



MANATEE BURYING GROUND PRESERVATION PLAN

2019

Executive Summary

Environmental Services, Inc., of Jacksonville, Florida conducted a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey for Manatee Burying Grounds located at the Manatee Village Historical Park in Bradenton, Florida. The objectives of this project were to create a Master Preservation Plan, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey and digital map for the 1850 Manatee Burying Grounds. All work was intended to comply with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* (as amended) as implemented by 36 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties), Chapter 267 F.S. and the minimum field methods, data analysis, and reporting standards embodied in the Florida Division of Historic Resources' *Historic Compliance Review Program* (November 1990). All work also conformed to the professional guidelines set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 4416). Field survey methods complied with Chapter 1A-46 *Florida Administrative Code*. The GPR Survey was conducted in general accordance with ASTM D-6432 (Standard Guide for Using the Surface Ground Penetrating Radar Method for Subsurface Investigation).

The Manatee Burying Ground Master Preservation Plan introduction looks at the initiation of the Preservation Plan and provides a context for how the plan began.

During the survey, Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) documented hyperbolic features indicative of suspected historical grave like features or signs of previous excavations. 229 possible grave features were located within the boundary of Manatee Burying Grounds. 94 of these grave features were recorded during a 1976 survey of the burying ground by a 4-H Group. According to the RFP, as of 2016, one-third of the 94 graves were missing.

Additionally, this project was also required to produce an interactive digital map, providing location information and known genealogical information of those interred in Manatee Burying Ground.

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To the Manatee County 4H for great survey and recordation effort which produced baseline data for the current assessment.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Executive Summary..... | 1 |
| Additionally, this project was also required to produce an interactive digital map, providing location information and known genealogical information of those interred in Manatee Burying Ground. | 1 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 3 |
| Table of Figures | 7 |
| Table of Tables..... | 8 |
| Introduction..... | 9 |
| Survey Methodology..... | 12 |
| Background Research | 12 |
| Field Investigation..... | 12 |
| Burying Ground History..... | 15 |
| Evolution of Cemeteries | 15 |
| Burying Ground in Context | 15 |
| Inclusion in Inventories | 17 |
| Significant People & Families..... | 22 |
| The Gates Family..... | 22 |
| The Mitchell Family..... | 23 |
| The Griffin Family..... | 24 |
| The Clark Family..... | 24 |
| The Curry, Harlee, Wyatt, & Sawyer Families | 24 |
| The Pelot – Cooper Family..... | 25 |
| The Lloyd Family..... | 25 |
| The Vanderipe Family..... | 26 |
| The Helveston Family..... | 26 |
| Reverend J.R. Crowder | 26 |
| The Robinson Family..... | 27 |
| The Johnson Family | 27 |
| The Glazier Family | 27 |
| The Tresca Family | 27 |
| Curtis Henderson Stanton..... | 28 |
| John Riffin, Brigadier General..... | 28 |
| General Cemetery Information | 29 |
| Local Setting..... | 29 |
| Zoning & Future Land Use..... | 29 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| City/County Plans, Ordinances, Resolutions, Etc..... | 29 |
| State Statutes | 30 |
| Documentation..... | 30 |
| Infrastructure | 30 |
| Security | 30 |
| Development | 31 |
| Disaster Preparedness & Resiliency | 31 |
| Sea Level Rise..... | 32 |
| Cultural Landscape Information | 33 |
| Past Survey Efforts | 33 |
| Survey Results..... | 36 |
| Preservation Concerns..... | 36 |
| Signage..... | 36 |
| Pedestrian path..... | 36 |
| Fallen or sunken grave markers..... | 36 |
| Broken markers..... | 36 |
| Conditions Assessment Report..... | 38 |
| Built Environment | 38 |
| Marker Types..... | 38 |
| Materials Observed..... | 38 |
| Granite..... | 38 |
| Marble..... | 38 |
| Cast Concrete | 39 |
| Zinc | 39 |
| Enclosures..... | 39 |
| Fencing..... | 39 |
| Memorial Arch | 40 |
| Natural Environment | 40 |
| Water and Stormwater | 40 |
| Trees & Landscape | 40 |
| Wildlife | 41 |
| Ground Penetrating Radar Survey..... | 43 |
| Community Feedback..... | 43 |
| Iconography of Existing Markers | 44 |
| Management & Operations..... | 45 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Cemetery Funding..... | 45 |
| Existing Maintenance and Repair Practices | 45 |
| Markers & Monument Preservation..... | 46 |
| Rubbing Stones | 46 |
| Cleaning Stones..... | 46 |
| Programming, Use & Recreation..... | 47 |
| Public Outreach & Engagement..... | 48 |
| Survey..... | 48 |
| Community Meeting | 49 |
| Cemetery Resource Protection Trainings..... | 49 |
| Website..... | 50 |
| Future Outreach | 50 |
| Recommendations & Implementation | 51 |
| Improve Documentation | 51 |
| Coordinate with the City of Bradenton | 51 |
| Provide Better Information Management..... | 51 |
| Implement Operations/Maintenance & Preservation Plans..... | 51 |
| Evaluate Funding | 52 |
| Implement Wayfinding System | 52 |
| Protect Landscaping, Tree Canopy, & the Environment..... | 52 |
| Mowing | 52 |
| Tree Trimming and Removal | 53 |
| Groundcovers | 53 |
| No Chemicals..... | 53 |
| Maintenance Training..... | 53 |
| Historic Landscape Preservation | 53 |
| Grave Plot Plantings..... | 53 |
| Retention Canopies..... | 53 |
| Historical Vegetation vs. Grave Markers..... | 54 |
| Drainage..... | 54 |
| Create Programming & Outreach..... | 54 |
| Bibliography | 55 |
| Appendix A: Ground Penetrating Radar Survey | |
| Appendix B: Florida Master Site File Survey Log & Map | |
| Appendix C: Florida Master Site File Form & Map | |
| Appendix D: Important Dates in Manatee County History | |

- Appendix E: Public Outreach Survey Data Collection**
- Appendix F: Technical Preservation Breifs**
- Appendix G: ESI Sample Headstone Recording Form**
- Appendix H: Digital Interactive Map & Key**

Table of Figures

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Manatee Burying Ground Cemetery Location | 11 |
| Figure 2: GPR Survey Results for Manatee Burying Ground..... | 14 |
| Figure 3. A historic view of Manatee Burying Ground | 15 |
| Figure 4. Manatee Burying Ground signage..... | 17 |
| Figure 5: Historic Aerial Photograph of Manatee Burying Ground, 1951..... | 18 |
| Figure 6: Historic Aerial Photograph of Manatee Burying Ground, 1957..... | 19 |
| Figure 7. Excerpt of the 1922 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map..... | 20 |
| Figure 8. Excerpt of the 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map..... | 20 |
| Figure 9. 1929 Sanborn Map..... | 21 |
| Figure 10. Mary & Josiah Gates. | 22 |
| Figure 11. Mary Ellen Curry Harlee..... | 24 |
| Figure 12. Mary Elizabeth Cooper Pelot and Dr. John Crews Pelot. | 25 |
| Figure 13. Katie Gates Pelot. | 25 |
| Figure 14. William H. and Eliza Burts Vanderpipe..... | 26 |
| Figure 15. Ezekiel Glazier. | 27 |
| Figure 16. Frederick Tresca..... | 27 |
| Figure 17. The steamer Manatee. | 28 |
| Figure 18. Curtis Henderson Stanton..... | 28 |
| Figure 19. John Riggin. | 28 |
| Figure 20. An aerial of Manatee Burying Ground with current fence line (yellow) and 4H map overlaid..... | 33 |
| Figure 21. 4-H Club Tombstone Transcriptions, 1976. | 34 |
| Figure 22: 4-H Club Tombstone Transcriptions, continued. | 35 |
| Figure 23. Main entry to Manatee Burying Grounds..... | 36 |
| Figure 24. Broken headstone in danger of loss..... | 37 |
| Figure 25. Broken base of vault..... | 37 |
| Figure 26. Fallen headstone in danger of loss or damage. | 37 |
| Figure 27. The zinc marker belonging to James Helveston..... | 38 |
| Figure 28. The Gates obelisk. | 38 |
| Figure 29. Markers in Manatee Burying Ground..... | 38 |
| Figure 30. The Griffin enclosure..... | 39 |
| Figure 31. Entry arch..... | 40 |
| Figure 32. Looking west through a part of the cemetery across 15 th Avenue East. | 40 |
| Figure 33. Looking south along the west fence line..... | 41 |
| Figure 34. Ground penetrating radar work..... | 43 |
| Figure 35. An example of a grave marker with little associated information..... | 43 |
| Figure 36. An example of a centerpiece. | 44 |
| Figure 37. James Vanerripe's marker with a weeping willow. | 44 |
| Figure 38. Rev. Crowder's grave marker with hand and open book..... | 44 |
| Figure 39. Henry S. Clay marker. | 45 |
| Figure 40. CRPT training..... | 49 |

Figure 41. Cleaning during a CRPT training 49

Table of Tables

Table 1. 19th century historic cemeteries in the Bradenton area 16
Table 2. Timeline of Manatee Burying Ground..... 16

Introduction

“Cemeteries are outdoor museums. Every tombstone has a story to tell.”

Phaedra Carter, Manatee Village Historical Park Supervisor

Established in c.1850, Manatee Burying Ground is located in Bradenton and is the oldest established cemetery in Manatee County, Florida. It originally served pioneer settlers of the Village of Manatee in what later became part of the City of Bradenton.

Manatee Burying Ground is 1.92 acres and is bordered by 15th Street East and 6th Avenue East (**Figure 1**). The property is owned and maintained by the City of Bradenton, with public access and programming made available through the Manatee Village Historical Park and Manatee County Historical Commission, Inc. In 2018, the Historical Park and City jointly pursued grant funding through the Florida Division of Historical Resources for a comprehensive master plan for the Manatee Burying Ground.

As noted in the Request for Proposals, the

1.92-acre site is now in the middle of an urban landscape, edged on two sides by highways and on the third side by a public school. It is subject to vandalism and poor maintenance. Recently vandals opened a grave exposing human remains. Debate over the responsibility for repairs emphasized the need for a Preservation Plan. Because historic trees and plants grow in close proximity to gravesites, some even pushing over tombstones, there is a need for the establishment of best practices in grounds and grave marker maintenance for the purpose of guiding City of Bradenton staff, and volunteers who strive to maintain the property. It is the culmination of these factors which spurred the Manatee County Historical Commission, Inc. to apply for a grant from the Florida Department of Historical Resources for the purpose of developing a survey and master plan to ensure preservation of the historic cemetery. An additional component of the grant funded project is to develop a webpage with a digital map of the 1850 Manatee Burying Grounds and supporting historical information.

The Historic Resources Staff for Environmental Services, Inc. of Jacksonville, Florida, coordinated these efforts and compiled data for final reporting purposes. The objectives of this project were to conduct a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey, create a digital map for the 1850 Manatee Burying Grounds for use on the Manatee Historical Village Website, and create a Master Preservation Plan.

The purpose of the GPR Survey was to document hyperbolic features representative of potential historic grave like features or signs of previous excavation. Potential graves were identified post-processing by applying filtering, background removal, stacking, and other digital signal processing techniques to the GPR data by a Professional Geologist trained and certified in GPR. These features were projected on a planimetric map consisting of either CAD or geospatial figures indicating the location of possible archaeological burial grounds.

A preservation plan for a historic cemetery is a working document intended to be a tool for local staff to use as a guide for both everyday maintenance and future management and interpretation efforts. Additionally, a

cemetery master plan provides all known information about the site in a single location. For all these reasons, a master plan is not intended to be a static document and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.