenance.

The Farmer Street cemetery presented its own challenges. The research at the site began with the establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Coweta County African American Alliance, the City of Newnan, and Georgia State University. The MOU defined the scope of work for my research being conducted at the cemetery and limited it to the ground-penetrating radar survey, collection of ETS points with the total station, and possibly

taking a few ground scrapes if time permitted. Unfortunately, over the course of the project the leadership of the alliance overturned multiple times. Following the hiatus, when we returned for a final day of data collection, we hit a roadblock because the new leadership of the alliance did not know who we were or why we were there. They were completely unaware of the research project that was being conducted and knew nothing about the MOU. They also stated that the community knew nothing about the work that we were doing at the cemetery, and this was a huge surprise to us because we were under the impression that the alliance represented the community's interests and would have been in communication with community members about the work that was being conducted starting at the planning phase of the project. The interaction conveyed a larger disconnect between the city and the alliance. We found out later that the city and alliance were having issues of their own that had yet to be worked out upon the completion of this project.

The reason I am emphasizing the division between the alliance the city is because it is important to point out that working at burial sites, despite having the best intentions and careful project planning, will not always play out in a way that appeases all of the stakeholders. This work can be difficult, complicated, and messy because we are working at sites that are not just culturally connected, but spiritually connected. While we were still able to produce a final product that the alliance and city will be able to use for their own purposes, this interaction brought to light the sociopolitical issues dealt with in researching cultural heritage sites in communities that have been historically exploited and underrepresented.

The alliance and elderly community members who were present that day made it clear that there were ritual practices that they would have liked to perform before commencement of the site research. To be clear, they were upset not at us, but at the city, for allowing this work to

begin without giving them the opportunity to practice those rituals. Although, as stated above, the work only began at the bequest of the alliance in the first place. Reiterating the point of Flewellen et al. (2020) and their emphasis on not allowing science to undermine spirituality, the libations and prayers were was an absolutely essential first step that should have taken place before commencement of the project. At the end of the day, we all shook hands, hugged, and dispersed on a positive note. Had I not listened to their grievances while maintaining an open mind about where these problems were rooted, the situation certainly could have taken a turn for the worst.

Even though the initial measures as suggested by Ervin (2005) and Flewellen et al. (2020) were followed during the planning phase of the project, in the case of Farmer Street they did not translate into the execution of the project. Reflecting upon the experience, we had limited contact with the alliance leadership after the third turnover. Our only constant point-of-contact was Eve Olsen, who was kind enough to keep us in the loop of what was happening with the changes in leadership and who to contact as the project progressed. Having maintained our presence with the first three leadership changes, I had assumed that the fourth set of leadership was already aware of the work that was being conducted at the cemetery. Needless to say, it was a wrong assumption, and we should have been more diligent in maintaining a line of communication with whoever the current leadership was at the time.

For a project to be rooted in social justice, it is not enough to just be aware of the project's impacts on the community and to keep stakeholders in the loop, but a researcher must be willing to adapt to situations as they change and adjust to the current needs of the community. In our case, this meant that when we returned for the final visit the work that needed to be done was not to survey the remaining grids. Instead, the essential work that needed to be done that day

was reconciliation. This action can only take place if researchers listen to and remain mindful of the needs and desires of the community with whom they are working. Reconciliation is not something that can be imposed, forced or hurried; rather, it is a gradual process by which groups work together to come to an understanding of each other in order to find common a ground where they can coexist and continue to work together. My hope is that the maps and project reports that I supply to the stakeholders in these projects can help these sacred places get the recognition they deserve, which in turn can play a small part in the broader reconciliation processes needed for the whole country.

9   RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important for the boundaries of a cemetery to be fully delineated and for its identity

or community association to be easily discernable so that it can be quickly identified by

community and family members. While the Utoy Cemetery has a standard, chain-link fence

(Figure 9.1), both Cohentown and Farmer Street lack visual boundaries. Rainville (2014)

recommends fencing in cemeteries in a way that is culturally appropriate. She suggests that iron

fencing, chain link fencing, or fencing that is too high and cannot be seen through (i.e. tall

wooden plank) can be considered too carceral or Euro-centric. She recommends a low stone or

wooden fence, which provides a visual barrier without feeling too enclosed or confined.
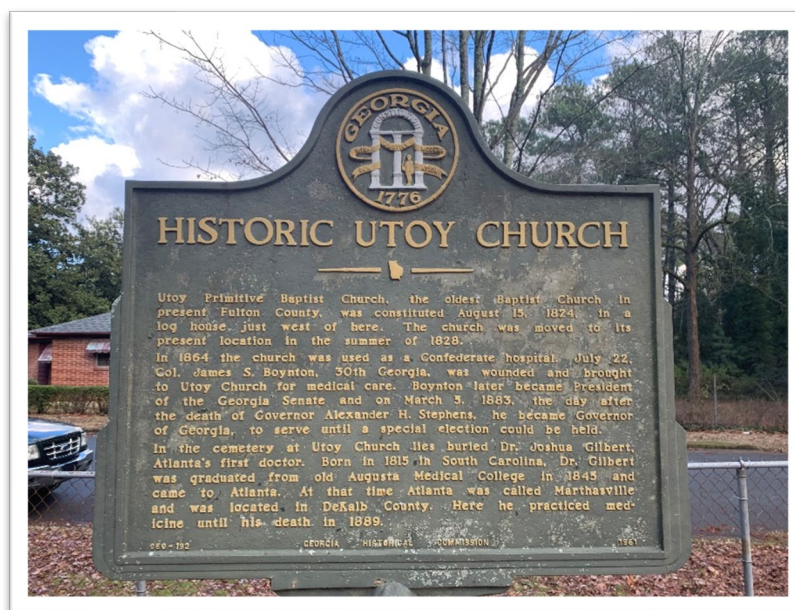

Figure 9.1 Signage and fencing at the Utoy Cemetery

The Utoy Cemetery has a large, historic marker for the associated historic church that also

provides information about its establishment and history (Figure 9.1). Farmer Street's roadside

sign is small and far from the entrance of the driveway, making it easy to miss. Cohentown has

no associated signage since it was just recently re-discovered. Signage can be expensive, but can be funded through grant money from historic organizations. Georgia's historic highway marker program accepts applications for grant money to apply toward the production of a marker similar to that of Utoy. Signage should be large enough to spot easily and located near the entrance of a site so that it does not get missed.

Georgia Archaeological Site File (GASF) site forms should be completed for all 3 cemeteries. The site file repository at the University of Georgia maintains Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources Geographic Information System (GNAHRGIS) database where developers, consultants, state agencies, and federal agencies can research historic and archaeological sites during the planning phase of various projects. The GASF will designate each cemetery a unique site number. Additionally, adding the cemeteries to GNAHRGIS will ensure that they are not missed while development is occurring around the site in the future. GASF forms can be submitted by anyone and do not have to be submitted by an archaeologist.

Since the work at Farmer Street could not be completed, a qualified geophysical firm should be contracted to survey the cemetery in its entirety. In fact, the city has recently sent out a call for proposal for a comprehensive GPR survey of the entire cemetery. Through georeferencing of the map, it can be determined that no burials were affected during the construction of the baseball diamond or skate park. However, it is uncertain as to how far the cemetery burials extend toward Farmer Street (east) and toward the private residences to the south. The homes on the southern boundary of the cemetery are already encroaching onto cemetery property. As the boundary has not been clearly defined, residents have been building their yards into the limits of the cemetery as well as dumping household refuse into that area. Fully surveying the cemetery

will ensure that all the burials are located so that they can be marked and avoided if the cemetery is turned into a memorial park.

9.1   Creating a Memorial Garden

Creating a memorial garden at historic, African American burial grounds is not an uncommon occurrence. Memorial gardens have taken several forms spanning from completely unplanned natural landscapes that are enhanced by decoration to more structured, western style landscaping with walking paths and physical memorials (Jones 2011; La Roache & Blakey 1997). While large monumental structures may serve the needs for one site, such as the large memorial featured at the African Burial Grounds in New York (Figure 9.2), smaller cemeteries may not have the financial or spatial means to accommodate such a large tribute to the interred population. There are a variety of options available outside of monumental structures that can serve the same purpose of memorializing the buried population without taking up such a large footprint and financial burden.

Figure 9.2 The African Burial Ground National Monument in Manhattan, New York commemorates the earliest and largest known black burial site in the United State (nps.gov)

Figure 9.3 Photograph of a shring with a QR code (Kneese 2014)

9.2   Sharing Information in the Digital Age

Advanced technological options should also be considered for information dissemination at historic cemeteries. A geographic information system (GIS) database could be made available online to anyone visiting the cemetery website and can easily be accessed at the cemetery using a quick response (QR) code (Figure 9.3). The QR code can give access to databases, websites, photographs, maps, and any other digitized information connected to the code. This provides a wealth of information to anyone with an internet-connected camera phone. There are limitations, however, that present themselves with the use of any technology. The primary concery for use of this technology is its longevity. The effectiveness of these codes rely on the software and technology needed to process them. Without these tools the codes are rendered useless. If a cemetery were to implement the use of QR codes as a tool for information transmission, they would have to do so in a way that the mechanism could be updated or exchanged as needed to ensure that the information would remain easily accessible with or without the code (Kneese 2014).

The advent of the near field communication (NFC) devices in 2020 seems to have provided the solution for the potential obsolescence of the QR code. NFCs do not depend on an internet connection, but rather use radio frequency identification (RFID) technology to transfer information from one place to another (Faulkner 2017). A simple tap with a phone on an NFC can transfer small amounts of data between devices including sharing documents and maps or giving access to a GIS database. NFCs are not new technology, they chips have been installed in credit cards, cell phones, and smart watches for years. The use of this technology can be easily applied without making a significant financial impact.

9.3   Creating a Cemetery GIS

The historic nature of cemeteries often leads to the primary source of documentation

being in an analog form. Background texts and maps can be combined with surveys and digital

photography to create a GIS for easy sharing of information and data management. GIS

databases can take many forms, but an ArcGIS StoryMap would be an efficient and informative

way of sharing the background information and research conducted at a historic cemetery.

A GIS StoryMap would create a visual walkthrough about the cemetery's past through

the upload of historic texts, maps, and photos while situating these items in a modern context

through recent surveys, maps, interviews, aerial images, and documents. This information can be

reviewed by cemetery visitors as they physically engage with their surrounds in the cemetery, or

simply by clicking the link from the cemetery's website in the comfort of their own space. With

the necessary information already available, assembly of a StoryMap is relatively easy and

ArcGIS online provides a user-friendly interface to construct the story of the site. This means

that the StoryMap can be created without a heavy financial burden on the cemetery management,

community, or family.

The city of Marietta, Georgia utilized ArcGIS story maps to convey information about

the historic Marietta Cemetery in downtown Marietta. The city utilized story maps to accurately

share information about grave marker and burial locations while sharing historic photos of the

site. Using tablets, wireless internet, and an ArcGIS online organizational account, the GIS team

compiled information into a StoryMap entitled "Marietta Georgia: Places of Grave Interest". The

StoryMap and GIS database allows users and cemetery visitors to pull up information about the

interred, find specific headstones located in aerial photographs and google maps, and identify

features specific to the cemetery such as large trees and water features (Brewer 2019). Similar

projects can be conducted at all three cemetery sites to convey information about the historic

community, burial locations, survey information, and historic records.

10 CONCLUSION

This project involved the survey and documentation of three historic, African American cemeteries in North Georgia for the sake of their preservation and protection from current and future development. While the Utoy Cemetery has been properly delineated and its boundaries are fenced, the Farmer Street Cemetery and Cohentown Cemetery are both in danger of encroachment due to development in the surrounding neighborhood (Farmer Street) and silvicultural activity (Cohentown).

The Cohentown Cemetery is situated within an expansive, wooded property. However, portions of the property are systematically planted, harvested, and re-planted by logging companies leaving it in danger of being negatively impacted if the boundaries and burials are not demarcated in a way that people can discern them from the wooded surroundings easily. Access to the site is severely restricted adding to the challenges faced by the research team in effectively mapping the site. The visual and ground probe survey identified 56 burials with high probability and 4 potential graves. The potential graves could not be verified with the ground probe, and the shape was slightly off from the commonly observed cigar-like outline. The survey was completed in a single day with the help of 10 volunteers from Georgia State University, Emory University, and the Hanson family.

The Farmer Street Cemetery is believed to have been 16 acres at the point of its initial establishment in 1823 and has since been reduced by development to a quarter of its size, currently measuring at 4.4 acres. Farmer Street itself was non-existent at the time of the cemetery's establishment and is not indicated on any historic maps of the area. The community and alliance members believe that Farmer Street and the adjacent skate park have both impacted cemetery burials. By georeferencing the 1828 lot map showing the limits of the "Negro

Cemetery", I found that while Farmer Street covers both lots 88 and 89, the cemetery did not extend beyond the northern hill leading down to the nearly built skate park which covers lots 98 and 99. I believe that the 16 acre procurement may referred to a combined total for all the lots purchased by A.J. Berry at that time. The GPR survey identified 163 grave shafts in the seven surveyed grids.

The GPR survey at the Utoy Cemetery took place over 4 days and identified 24 graves in seven grids. The survey covered most of the western end of the cemetery so that when combined with the 2015 survey, nearly all areas of the cemetery have been ground truthed to located unmarked burials. Metal detection also allowed us to locate the steel pins placed by Southern Research to better georeferenced

For all three cemetery, GASF site forms have been completed and will be submitted to the site file repository so that the locations of the cemeteries are visible during archaeological desktop reviews. Once the National Park Service has posted additional information about the African American Burial Grounds Act and the policies related to it, the cemeteries should apply for listing in their database as well.

This research was developed as an archaeological praxis and community archaeology project that combined the efforts of local community members, family members, and academic researchers to add to the knowledge of southern, African American cemeteries and to aid in the preservation of three sites. Through the combined effort of these groups the Cohentown Cemetery, Farmer Street Cemetery, and Utoy Cemetery have been surveyed and documented for future generations.
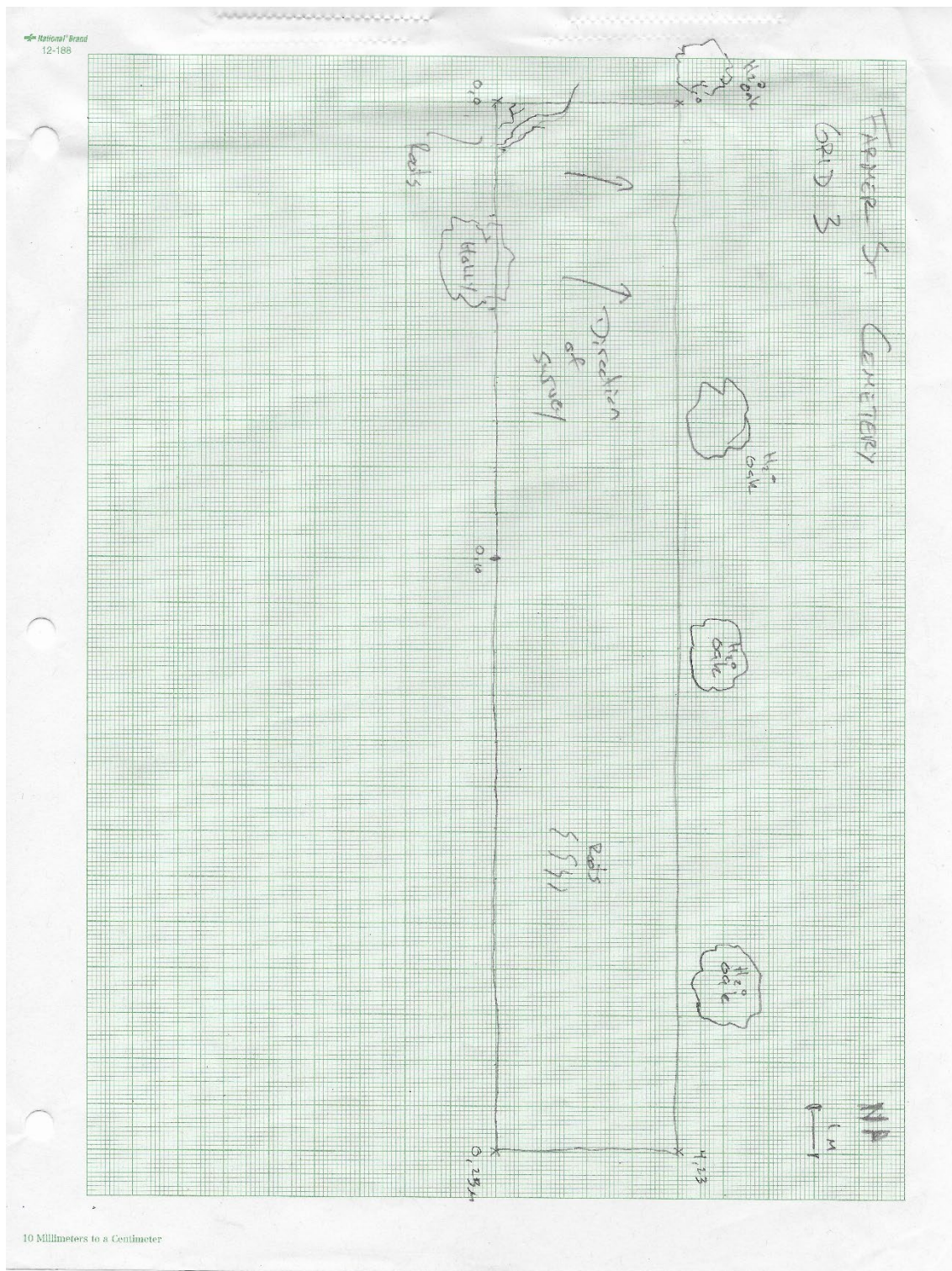
APPENDICES

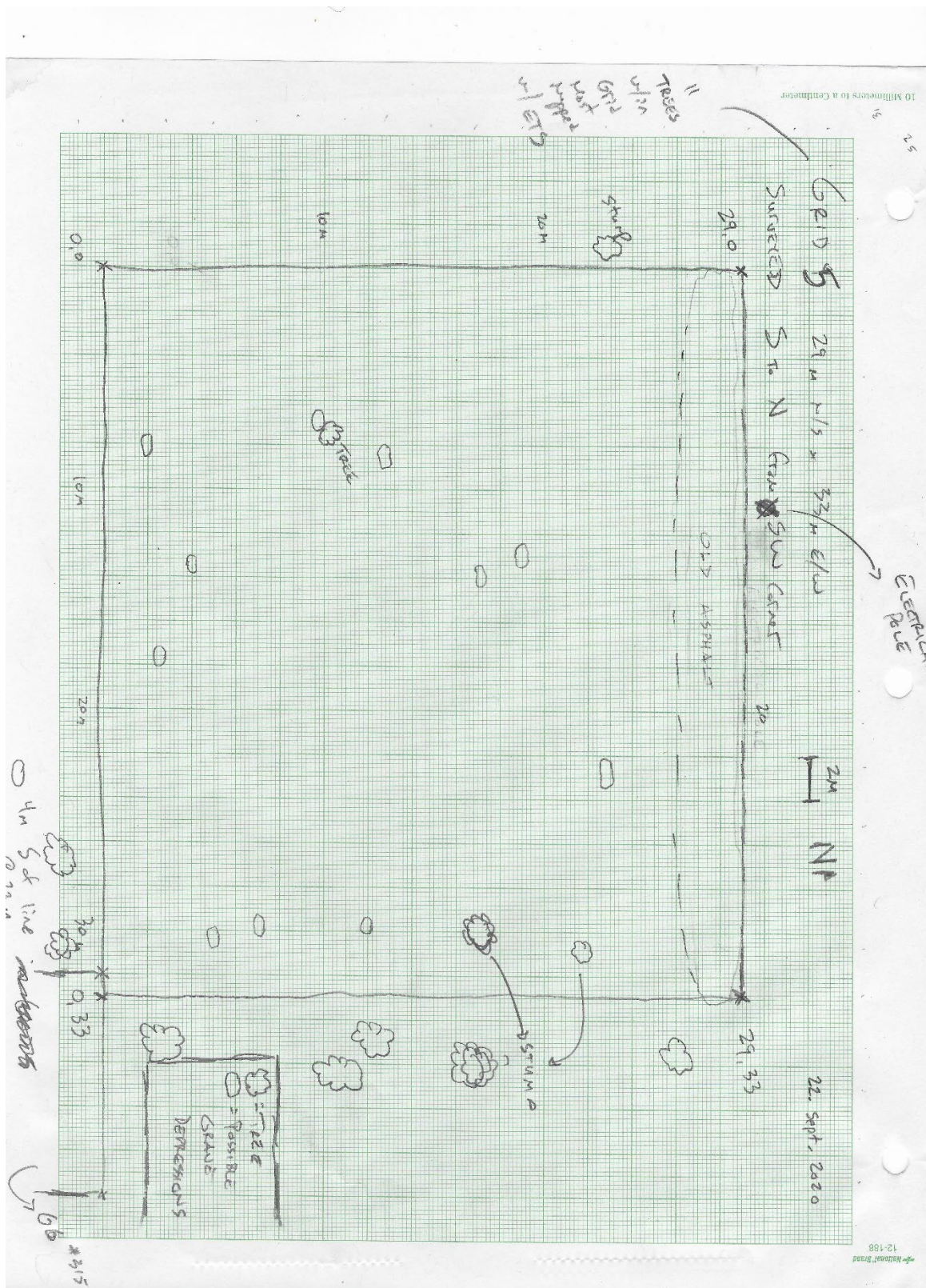## Appendix A – Hand Drawn Maps

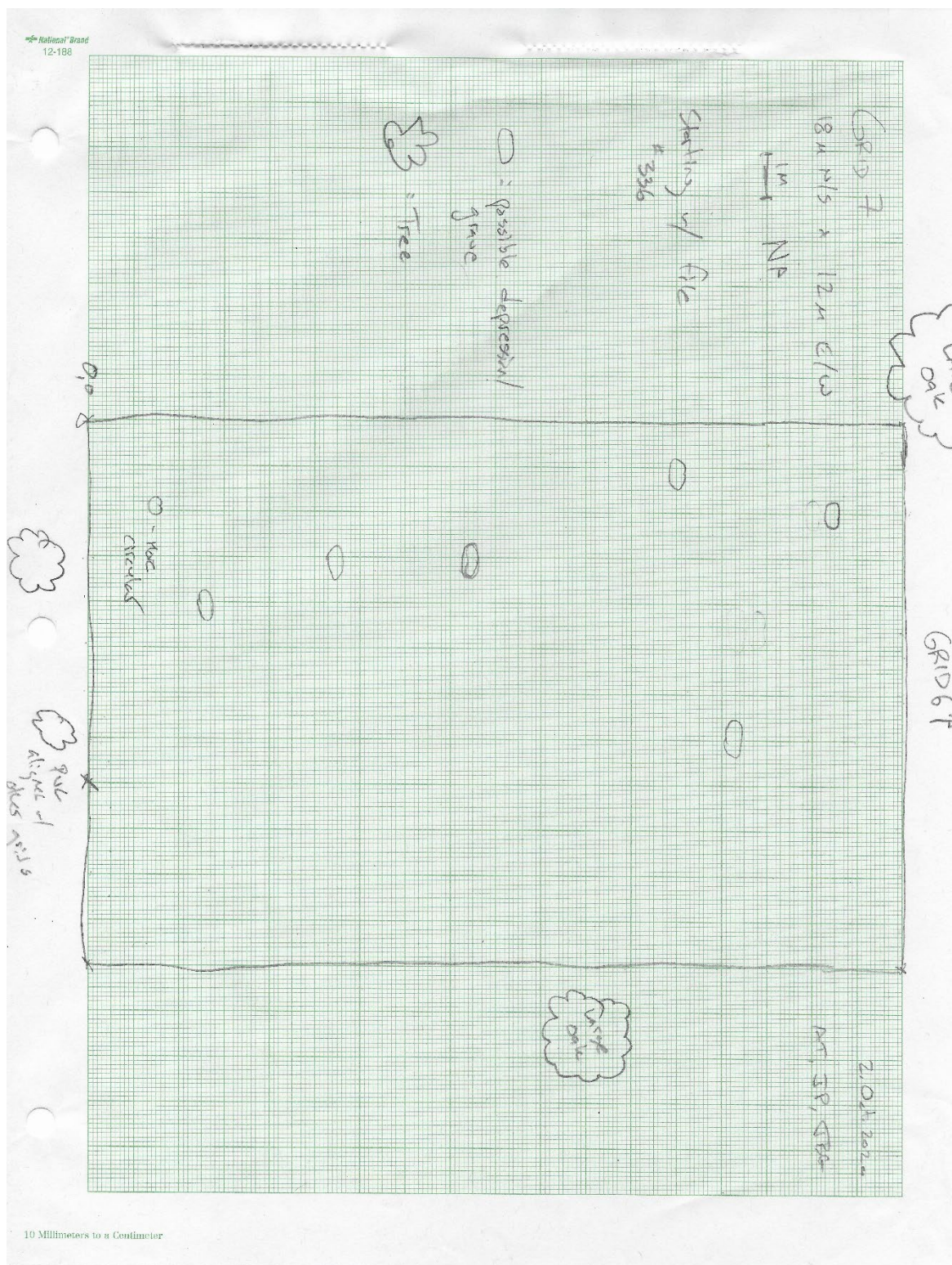### *Appendix A.1 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 2*
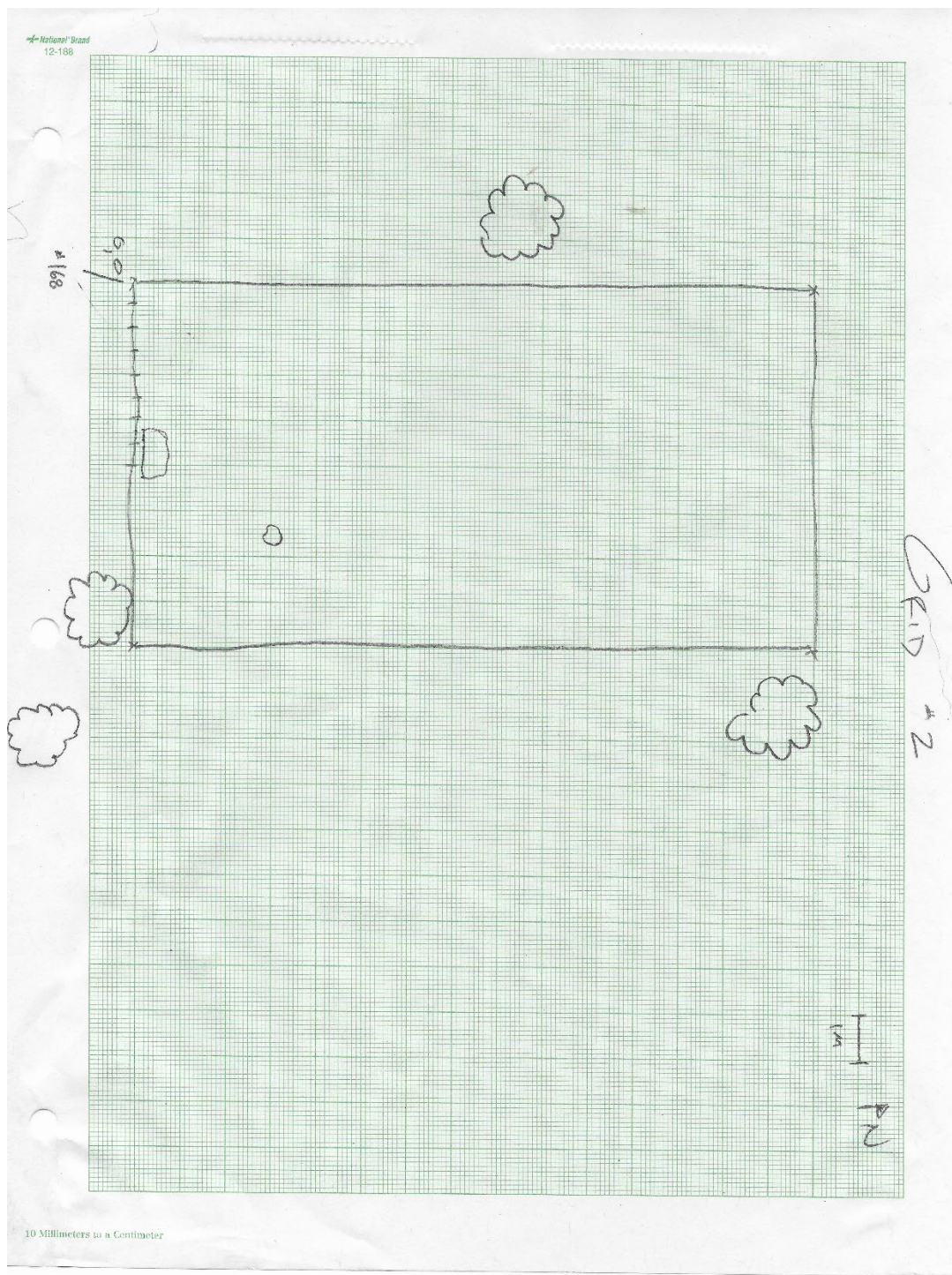
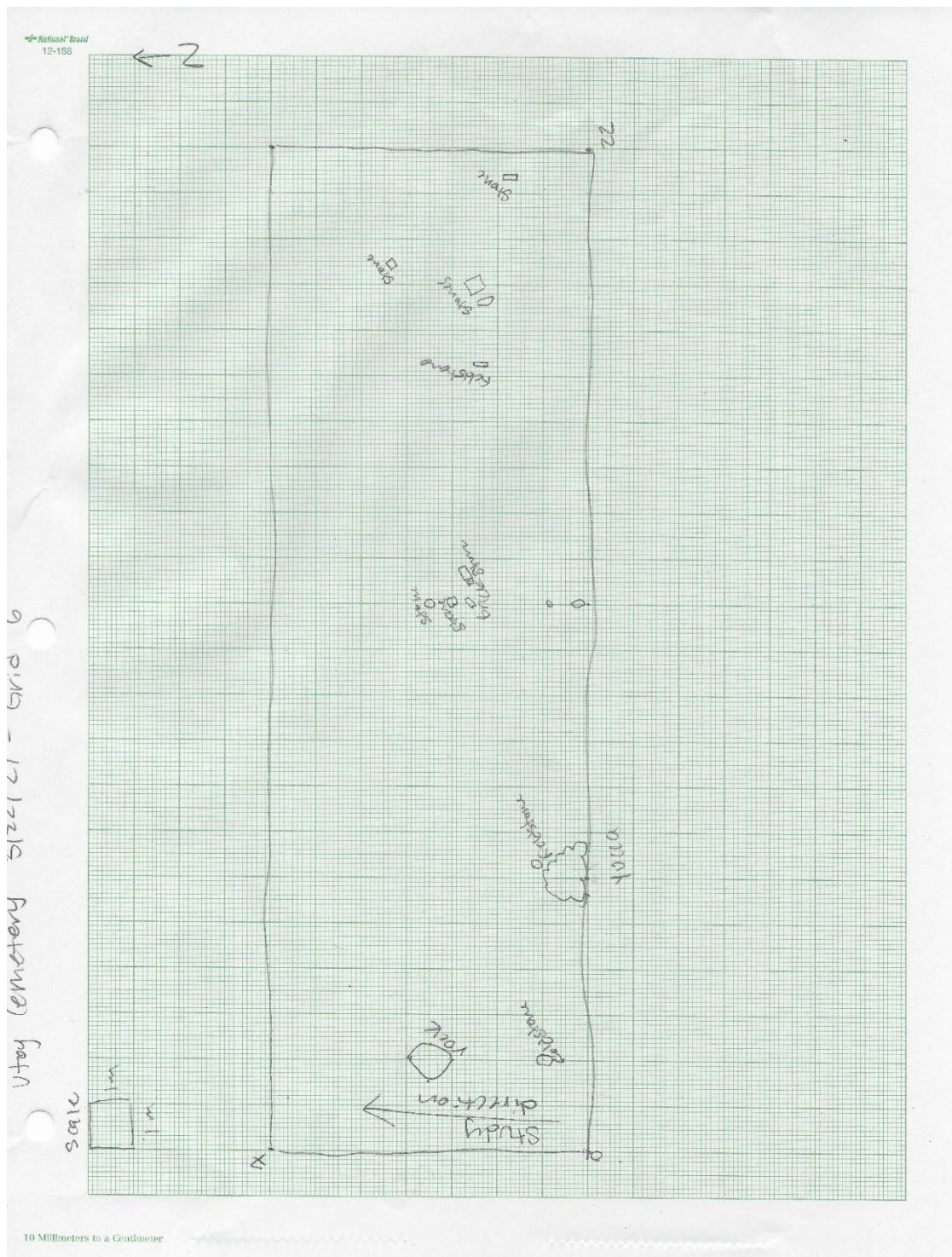*Appendix A.2 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 3*

Appendix A.3 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 5

Appendix A.4 Farmer Street Cemetery Grid 6

Appendix A.5 Utoy Cemetery Grid 6

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