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P.O. Box 8664
861 ARBUTUS DRIVE
COLUMBIA, S.C. 29202
803-787-6910
WWW.CHICORA.ORG

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Ms. Connie W. Kinnard
Senior VP, Multicultural Sales & Development
Nashville Convention & Visitors Corporation
150 Fourth Avenue North, Suite G-250
Nashville, TN 37219

Dear Ms. Kinnard,

This letter provides you with an overview of our one-day on-site assessment of the Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery in Franklin, Tennessee. Before going on, however, let me again thank you for both the kindness shown me and the opportunity to visit your cemetery. I am attaching our invoice for the one additional hotel night necessary to allow us to visit the cemetery.

Our comments, as I've mentioned, are based on the single day, July 31, spent at the cemetery. There may be other issues that we failed to observe or issues that, with additional research or discussion, would self-resolve. Nevertheless, these comments should provide you with an initial plan of action for the Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery.

Landscape and Cemetery Character

The cemetery is situated in east central Franklin, adjacent to the private Mount Hope Cemetery and incorporated within the same parcel number - 063N D 02600. In 2012 when Mount Hope Cemetery sought a zoning change from a High Residential District (R-3) to Civic and Institutional District (CI) in order to use an existing residence on their property for an office, the zoning change applied to Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery as well (Ordinance 2012-03, Mt. Hope Cemetery Rezoning). Curiously, it appears that not even city staff recognized that the rezoning applied to Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery since the document notes that the "site contains an existing cemetery" with no mention of the African American burial ground.



Figure 1. Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery. Upper aerial shows contours, lower aerial shows flood zones in the immediate cemetery vicinity.

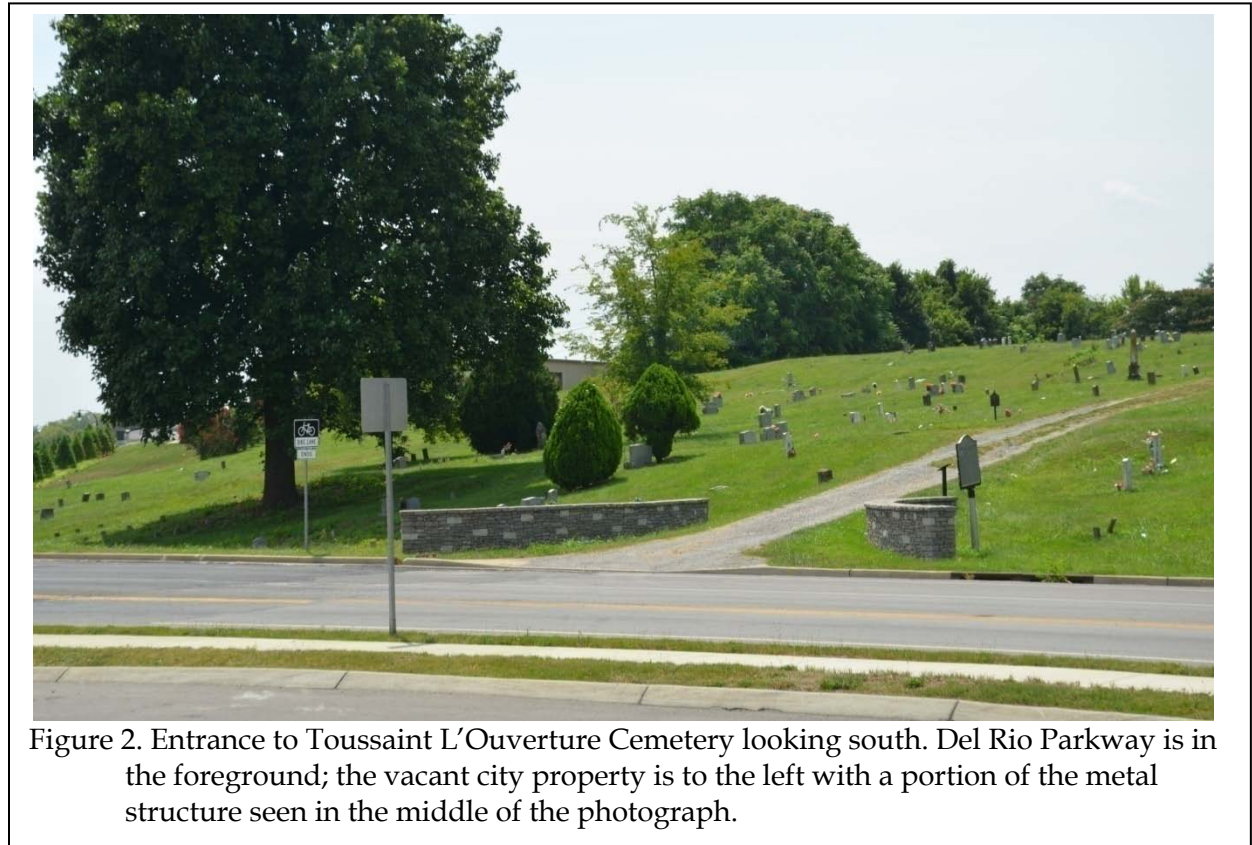
The cemetery is situated on an east side slope with elevations ranging from 630 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) at the northeastern edge to 665 feet AMSL in the south central portion. It is bordered by Del Rio Parkway at the north. To the south and west is Mount Hope Cemetery, the boundary marked by planted white pines. To the east is Hillsboro Road and now vacant city property (Figure 1).

Soils in the vicinity of the cemetery are Maury series. On the higher elevations are Maury silt loams, 2-5% slopes. These are deep, well-drained soils found on broad, gently sloping uplands of old, high stream terraces. On the side slopes and lower elevations are Maury silty clay loams, 5-12% slopes, eroded. In this area the plowzone is brown or reddish-brown

silty clay loam and is predominately subsoil. Because of the elevations, the entire cemetery except for the extreme northeast corner is outside both the 100 and 500-year flood zones. The cemetery is about 500 feet west of the Harpeth River.

According to the Williamson County GIS, the cemetery measures about 738 feet north-south and 313 feet east-west. It encompasses about 5.25 acres based on a planimetric survey.

Both Del Rio Parkway and Hillsboro Road are busy roads with heavy commercial development. It is fortunate that the cemetery is bounded to the west and south by Mount Hope, since this provides some buffer and helps minimize visual intrusions. Nevertheless, the cemetery should take special interest in how the now abandoned city property to the east is developed since this parcel has the potential to cause considerable disruption to the ambiance of the cemetery. It would be best if that property were converted into a small green space; the cemetery should demand that any development include dense screening to minimize visual and



noise intrusion.

The cemetery (as shown in Figure 1) has a gridded road system similar to adjacent Mount Hope. A major north-south road provides access from Del Rio Parkway. At the southern terminus this road loops around and parallels the main access on the eastern side of the cemetery, eventually tying back into the main road. Although the 1995 National Register nomination suggests a more elaborate plan with a central road and two parallel north-south

roads, along with six east-west connectors, this is not clearly visible today. The entrance stonework is modern, replacing the original two stone columns and was probably constructed by the City of Franklin during the Del Rio Parkway work (Figure 2).

While some formal plantings may have been planned or conducted, there is little evidence of this today. There are some living memorials, typical in African American cemeteries, such as yucca and iris. Additional bulbs may be present that were not clearly evident at the time of our visit.

The bulk of the trees, excepting those forming the boundary with Mount Hope, appear

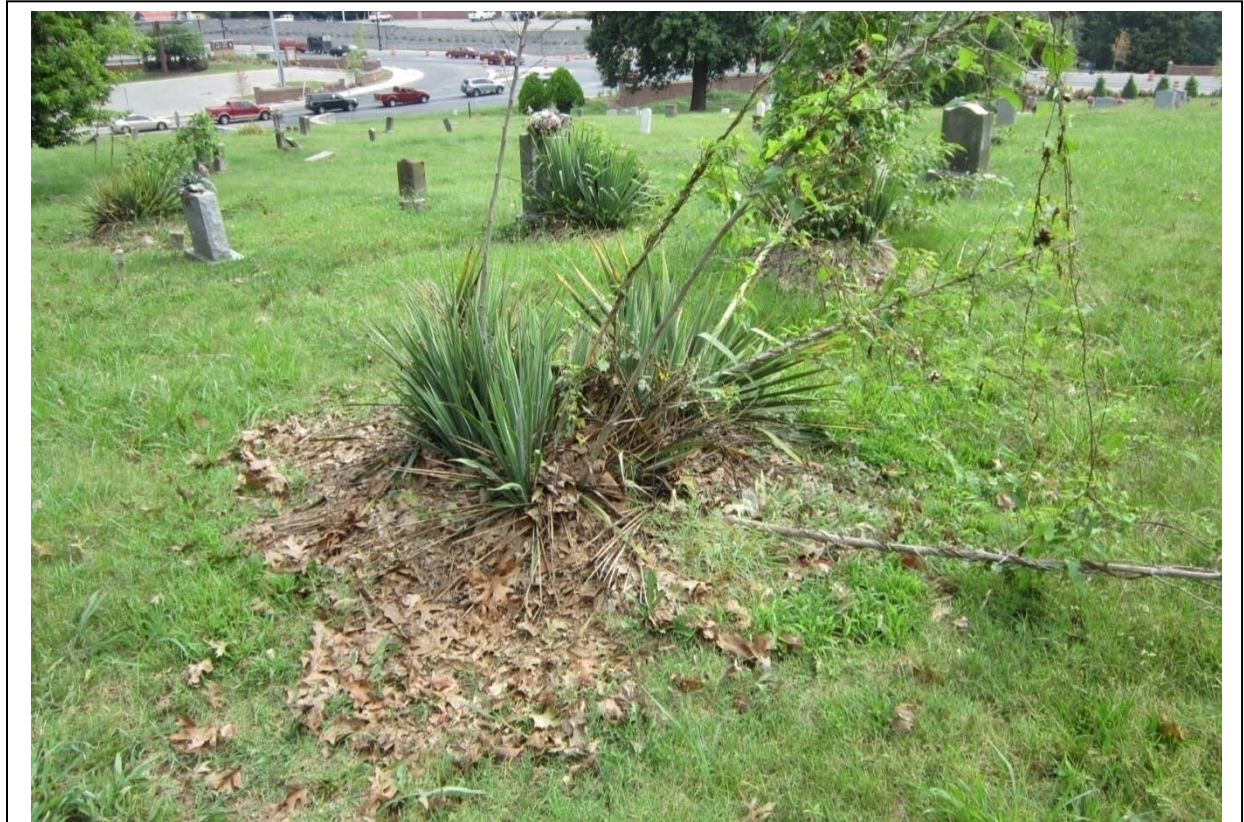


Figure 3. Example of yucca plants in the cemetery, virtually all overtaken by trash vegetation. The lack of care significantly reduces their beauty and traditional significance.

to be accidental and not planned. Nevertheless, the magnolia at the northeast corner (see Figure 2), and several other trees in the cemetery represent large, old specimens that dominate the landscape and soften the otherwise harsh view. There is no turf and the cemetery grass consists of a variety of broadleaf weeds. Some fescue is found in locations.

Monuments in the cemetery are largely commercial marble and granite, although both cement and temporary metal funeral home markers, as well as wooden crosses, are also present.



Figure 4. Unusual style marker at the Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery, Section D.

The cemetery also exhibits some unusual marker designs (see Figure 4). It is likely that the variety is greater than indicated by this assessment since we only closely examined Section D.

The National Register estimates at least 400 burials. This is entirely too small a number and burials have continued at least as recently as 2009 when Elease R. Parrish was buried at the cemetery. It seems likely, based on our walking of the cemetery property, brief review of historic sources, and intimate knowledge of African American cemeteries throughout the southeast, that this cemetery is entirely filled and few, if any, empty graves still remain. In the absence of any detailed maps or a burial register, we strongly recommend that the cemetery be formally closed to any future burials. Failure to do this will likely result in the disturbance of existing burials.

The character of the cemetery is dominated by a spartan lawn park layout with very close design parallels to a more formal city cemetery design. The infrequency of plantings and geometric layout are not characteristic of the lawn park cemetery movement, but are likely the results of the limited resources of the African American community. Where plantings occur they are clearly associated with individual lots and represent a softening of the landscape by individual families practicing aspects of the earlier rural cemetery movement. There is, however, no picturesque landscape or sentimentality that is generally associated with the rural cemetery movement.

When you enter the cemetery you are drawn to three elements – the elevation changes, the specimen trees, and the abundance of relatively small three-dimensional markers. These three elements are critical since they are what you are drawn toward – they form the central “core” of the cemetery and represent critical features that should receive a very high preservation priority. As discussed in more detail, these features are today diminished by the poor landscape maintenance.

Historical Background

No historical research has been conducted as part of this assessment, and we have relied on the National Register nomination for this brief account. We have focused particularly on issues that require additional historic research.

It appears that the cemetery was conveyed on January 1, 1884 (Williamson County Deed Book 11, pg. 283) by Robert M. Ewing to seven African Americans: Henry Waters, J.W. Randolph, Joseph Leach, Tobias Hightower, G.W. Carter, George Johnson, Charles Southall, and Henry Ewing (the son of Robert M. Ewing). The property, identified as 4 acres (in contrast to the actual 5.25 acres present) was identified as adjacent to Mount Hope (incorporated in 1877) and in what was known as the Hard Bargain area of Franklin. The eight were identified as trustees and the property was specifically to be used as a cemetery “for the interment of persons of African Descent” (quoted in the National Register nomination). Henry Ewing, an undertaker, was identified in the deed as serving as the first caretaker of the cemetery. The cemetery was also chartered that same day, although the National Register nomination fails to mention the name of the charter.

Cemetery associations such as this were not uncommon as blacks sought dignity in death after the Civil War. In fact, the cemetery is even mentioned in the list of “Negro cemeteries owned” in the 1907 *Economic Co-operation Among Negro Americans* by W. E. B. Du Bois. This suggests that the cemetery was important enough to have caught DuBois’ attention during the first decade of the twentieth century.

The nomination notes that there is no indication that the board of trustees named in the deed made provisions for succession and that the cemetery “failed financially during the Depression.” This of course assumes

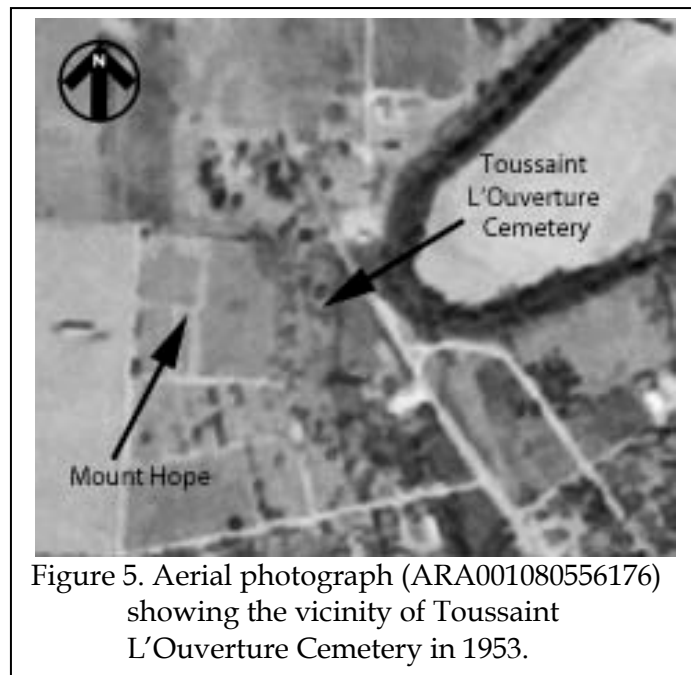


Figure 5. Aerial photograph (ARA001080556176) showing the vicinity of Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery in 1953.

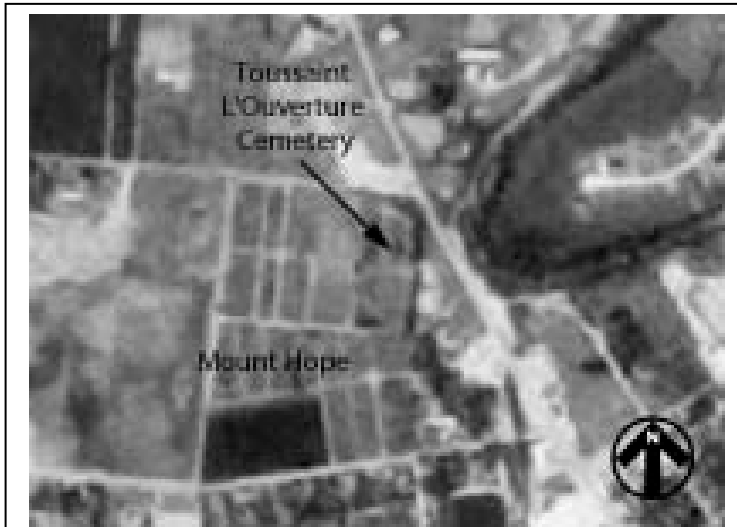


Figure 6. Aerial photograph (AR1VDUT00050004) showing the vicinity of Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery in 1975.

that the cemetery was ever financially solvent – an unlikely scenario for a non-perpetual care cemetery with family members assuming the majority of upkeep functions.

What is interesting – and not explained in the National Register nomination – is that the earliest burial in the cemetery appears to date from December 1869 – 15 years prior to the organization of Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery.

The earliest aerial photograph we have identified for the cemetery is 1953 (Figure 5).

Adjacent Mount Hope Cemetery appears limited to two sections and Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery is far more vegetated than today. A windrow separates the cemetery from the pasture to the east (that would become city property).

By 1975 Mount Hope Cemetery has dramatically expanded (Figure 6) and the lot to the east is now occupied. The road system at Toussaint L'Ouverture is more clearly defined as what is present today. Most notable is the extensive growth that has developed along the north and east edges of the cemetery, as well as the loss of trees within the cemetery. It is likely that by 1975 the cemetery was receiving minimal maintenance, allowing areas to revert in brush.

Beyond this, almost nothing is known of the cemetery. There are no burial books, no funeral home records, and no maps of the cemetery. In fact, there has never been a complete transcription and mapping project for the cemetery. There appears to be no research on the chartered association, no account of its members or their place in the African American community. There are no newspaper accounts of the cemetery. It appears that this cemetery has attracted virtually no interest on the part of those exploring the African American history of Williamson County and this is unfortunate.

The Status of Legal Ownership Today

Today there is no formal organization responsible for the cemetery. It appears that various individuals, and perhaps the First Missionary Baptist Church, have assumed responsibility over the years, but none claim descent from the original trustees. A Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery Club has been formed and is seeking either a 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(13) status. While this organization may serve as a caretaker, it will not own the cemetery or have any control over activities at the cemetery.

We recommend that an attorney be consulted to determine what steps can be taken to determine ownership and whether such steps might be appropriate, especially in an effort to halt future burials at the cemetery.

An important aspect of the reorganization will be to ensure that membership include those young and energetic enough to ensure that the organization remains viable.

Vehicular Access

The main entrance road is gravel, eventually limited to two tracks. Even this largely disappears by the south end of the roadway and it becomes little more than a worn area in the grass. We estimate that there are approximately 1,700 linear feet of extant roadways in the cemetery today. Regardless, there appears to be only limited vehicular traffic and there is no evidence of rutting or holes in the road. With the current limited vehicular traffic, the road appears sufficient. There is no parking, and pulling off the road should be discouraged, given the close proximity of graves.

Turning into and out of the cemetery can be challenging, depending on traffic conditions. Not only is Del Rio four-lanes, but the entrance to the cemetery is only 150 feet from the intersection. The cemetery caregivers should consult with the city's traffic department to determine if there are any safety improvements that could be made, although the low incidence of visitation may preclude such changes.

While an effort to gravel the existing roads is not inappropriate, it should not have an especially high priority given the very limited use of the cemetery. The current road network would, however, benefit from being better defined and this may be achieved through more frequent mowing.

Pedestrian and Universal Access

I believe that the cemetery, currently, has relatively low pedestrian access. Historically there were no formal paved path areas – pedestrian areas were grassed. Although the cemetery topography is steeply sloping at the north end, much of the cemetery is relatively flat and walking access has not created erosion or bare areas (primarily because of the low visitation). Paved pathways for this cemetery are not appropriate and I recommend no changes at this time for pedestrian access. Universal access is not feasible beyond that allowed by vehicular access routes.

Security and Vandalism

The site is essentially open. The vehicular access points are not gated, allowing 24-hour access to the cemetery. Access from Mount Hope is unlimited, both to vehicles and pedestrians. Similarly, pedestrian access along the eastern boundary is also possible. Our assessment was



Figure 7. Examples of trash in the cemetery.

not able to determine if pedestrians cut through the cemetery, but it seems unlikely given the location.

While we saw no vandalism that could be directly attributed to the porous boundaries (distinct from damage resulting from lawn maintenance), we did see abundant trash, especially in the eastern woods line. In particular, there are numerous alcohol containers, as well as a 55-gallon drum filled with trash. This should be of concern at several levels. First and most fundamentally, it is inappropriate behavior in a cemetery. Second, it creates a situation where those with legitimate business may become fearful to visit the cemetery. And third, the presence of inebriated individuals is eventually likely to lead to vandalism, whether present currently or not.

At this juncture, the best proactive methods to minimize problems will be to remove the vegetation and debris along the eastern property line, including the abandoned metal building, and ensure that all trash is removed from the cemetery on a regular basis.

It would also be wise to establish a volunteer patrol of the cemetery. This would involve having volunteers drive through the cemetery as frequently as possible, simply to establish a presence and keep an eye on the cemetery.

We also recommend that the caregivers form a relationship with those responsible for Mount Hope, encouraging them to report – either to a caregiver or the police – any problems they observe in the cemetery during their own maintenance activities.

Signage

At the entrance to the cemetery the only signage is the historic marker; otherwise the cemetery is not identified nor are any regulations posted. Within the cemetery there are section markers, although many are in poor condition. There are also numbered markers at graves, which we presume correspond to Franklin’s cell phone tour.

We recommend that identification and regulatory signage be combined and erected at the entrance. This would include the name of the cemetery, when founded, and that it is listed on the National Register. The regulations listed on the sign should include, at a minimum, these rules:

- a warning that the stones are old and fragile and to avoid leaning or sitting on them (and perhaps that all children need to be accompanied and attended by an adult),
- hours that the cemetery is open for visitation,
- a prohibition against alcoholic beverages,
- a prohibition against dogs or other animals in the cemetery,
- no littering, cutting of flowers, and
- a prohibition against inappropriate behavior (some phrase this as



Figure 8. Cemetery signage. Upper photo shows sign held up by twine, lower photo shows a tour stop at a toppled stone.

requiring activities respect the nature of the cemetery).

It is critical that signage be maintained. We observed that section markers in the cemetery were leaning and one was tied onto its post using twine. This gives the public the impression that the cemetery is uncared for and encourages a lack of visitor respect.

It is equally critical that if there are to be numbered graves in the cemetery and these graves are to be promoted for tourism, the graves must look cared for and maintained. At this time they do not – and this seriously detracts from the cemetery.

Site Amenities

We observed few amenities in the cemetery. There were no trash cans and we noticed only one collapsed bench on a family plot.

We do not recommend the installation of benches. At this point there is insufficient



Figure 9. Trash problems created by deteriorated and mowed flower arrangements. These significantly detract from the dignity of the cemetery.

visitation to warrant benches and they would simply add yet another maintenance issue for an essentially unfunded cemetery.

A significant problem in the cemetery is uncollected flower arrangements. It is sad that families are not proactive in the removal of deteriorated flowers – but they are not. We observed faded, damaged, and badly deteriorated arrangements across the cemetery. We also observed that many arrangements had been thrown in the woods at the east side of the cemetery. Other arrangements had simply been mowed. All of these practices give the cemetery an uncared for appearance.

It is essential that all deteriorated flower arrangements be collected on a monthly basis for proper disposal. It is equally essential that no arrangements be mowed as this simply scatters the flowers.

In a future mailing it may be appropriate to bring this problem to the attention of families still visiting the cemetery, explaining that with so limited funds, it is essential that they remove all trash with them.

Trees and Shrubs

As mentioned, it seems that most of the trees are natural and were not intentionally planted. Nevertheless, they represent a significant feature of the cemetery and should be carefully preserved. They are not, however, receiving the care they deserve.

In the center of the cemetery a large hickory contains dead wood and requires pruning. There are piles of dead branches under the tree. This not only gives the cemetery an uncared for appearance, but it can harbor pests and diseases that can affect the vegetation.

All trees require inspection and pruning by a member of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) on a yearly basis. All pruning must comply with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) A-300 Pruning Standard. This is more than simply ensuring correct cuts are made close to the branch collar, that no stubs are left, and that the pruning does not injure the collar. It also requires that the condition of the entire tree be evaluated. In some cases only damaged braches or dead wood will be removed, while in other cases it is appropriate to remove live branches in order to promote the overall health of the tree. This is why it is critical to have trees evaluated by a certified arborist.

In addition to removing dead branches from the ground, it is critical that all debris either be removed immediately or chipped for mulch. We observed piled wood at the edge of the cemetery. Its condition suggests that this wood has been present for many months. This must be removed.



Figure 10. Tree and shrub problems. The upper left photo shows dead branches at the base of a tree. Upper right photo shows dead wood in a tree that requires pruning. Middle left photo shows stacked wood in the cemetery. Middle right photo shows scrub tree growing in the middle of a yucca. Lower left photo shows inappropriately pruned arborvitae. The lower right photo shows a trash tree that should be removed.

Much of the wood being removed can be chipped and used as mulch under trees in the cemetery. This will promote the health of the trees and reduce the area to be mowed. Mulch should never be applied more than 3-inches in depth.

We also observed an arborvitae that, planted too close to a monument, had been inappropriately pruned. Unfortunately these planning problems can't be easily corrected by pruning without dramatically affecting the character, appearance, beauty, and health of the plant. In this case the plant now appears unattractive and even comical. The damage done to this plant is so severe that it cannot be salvaged. We recommend the removal of inappropriately pruned materials such as this and their replacement with new arborvitae. In the future special care must be exercised to ensure those entrusted with pruning are knowledgeable and appropriately trained.

Another problem common to the cemetery are trash or volunteer trees growing up in the middle of plantings or stones. These must be removed and not allowed to take over legitimate plantings. They should be cut as close to the ground as possible and the stump painted with undiluted herbicide, such as Roundup or Garlon, to prevent suckering.

Consideration should be given to planting a few additional trees in the cemetery. These new trees should be of at least 2-inch caliper and meet the minimum requirements of the American Nursery and Landscape Association's American Standard for Nursery Stock (ANSI Z60.1-2004). They should be fitted with water bags for the first year in order to help them become established.

Overgrown Lots

We observed several lots in the cemetery that, for unknown reasons, have been essentially abandoned and allowed to grow up into tangles of vegetation. These lots should be immediately cleaned out, removing the trash vegetation. As recommended above, stumps should be painted with a full-strength herbicide to prevent them from resprouting.

Also observed was a downed tree in the cemetery that has been ignored, with the result that it has been taken over by vines. This gives the cemetery an uncared for appearance. Immediate removal is necessary.

Virtually all of the trees in the cemetery are becoming overgrown with vines. This is harmful to the tree and many of the vines are poison ivy, which presents a real threat to the visiting public as well as maintenance workers. These vines should be manually removed and the stumps treated with herbicide.

The eastern edge of the cemetery has been allowed to become overgrown and careful inspection reveals the presence of many graves totally overtaken by vegetation. While this provides some screening from the city lot, it is critical that this invading volunteer growth be



Figure 11. Vegetation problems in the cemetery. The photos in the upper row show two plots taken over by vegetation. The middle row shows a downed tree in the cemetery that has been taken over by vines. All of these debris must be removed to restore dignity to the cemetery. The lower photo shows poison ivy completely taking over a tree in the cemetery.



Figure 12. Vegetation problems in the cemetery. The first five photos show a variety of monuments on the east side of the cemetery that have been lost to vegetation. The final photo (bottom right) shows one area that has been “carved out” to reveal several stones and a variety of trash trees that should be removed from the cemetery.

removed to provide dignity to the burials in this area. Many of the volunteer trees in this area are under 4-inches dbh and should be removed.

After the eastern edge of the cemetery is cleaned, with the removal of noxious vegetation and trash, the city should be approached with the request to help develop plantings to screen their property from the cemetery.

Lawn Issues

The cemetery exhibits only limited turfgrass (primarily fescue) and is covered with a variety of broadleaf weeds. This is likely seen by most as an aesthetic issue, but weeds grow differentially, giving the cemetery an unkempt and unattractive appearance. Looking abandoned and uncared for, this appearance likely attracts inappropriate behavior and activities.

The high grass is also a safety issue since it gives harborage to pests such as rats and mice, which in turn attract snakes. This can create a public safety issue – although at present the abandoned building at the east edge of the cemetery is a far greater menace than the tall grass.



Figure 13. Examples of mower damage common at the cemetery. Upper left shows edge damage from a mower running over the monument. Upper right shows damage to the top of a footstone, also the result of being mowed over. Lower left photo shows a metal funeral home marker, shredded by mowing. The lower right photo shows damage caused by a nylon trimmer.

Finally, the tall grass is also an issue in the long-term care and maintenance of the monuments in the cemetery. We observed a very large amount of damage being done to stones by efforts to mow when the weeds obscured monuments (Figure 13).

Currently the cemetery is mowed no more often than twice a month during the approximately nine month growing season. While we are sympathetic to the cost of mowing (\$500 for the 5.5 acres or about \$91 per acre), the infrequent mowing is causing damage to the stones and affecting the safety and appearance of the cemetery. We should note that this is not an inappropriate amount. The average mowing cost is about \$87/acre and this does not include nylon trimmer work, typically billed at about \$60 per 1,000 linear feet. The current charge is appropriate and fair given the quality of the work offset by the difficulty.

The idea solution would be to establish an appropriate turfgrass at the cemetery. Having a low, more easily maintained turfgrass would help control not only the dramatic damage to the stones, but also the rising maintenance costs. This can be accomplished by reseeding the cemetery with a grass such as fescue (see <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W159-E.pdf>) for additional information). It seems unlikely, however, that the cemetery will have the funding in the near future to accomplish this.

The only viable alternative is to increase the frequency - and care - of mowing. A good introduction to proper mowing is available on-line at <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W161-I.pdf>. Consequently, we recommend that funding be sought to allow mowing the cemetery every one to two weeks. Although this will still be less than is generally recommended, it should serve to keep the weeds manageable, reducing the damage to stones, reducing the ability to hide trash, and minimizing the potential for the cemetery to hide pests.

It essential that the firm caring for the cemetery receive training and have proper supervision. Ideally those caring for the cemetery will be certified under a program such as that sponsored by Planet, the professional landcare network (<https://www.landcarenetwork.org/PLANET>).

A representative of Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery should be present during each maintenance activity and should approve the work prior to the contractor leaving or being allowed to present an invoice for the work.

Sunken Graves

There are a number of graves across the cemetery that have sunk. As the coffin and the remains decompose, the overlying soil compacts and sinks, leaving a depression. These depressions, while characteristic of historic cemeteries, may present hazards to the public. In many cases the sinking also endangers the marker, causing it to either crack (if it is a ledger) or to tilt and fall (if a three-dimensional monument). As long as the grave is marked, the

depression can be filled and the grave leveled. Graves should be filled with good soil and reseeded to encourage grass growth.

Where depressions exist without being clearly marked, filling should occur only after the cemetery has been mapped. Otherwise, the grave – indicated by the depression – will be lost. Thus, the caregivers may wish to explore a grant to allow mapping of the cemetery. This would be of considerable use since there is, at present, no thorough count, transcription, or map of the cemetery.

Temporary Grave Markers and Site Mapping

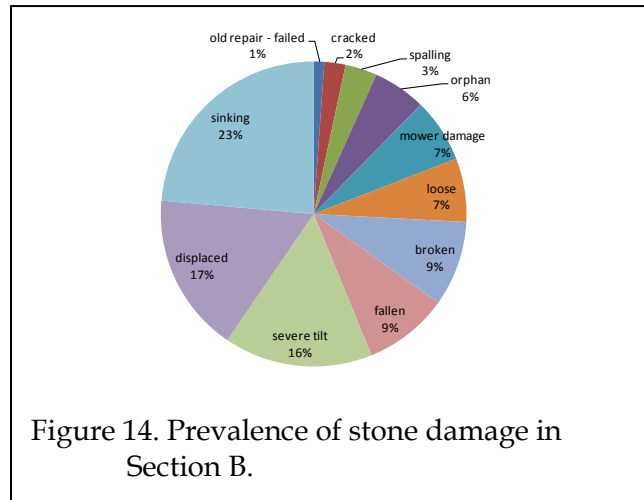
There are a very large number of temporary metal funeral home markers present in the cemetery. These are common in African American cemeteries; the reason may be associated with poverty and the inability to afford a permanent marker, but it may also be a result of a deeply held African American custom that graves need not be permanently marked. Regardless, these temporary markers are short lived and once the name is gone it may be difficult or impossible to determine who is buried in that location.

The ideal is to have a map of the entire cemetery, with each grave and marker numbered and indexed to a permanent database. Such an effort at Toussaint L’Ouverture Cemetery, however, would be very costly if contracted out (probably in excess of \$30,000) and would be a time-consuming activity if volunteers were used. Nevertheless, it is a goal. We prioritize it below other issues since it is critical that the cemetery be in a position to use – and maintain – the resulting data.

An Evaluation of Markers in the Cemetery

This brief assessment did not attempt to identify or document all of the stones in need of repair. We did, however, conduct a brief assessment of those markers found in Section B. These markers consist of concrete, granite, marble, fieldstone, limestone, funeral home markers, terracotta, bronze, concrete block, and wood. This range is typical of African American

cemeteries. A variety of forms exist, including the upright tablet (or headstone), flush to ground lawn marker, die on base, tab in socket, cradle grave (or bedstead grave), pedestal tomb, and a few other less common forms.



Eleven distinct problems were identified associated with the stones in Section B and a total of 89 stones were involved. The prevalence of these problems is shown in Figure 14. Fully 56% of the stone problems are identified as sinking (largely

the result of the stones being set on the grave and sinking as the grave collapses), tilting (similar to sinking, although the tilt can cause mechanical damage to the stone), or displacement (which is largely the result of being impacted by mowers). These are all problems that can be corrected by careful resetting using volunteers. Where this to be done, there would be an immediate improvement in over half of the stones present at the cemetery. Many (although not all) of the fallen monuments could also be reset, resulting in an even greater overall appearance.

Resetting monuments is fully explained at <http://www.chicora.org/resetting.html>. In general, the stone should be excavated, being careful to avoid shovel damage. There are some monuments that have been set in concrete and the removal of this material may require a conservator to ensure that the stone itself isn't damaged. Otherwise, the hole can be deepened and filled with pea gravel or decomposed granite as bedding. The lawn marker should be reset about 1 inch above the ground level – tall enough to prevent being covered by soil and grass, but not so tall that it will be damaged by mowing. Tablets should be set with about 25 to 33% of the stone below grade. Additional pea gravel should be packed in around the stone as it is being leveled. The upper inch of backfill should be soil to allow for revegetation.

It is critical that Portland cement never be used to reset stones since it removes their ability to shift if they are accidentally hit by mowing or other landscape activities.

The process of resetting a die on base stone is somewhat more complex, but still within the capability of a careful and trained volunteer. The cemetery has a number of granite die on base stones that were originally set using setting compound. This is a commercial product typically consisting of calcium carbonate, talc, and occasionally calcium silicate in linseed oil or a similar material. It is designed to be applied under a granite monument to help seal it to base and prevent water intrusion. Because it contains oil it may leave a halo on marble and should only be used for setting granite monuments. Setting compound is not an adhesive and will eventually dry out. It also does not prevent a monument from being tipped over, so care must be taken when the monument being set is top heavy, very tall, or is in a setting where vandalism is likely. In such cases it is good practice to set the monument not only with setting compound, but also with one or more fiberglass pins. This requires drilling the stone and is best left to a conservator.

Marble die on base stones were typically set with a mortar rather than setting compound, although this too is not an adhesive and will often fail.

In order to reset a die on base that is loose or shifted, it is first necessary to remove the die and set it aside. The base then must be checked to determine if it is both stable and level. In many cases it will be necessary to remove the base, establish a new foundation with pea gravel or decomposed granite.

All old mortar or setting compound must be removed from the base and the die. This can usually be accomplished using plastic spatulas or a small chisel. Care must be taken not to disfigure the stone during this cleaning process.



Figure 14. Examples of stone problems. Upper left is a sinking lawn marker. Upper right is a sinking cradle grave. Middle left photo shows a displaced footstone set on coping. Middle right photo shows a severely tilted headstone. Lower left photo shows a severely tilted die on base, with the die sliding and about to topple off the base. Lower right photo shows a stone that has fallen off its base.



Figure 15. Examples of stone damage that requires conservation treatments. Upper left photo shows a broken die on base. Upper right is a cracked die on base. Middle left is a spalling limestone. To further complicate its preservation, the stone has been set in Portland cement, which must be carefully removed. Middle right is a tab in socket that is loose and requires resetting with a high lime mortar. Lower left is a bronze marker that has become detached from its base. Lower right is a die on base with ferrous pins. Repair of this stone will require drilling out the ferrous pins and replacing them with non-corrosive stainless steel or fiberglass.

If pins are to be installed holes must be drilled and cleaned in both the die and base. Either fiberglass or stainless steel pins should be inserted that are slightly shorter and smaller than the holes. While they may be set using epoxy or lime mortar, it is often acceptable to leave them loose. The purpose of these pins is to help secure the base and die, making it more difficult to accidentally (or intentionally) tip a monument over.

If setting compound is being used on granite markers, it should be rolled between your hands to create "strings" 1-2 feet in length and about ½ inch in diameter. These strings should be set about ½ inch inside the edge of where the die will make contact with the base. Poly cushion spaces should be used at the four corners to prevent the setting compound from being expelled when the die is reset.

If the monument is marble, then a lime based mortar (never Portland cement mortar) should be used rather than setting compound.

The stone is then reset and appropriately centered – there are special monument setting devices to assist in this. Setting compound that is pushed out can be cut off using a plastic spatula for later reuse. Excess mortar can be manually removed and then the monument can be cleaned off using a barely damp sponge and fresh water. If there are any gaps, additional setting compound or mortar will need to be used to fill these gaps.

Only about 15% of the stones in the cemetery likely require conservation treatment, so there is much that can be accomplished with limited funds and volunteers.

Priorities

While this letter indicates that there is much to be done at Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery, it is important to emphasize that the recommended actions can be prioritized – allowing what certainly seems to be a huge undertaking more manageable.

First Priority – Needing Immediate Attention (within the next 6 months)

- ❖ Re-establish a caretaker organization capable of receiving tax deductible contributions and grants and ensure a means of continuation.
- ❖ Contact an attorney to determine the pros and cons of seeking ownership.
- ❖ Make contact with the City regarding any possible funding or grant assistance.
- ❖ Contact neighbors of the cemetery personally and request their assistance in securing the cemetery.
- ❖ Develop and install appropriate signage at the cemetery entrance.

Second Priority – Needing Longer-Term Attention (over the next year)

- ❖ Phase-in three mowings per month.
- ❖ Remove all downed wood (and the current stacked wood) during every mowing.

- ❖ Remove all dead and deteriorated floral arrangements and stands; establish a procedure to remove future flowers.
- ❖ Remove the second growth on lots to open them and promote grass.
- ❖ Retain a certified arborist to evaluate and treat trees in the cemetery; limb up trees along the road to make access easier.
- ❖ Remove all vines and noxious vegetation from around trees.
- ❖ Remove trash vegetation from within shrubbery and where adjacent to monuments.
- ❖ Cut all vegetation along the east side of the cemetery to provide access to the burials in this area.
- ❖ Chip all wood debris to provide free mulch for the specimen trees in the cemetery.
- ❖ Enlist volunteers to begin resetting monuments, beginning with those on the cell-phone tour.

Third Priority – Actions Can Be Spread Over Several Years

- ❖ Remove soil piles from the cemetery.
- ❖ Remove the structure on the east side of the cemetery.
- ❖ Map the cemetery and establish a database consisting of inscriptions and photographs.
- ❖ Determine if the City can assist with a tree planting and watering program at the cemetery.
- ❖ Retain a stone conservator to make repairs on prioritized monuments
- ❖ Enlist the assistance of a historian to address the unanswered questions concerning the cemetery, its founding, and those responsible for it.

These actions are minimally necessary to establish Toussaint L’Ouverture Cemetery on firm preservation footing and help ensure its long-term preservation. After three to four years we recommend an additional review to determine the status of preservation efforts.

Many of the actions can be assisted by careful, trained volunteers and the caretakers, with limited funds, should explore all such options. Nevertheless, it remains critical that those with family at the cemetery exhibit their willingness to fund preservation actions and take an active part in the work. It will be difficult to find outside funding if it is not clear that family members are both supportive and totally committed to the preservation of the cemetery.

Funding

There are few grants that will cover operating expenses of a cemetery. The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office does have limited, competitive, 50-50 funding for actions relating to historic resources that might help fund some aspects of these preservation efforts. Since the City of Franklin is a Certified Local Government (CLG), it has a competitive advantage in the grants. The caregivers should consult with the City to determine if a partnership is possible. Similar grants, in reduced amounts, may be available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

However, prior to applying for these funds, it is critical that Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery be solvent and stable. There is, in other words, no need for a map of the cemetery if there is no organization to use, maintain, and update that map. Consequently, I recommend not applying for such funding until, at a minimum, the high priority issues and at least some of the second priority issues have been funded and implemented.

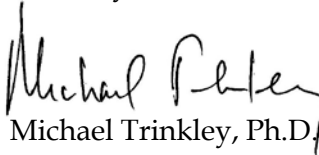
As previously explained, the foundation of the cemetery's long-term financial solvency, however, must come from the families and community. It was widely recognized when the bulk of these burials were being made that the decedent's family would be responsible for maintenance of the plot. This was the nature of African American burial practices and the expectation that allowed plots to be sold for very low prices with no effort at establishing perpetual care funds. Those who have family buried in the cemetery must fulfill their responsibility of long-term care – they must be identified and must be urged to fund the cemetery.

One way to achieve this is to identify the next of kin through newspaper obituaries and on-line research (including the use of the Social Security files). Once identified, letters should be sent with a photograph of the current condition of the lot, asking the family for a significant yearly pledge or a large one-time donation. Volunteers are essential in making this happen.

Another way to achieve this goal is to solicit assistance from a wide range of African American groups in the Williamson County community, as well as state-wide. Such groups might include African American sororities and fraternities, fraternal organizations, military and veteran groups, and local civic groups. While financial contributions should be the primary goal, donations of time could also make a significant difference in the long-term care of the cemetery.

I appreciate this opportunity to meet with you and hope that these observations and recommendations can assist you in reviving interest in Toussaint L'Ouverture Cemetery and making it a focus of African American heritage in Franklin.

Sincerely,


Michael Trinkley, Ph.D.
Director