

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey



Figure 34. Ground penetrating radar work.

It is generally assumed that there are multiple unmarked graves in Manatee Burying Ground. A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey is a common way to identify possible historic graves, although it does not provide any information about who it may be. The survey area is divided into a grid and then scanned in approximate 5' intervals in both north-south and east-west transects. Returning waves mark anomalies, which can be indicative of unmarked burials or excavated soil.

Community Feedback

Community survey respondents indicated an interest in seeing unmarked graves be marked or remembered in some capacity. Different examples of markers could be utilized to remember those buried in Manatee Burying Ground, or people affiliated with Manatee history but not buried there. Two possibilities (as described in an Indiana Division of Natural Resources cemetery glossary) include:

Cenotaph - a grave where the body is not present; a memorial erected as over a grave, but at a place where the body has not been interred. A cenotaph may look exactly like any other grave in terms of marker and inscription. Cenotaphs often commemorate the deaths of those lost at sea, in war, or by some other means where recovery or transportation of a body would be difficult.

Centerpiece - a sculpture or other monument, usually in the middle of a cemetery, commemorating no one in particular, but for the benefit of all buried there. Centerpieces usually are religious and are quite prominent in



Figure 35. An example of a grave marker with little associated information.



Figure 36. An example of a centerpiece.

many Catholic traditions, as with the ornate crucifixion scenes of French-Canadian cemeteries and the large crosses of Mexican cemeteries.

Iconography of Existing Markers

The Manatee Burying Ground is home to varied stones, where they still exist, and some stones display traditional cemetery symbolism and iconography. *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* by Douglas Keister is a valuable resource in discerning historic tombstone images (information in this section is derived from *Stories in Stone*).

Plant iconography is very common on tombstones. Plants represent and remind the living of the beauty and brevity of life and are symbols of remembrance. Flower symbolism is prevalent on historic tombstones, especially during the Victorian era, and usually the flowers chosen were intended to represent a virtue or attribute.

The weeping willow tree can suggest grief, but in various religions it can also mean immortality. In the Christian faith, the weeping willow is often connected with the gospel of Christ because no matter how many branches are cut off, the tree will still flourish. The weeping willow was an exceptionally common icon on tombstones in the late 18th and early 19th century.



Figure 37. James Vanerripe's marker with a weeping willow.



Figure 38. Rev. Crowder's grave marker with hand and open book.

An open book can represent the human heart, open to the world and God. On Rev. Crowder's stone, coupled with a hand,

it could also be interpreted to be the Bible. Other Christian symbolism, like crosses, are found on other stones within the Burying Ground.

The Gates obelisk has a Masonic symbol, very common in historic cemeteries. The Masons are a fraternal organization for men. Symbology is an important aspect of Masonry and generally draw from tools used by stone masons, including the square and compass, level and plumb rule, and trowel.

Henry Clark, the first documented burial in the Burying Ground, has floral patterns on his stone. The marker also includes a maker's mark: W.L. Woodruff, Potsdam, NY. Given that the Burying Ground was in a remote location at the time Mr. Clark was buried, it is logical that a stone would have been imported for his burial.

Management & Operations

Manatee Burying Ground is owned and maintained by City of Bradenton. This is the most typical form of public ownership, including for 18th and 19th century cemeteries no longer in use. The City also owns and cares for the historic Major Adams Cemetery and the Vanderipe burial site. The Major Adams cemetery was donated by Major Alden Joseph Adams to the village of Manatee in 1892 "to be used as a burying ground forever" and was first called New Cemetery. Like the Manatee Burying Ground, members of pioneer families, including Major Adams, are interred here. The Vanderipe plot is a small site containing only one grave, that of James Vanderipe, and is located across from the Edmund Lee family cemetery.

Once upon a time, Manatee Burying Ground was in a frontier village in a remote part of Florida, but the area has since become urbanized. This is common throughout the United States:

"In larger cities, [...] cemeteries that were at the edge of town at the time they were laid out have often been surrounded by newer development, and burial in small urban churchyards became impractical long ago. As American cities have grown outward and urbanized cores have expanded, older cemeteries, especially those dating to the 19th century, have come to be much closer to the middle of town, in some cases occupying land in the densest parts of cities. Not surprisingly, these cemeteries tend to be the most historically significant, quite often the most valued, and in many cases the most in demand (Planning for the Deceased n.d.:17)."



Figure 39. Henry S. Clay marker.

The Burying Ground is no longer used for burials and is functionally a historic site programmed by the Manatee Village Historical Park and the Manatee County Historical Committee. The Historical Committee has several standing committees: Finance and Fundraising, Village Development, Manatee History Day Task Force, Collections, Website and Social Media, and Special Events. The Manatee County Historical Committee may wish to consider establishing a specific Burying Ground committee that could coordinate with the City regarding future site planning, implementation of the Master Plan, and maintenance/operations.

Cemetery Funding

Currently, Manatee County provides funding for the cemetery, with some funding from private sources.

Existing Maintenance and Repair Practices

The City maintains Manatee Burying Ground, but subcontractors undertake the work, which primarily consists of mowing. There is currently no standard operating procedure. The City of West Palm recently completed a Cemetery Maintenance Management Plan in 2018. As part of the plan, the City established Standard Operating Procedures for City-owned cemetery maintenance and operations. Procedures have been established for the following: Burials,

Cleaning Grave Markers, Grave Subsidence, In Case of Visible Human Remains, Inspecting Grave Markers, Locating Sunken Markers, Notifying Plot Owners, Resetting Grave Markers, Section Markers, and Vandalism. While not all of these would apply to the Manatee Burying Ground, establishing maintenance procedures for the Burying Ground (and other City-owned cemeteries) is strongly encouraged.

Markers & Monument Preservation

Many headstones, monuments, and enclosures have fallen into a state of disrepair in Manatee Burying Ground. A general lack of proper headstone conservation has led to tilted, broken, and damaged headstones. All care should be taken to prevent the deterioration and destruction of funeral markers, but if they are damaged, it is important to clear the grounds of hazards. This may include putting stakes and tape around the gravesite to warn visitors of the danger.

Notes on repairing and caring for markers and monuments:

- Stabilize structures first for safety – consider “topple test” to determine stability (*this is a debatable practice*)
- Prioritize rankings based on the following:
- Safety – Can this structure hurt someone? Is the site visited frequently?
- Stability – Is the structure at risk of being lost or damaged without immediate attention?
- Aesthetics – What is the appearance of the stone and marker?

General notes on marker and monument conservation follow, but it is *strongly* advised to have a professional undertake stone and marker restoration.

- Leaning stones – lift from ground; stabilize the ground under the stone to avoid the stones from breaking or loss then, replace stone
- Broken stones – Route out to provide smooth surface, measure for rods, drill, and insert rods (if needed), epoxy and let set then, use jahn mortar to fill gaps and avoid further weathering or deterioration
- Masonry walls and barrel vaults – Consider use of flexible bars in sections of walls to stabilize and keep them from deteriorating in the future, re-lay brick, re-point brick and add coating (only if it was previously extant)

Rubbing Stones

It is NOT recommended that rubbings be done on old headstones and markers. Rubbing can cause deterioration and harm a stone over time. Savannah municipal code disallows headstone rubbing in its historic cemeteries. This is something the City may also wish to consider.

Cleaning Stones

The City has been fortunate to have the Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN) conduct their Cemetery Resource Protection Training (CRPT) at the Manatee Burying Ground. Part of the training is a hands-on workshop to teach the proper method for cleaning stones, as follows:

- Utilize a soft brush to wipe the stone in order to loosen dirt and debris
- Use a spray bottle with water to clean the stone. This may be enough, and no further cleaning warranted
- For tougher cases, use diluted D2 Solution in a spray bottle and a soft brush; it can be left for some time or immediately washed off with water (it will both clean and prevent future bio-growth on the marker)

Programming, Use & Recreation

The Manatee Burying Ground provides a unique setting for potential programming and events. It is important that the traditional cemetery functions continue, and the recreation, interpretive, horticultural, and other uses be respectful and compatible with the traditional uses. Cemeteries around the country have become more creative in finding low impact ways to bring the public into these sites that have traditionally been off limits. This public activation is in keeping with historic use of cemeteries especially during the rural cemetery movement when an outing to the cemetery for a picnic or stroll was very common.

At the Manatee Burying Ground, free self-guided walking tours are available through the Manatee Historical Village. The Burying Ground is included in the Walk Old Manatee brochure and phone app. In the past, the Spirit Voices of Manatee has staged historic tours where members have dressed in costume and portrayed famous residents interred in the Burying Ground. Cleanup events also take place within the Burying Ground.

Passive recreational uses such as educational tours, heritage or nature walks, bird watching, photography, or meditation would be appropriate for the cemetery. Such activities would maximize the use without causing damage to the landscape or architecture. Regularly scheduled events, such as historic or architectural tours, as well as annual events, such as a *Festival of Lights* during Christmas time or an *All Souls Day* near Halloween, would promote community participation in the education and preservation of the cemetery. These aspects will not only increase awareness about the cemetery, but also provide a better understanding and appreciation for it. By providing welcoming information and wayfinding and educational signage, the City and Historical Village can effectively help visitors navigate the site and interpret its historical significance.

Public Outreach & Engagement

Survey

As part of the Burying Ground preservation planning process, surveys were distributed to the community in hard copy and online, in English and Spanish. Two sets of questions were distributed.

The first set of questions involved understanding the challenges and opportunities of the site. Survey questions were:

- What is your perception of Manatee Burying Ground?
- From what you understand (have seen/heard), how is the cemetery used (why do people visit)? Why do you visit?
- What works? What doesn't?
- What is the one thing you wish were different?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge?
- Do you have specific/particular concerns?
- What's the one thing you don't want to change?
- Do you think the current situation works (restricted access and some programming)? Do you think the community likes it?
- If things were to change, do you think there would be pushback?
- Describe what you'd like Manatee Burying Ground to be in an ideal world.

The second set of questions tried to understand the role of the Burying Ground in the community.

- Do you have memories associated with the cemetery? Any family stories?
- How do you interact with/use the cemetery?
- Do you know how to access the cemetery? Have you ever done so?
- What do you like/care about the cemetery? What makes it special? What about cemeteries in general (why do you like/care about them)?
- What would you like to be able to do in the cemetery (e.g. wander in, attend events, maintenance, etc.)? What would you like it to look like (visual, programmatic, informational, etc.)?
- What is the one thing you wish were different?
- What's your favorite thing about Manatee Burying Ground?
- How would you like to be able to use it? Do you see any issues with this? (e.g. I would like it to be open and like a quiet park, but that may make it easier for the site to be vandalized.)
- Would you like more information about the history/people interred in the cemetery? How would you like it presented? (e.g. signs, flyers, interactive app, online media, performances, guided tours, etc.) DO you see an opportunity for different/new interpretations? If you were to discover information about the cemetery/interred, how would you want to share it?
- Describe what you'd like Manatee Burying Ground to be in an ideal world.
- Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Survey responses are included as an appendix to this plan. In general, visitors appreciate the ability to access the Burying Ground to learn more about the history of Manatee County and founders for educational and genealogical purposes. Respondents were generally comfortable with the level of access provided to the community but wanted to insure a proper amount of security is maintained to prevent vandalism. There is an interest in seeing more outreach and visible education around the Burying Ground through the form of signage, notices, or marking unmarked graves. Survey answers show there is an interest in historic tours and maintaining access through the Historical Village. More

documentation is encouraged, as is a plan to provide better maintenance and protection of existing headstones and the Burying Ground.

Community Meeting

There was a community meeting on February 8, 2019 to discuss the use and preservation of Manatee Burying Ground. The questionnaire survey was distributed, and participants discussed their wishes for the cemetery with each other and the consultants. Participants expressed pleasure with a preservation plan and primarily voiced a desire to increase programming, such as the Spirit Voices of Manatee.



Figure 41. Cleaning during a CRPT training.

Cemetery Resource Protection Trainings

The West Central and Central Regional Centers of the Florida Public Archaeology Network have conducted Cemetery Resource Protection Trainings (CRPT) at Manatee Burying Ground in 2011, 2015, and 2018.

This training consists of classroom work about cemetery preservation in general, laws, and iconography, history, and discussion. The afternoon portion of the program is a hands-on session, which was conducted in the Burying Ground. Participants learned how to properly clean headstones and markers and received basic information on other types of cemetery materials and structures, like fencing and coping.



Figure 40. CRPT training.

Website

A portion of the grant provides for an online resource for Manatee Burying Ground. In meetings, stakeholders have expressed an interest in an interactive map of the cemetery with information about the general history and the individuals and families interred. As a part of this project scope, the necessary information to create such a site has been submitted (**Appendix D**). In addition to providing a useful source, an open-source website, where the public can add their own research, can serve as a repository for information with minimal requirements for the hosting organization.

Future Outreach

In the future, the City and Manatee Village Historical Park should seek to increase their public outreach efforts. There are several possible methods, such as activities in the cemetery like Spirit Voices, community meetings/public forums, posting and exchanging information with residents via a website or blog, conducting oral histories, engaging partners to help care for the cemetery, etc. that may be used to further this goal. Most importantly, it is necessary for the city to keep an outlet open to the public for both the giving and receiving of information pertaining to Manatee Burying Ground, and work to strengthen and maintain relationships with the entities dedicated to it. Survey participants indicated an interest in being involved, and it was noted in staff discussions that residents in the area are also very interested in the cemetery. An official committee of the Manatee County Historical Committee or a volunteer Friends group may be worth exploring. Grassroots support and increased participation are crucial to success of implementing the Manatee Burying Ground preservation plan.

Some outreach ideas include:

- Partnerships with community organizations for care and maintenance
- Utilize City website to provide additional information on the cemetery.
- Create brochures with information on those in the Burying Ground and/or a walking tour
- Build informational kiosks at the Burying Ground
- Better wayfinding signage so that people can easily identify grave locations
- Continue holding FPAN CRPT workshops
- Conduct oral histories
- Make the Burying Ground available for sponsored passive activities like photography, bird watching, history or nature walks, etc.