



September 30, 2022

W. Tim Walker, Executive Director  
Metro Historical Commission  
3000 Granny White Pike  
Nashville, TN 37204

## **RE: Davidson County Cemetery Survey, Phase I, Management Summary**

Mr. Walker,

New South Associates, Inc. (NSA) has completed the first phase of the Davidson County Cemetery Survey for the Metro Historical Commission (MHC) in fulfillment of a 2021-2022 federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant awarded by the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC).

Fieldwork began June 9, 2022 with a meeting at Cane Ridge Community Club involving senior historian Dr. Lydia Simpson, archaeologist Caleb Hutson, historian Paul Hoffman, all of NSA, Caroline Eller of Metro Historical Commission, and community advocate Twana Chick. The group discussed the timeline, urgency, and plan for completing fieldwork to update the original Davidson County Cemetery Survey (DCCS) initiated in 1999. In addition to the above-named project staff, the field crew included field archaeologist Dan Lively and summer intern Riley Vernor, both of NSA, and a rotation of Metro Historical and Historic Zoning staff. The last day of fieldwork was August 11, 2022.

Between June 9 and August 11, field crew completed a survey of cemeteries identified in a combination of datasets including the original DCCS, parcel data from the Nashville Metro Planning Department, and community research. While the grant required survey completed in four subareas of Davidson County, the team exceeded the requirement to complete five subareas. The subareas completed in Phase I were as follows: 5 (East Nashville), 8 (North Nashville), 9 (Downtown), 11 (South Nashville), and 12 (Southeast). Due to threat of encroaching development, the fieldwork also included a survey of ten total cemeteries in subareas 10 (Green Hills-Midtown) and 13 (Antioch-Percy Priest). Altogether, the surveyors visited 126 sites, verified 108 as still extant, and identified eight (8) as removed or lost. Ten cemeteries were visited but not verified due to landscape conditions. These ten, identified in Appendix A as “not verified,” are recommended for a return visit during leaf-off conditions.

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## METHODOLOGY

Phase I survey was initiated with a regular field crew of three NSA team members and one MHC staff member. During the first two weeks of concentrated survey effort, the 3-person NSA field crew conducted a pedestrian survey of each cemetery, collected GPS boundary points on a Trimble unit based on a combination of parcel data and landscape observations, took extensive photographs of each site using a Digital SLR camera, and completed THC-required Survey123 forms. As a supplement to the Survey123 forms, which are not designed for cemetery documentation, MHC staff used the FileMaker app to complete a detailed field survey form at each site that provided an in-depth description and overall conditions assessment. After June 30, 2022, the crew was reduced to two NSA personnel and one rotating MHC staff member, helping the project stay on budget.

THC-required Survey123 forms for Phase I were completed by the end of the grant period (9/30/2022) and submitted directly to THC. All survey photographs and data collected in the FileMaker app and on the Trimble handheld units have been electronically shared with MHC, and copies are also included with this memo.

Due to seasonal conditions at the time of survey, the field crew experienced difficulty collecting complete data at some sites that were heavily overgrown and difficult to access or navigate through. Extreme heat was also a factor limiting time spent at individual sites; with temperatures well above 100 degrees and heat index values in the 110s on numerous days, this created health and safety hazards and equipment failures. Future fieldwork will be scheduled during late fall, winter, and early spring whenever possible.

Appendix B includes a list of endangered cemetery sites, based upon conditions observed in the field and reported or documented threats related to factors like maintenance, access, and/or proximate development/urban encroachment.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

Phase 1 Survey	
Total Visited	126
Verified	108
Not verified	10
Removed or Lost	8

Of 126 cemeteries visited during the Phase I survey, the vast majority of those verified were found to be historically Euro-American family or community cemeteries of the vernacular/informal subtype. Where possible, using census data and obituaries, NSA staff attempted to identify the primary racial or ethnic affiliation of surveyed cemeteries. Of the verified sites, the survey located two (2) Jewish, fourteen (14) African American, and seventy-one (71) Anglo-American

cemeteries. For twelve (12) cemeteries, researchers did not have enough information to determine racial or ethnic affiliation.

Additionally, many early cemeteries in rural areas were once part of plantations and either may have included or are known colloquially to have included interments of enslaved African Americans. Early formal cemeteries also often contain African American burials, as documented at Nashville City Cemetery and Mill Creek Baptist Church Cemetery. Some of the larger, previously-segregated cemeteries are also presumed to include multiple races and ethnicities. Cemeteries meeting these criteria were documented as “other” or “mirror,” a term used to describe cemeteries in which African American burials are in an adjacent but segregated section.

The cemetery survey form included four subcategories of cemetery types: lawn park, memorial garden, rural garden, and vernacular/informal. The survey team identified eighty-seven (87) cemeteries as the “vernacular/informal” subcategory, fourteen (14) as “rural garden” cemeteries, eight (8) lawn parks, and one (1) memorial park. Two (2) sites – the tombs located at the State Capitol and the tomb of Bishop Miles, did not conform to the available categories and were left uncategorized.

The conditions of the cemeteries surveyed in Phase 1 varied from pristine to unidentifiable. Common issues contributing to preservation needs included neglect by property owners and security problems (such as vandalism and urban camping). While many cemeteries were easily accessible and adjacent to public thoroughfares, others like the John G. Briley Cemetery were remote and difficult to access, requiring significant time to hike to and from the site. Inaccessibility can be both a benefit and a detriment to cemetery preservation, as demonstrated by Patterson Cemetery which sits atop a hillside above Kinhawk Drive and has incurred vandalism for several decades. Its isolated but suburban location has attracted ongoing criminal activity, resulting in damage to markers and desecration of burials.

The landscape of cemeteries has important implications for their care and preservation. For instance, trees and forested areas can both enhance the setting of burial grounds and pose risk to both the above and below-ground features within them. Of the confirmed cemeteries, 29 were identified as located within forested areas, 21 in open meadows, and 47 were “open with a few trees.” A few sites, such as Bishop Miles’ tomb in St. Mary of the Seven Sorrows Catholic Church and the tombs located at the State Capitol, did not fit comfortably into a common landscape category and were generally unthreatened by risk of tree damage.

While the primary scope of the survey was to revisit the original DCCS undertaken in 1999, the field team also visited newly identified cemeteries when possible. Of the 126 sites visited, 103 were previously surveyed by the DCCS. Sixteen (16) newly surveyed cemeteries were added to previous DCCS data, sourced from a combination of parcel data and community input.

## CONCLUSION

Despite a shortened timeline and extreme weather conditions, the DCCS 2022 Phase I field effort successfully assessed 92% of visited sites and surveyed 16 new cemeteries that were previously undocumented. Overall, the vast majority of Davidson County's cemeteries are in need of preservation efforts ranging from brush clearance to Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey for unmarked burials to significant headstone conservation. Phase I findings and subsequent survey phases will inform the development of a countywide cemetery preservation plan that will further quantify preservation needs at Davidson County's historic cemeteries. Additionally, at least five cemeteries surveyed were of unknown origin, and fifteen were of unclear or unknown racial or ethnic affiliation, calling for further research. These include cemeteries that were once part of plantations and may contain unmarked and unknown burials of enslaved people of African descent. Continued community outreach will better MHC's institutional knowledge of such sites and help protect the final resting places of historically marginalized people.

Burial practices have historically been, and continue to be, an important part of American culture, and Tennessee law dictates the protection of these sacred sites that hold human remains. The DCCS will continue to improve our knowledge of these hallowed grounds and the people interred within, allowing for a more informed preservation approach and strategic protection of the history and ancestors of Middle Tennessee.

### DELIVERABLES PER PHASE:

1. Database/Spreadsheet of survey form data for Metro Files of all cemeteries visited
2. GIS data of all cemetery boundaries visited
3. Photos of each cemetery visited
4. Survey123 forms to TN-SHPO
5. This memo

Sincerely,



Lydia Simpson, PhD  
Senior Historian  
New South Associates, Inc.









## Appendix B- Endangered Cemeteries

At the end of Phase I, Metro Historical Commission (MHC) staff created a list of ten endangered or threatened cemetery sites surveyed during this phase of the project. MHC identified these sites using notes and photos from the current survey, as well as additional existing Davidson County Cemetery Survey (DCCS) files that include correspondence, prior documentation, and archival research. Phase I sites listed below have some of the greatest need based upon factors like physical condition of the markers and overall site, visible maintenance issues, and known development threats. These sites are not ranked or presented in any particular order, except alphabetical listing. Original DCCS site numbers are indicated where applicable (DCCS), in addition to the Phase I field numbers for all. The following pages include historical summaries for five of these sites, researched and written by MHC staff as part of their local matching funds on this grant project.

Cemetery Name	DCCS	Phase I Field #	Notes on Threat(s)
Aunt Easter/Nightingale	AN-71	31	Abandonment, custodial care, illegible inscriptions, and planned development
Ensley	AN-69	87	Abandoned, impending development
Hope	AN-19	82	Custodial care and severe overgrowth; suspected burials of enslaved persons/plantation association, veteran burial
Kimbrow	AN-33	38	Custodial care and severe overgrowth; illegible inscriptions; suspected burials of enslaved persons (some fieldstones); rapid encroaching development in area
Moore	n/a	9	Reported burials of enslaved persons located outside of fenced area
Pasqueit	n/a	129	Previously undocumented; new development planned for surrounding acreage; suspected unmarked graves for enslaved persons; general overgrowth, not marked, challenging access
Peebles	n/a	34	Abandoned and overgrown; stone fragments on ground; encroaching development on all sides
Turner	AN-53	15	Rapid development in area, potential unmarked burials inside and outside fence
Whittemore	AN-64	99	Overgrown and neglected; stone marker from 1895 not visible during survey
Whittemore-Black	AN-63	41	Illegible inscriptions, sunken/tilted markers; missing and damaged stones; urban encroachment



## Aunt Easter/Nightingale Cemetery



Located in the Lake Providence Community west of J.J. Watson Avenue and north of Winston Avenue West, Aunt Easter/Nightingale Cemetery was first recorded by the DCCS on October 18, 2003. Inscriptions were not recorded/not legible during initial survey. An updated survey was conducted on March 12, 2005.

Lake Providence community formed as a Reconstruction-era African American settlement that included farms, dairies, Lake Providence Missionary Baptist Church (founded 1868), and the former Providence school. Many of the roads in this area are named for African American settlers. Nightingale Cemetery is a family graveyard that includes only one headstone (Roxie Pettis) but may have seven or more burials. A list of suspected interments submitted to the DCCS included: Annie Redd Nightingale (d. 1945), Rev. Henry Nightingale (1895-1941), Roxie Nightingale Pettis (1905-1927), Fannie Redd, Henry Redd, Bedford Taylor (d. 1926), and Easter Taylor (born c. 1856). Though not listed in the original list of interments for this site, research indicates that Taylor Nightingale (1893-1926) and infant Gereline Nightingale (d. 1926)

may also be buried here. Some death records refer to this location as Edmondson Cemetery, though that site is located further west. A native of Oklahoma, Henry Nightingale was a minister and a moulder in a foundry. He married Gertrude Nightingale (d. 1976, Nashville) and had two children, Henry and Archie V. Nightingale. Bedford Taylor's obituary notes him as a minister who may have had ties to Benevolent Lodge No. 29. The family had ties to Lake Providence Baptist Church.

Notes from the original DCCS read: "NAMES OF THOSE BURIED WERE RECORDED BY MRS. SADIE OVERTON AND MRS. LUCY BURNLEY IN THE 1980'S; ON JULY 9, 2003, MRS. BURNLEY GAVE PERMISSION TO THE DAVIDSON COUNTY CEMETERY SURVEY PROJECT TO LIST THE NAMES OF THOSE BURIED ON THE WEBSITE. MRS. OVERTON IS DECEASED. IN NOVEMBER 2004, RESIDENTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD REPORTED THAT THE CEMETERY IS NOW KNOWN AS "NIGHTINGALE CEMETERY."

The 2022 survey recorded this as a "Vernacular/Informal" site type, affiliated with the African American community of Lake Providence. The site is not marked and is moderately hilly. Landscaping is characterized as forest with generally open understory and nearby urban development. The seven known burials were not observable during the visit. Community members have indicated the presence of additional burials, but overgrowth precluded onsite confirmation of such features. A winter visit is recommended and will allow for better assessment and documentation.

Threats to this site include **abandonment, custodial care, illegible inscriptions, and planned development**. A 2004 article notes that the state archaeologist and a private research firm visited the site but could not locate proof of graves (*The Tennessean* · Wed, Dec 15, 2004). A 2018 study by a local cultural resources firm plotted seven (7) burials, but a 2019 GPR survey located only two burials at Roxie's marker and at an adjacent area marked with stones. Developers for the currently planned Winston Heights subdivision engaged MHC staff in 2022 and have been advised to exercise caution during site development.

## Hope Cemetery



Located on Creekside Drive near the intersection of East Ridge Drive, Hope Cemetery was first surveyed for the DCCS on April 14, 2000. This family graveyard contains three (3) known burials. Interments include Emma S. Cook (1850-1884), Rachel Hope (1762-1809), and Charles A. Kanaday (1880-1898). In addition to these three burials, a 1980 report by Richard and Carla Fulcher also noted two burials for Mary S. Ezell (1859-1876) and Mary Hope (c. 1759-1835).

Charles Kanaday died on July 18, 1898 at Camp Merritt, San Francisco, California, an apparent casualty of the Spanish American War. He served as a Private in Company L of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tennessee Volunteer Infantry, mustered into federal service in May 1898 and first stationed at Camp Merritt. The regiment left Nashville on June 10<sup>th</sup> and was assigned to the Second Independent Battalion of the Eighth Army Corps.

Originally from Chester, County, Pennsylvania, Rachel Hope was the first wife of Adam Hope (1761-1841), who is also believed to be interred at Hope Cemetery. Adam's second wife, Mary Wright "Polly" Brown Hope (1765-1838), who he married in 1814, is also said to be buried here. In 1840, Adam was listed in the census as the only free person in his household, which included fourteen enslaved persons. Upon his death the following year, he left behind seven children and numerous grandchildren.

The 2022 survey recorded this as a "Vernacular/Informal" site type, affiliated with Anglo American burials (based on field conditions). Access is currently unrestricted and afforded by foot, with the cemetery located on a ridgetop/hilltop in an urban/suburban setting. It appears abandoned and overgrown, with no inscriptions and sunken/tilted stones. Davidson County Sheriff's Department previously maintained the site, once a piece of a large plantation. The property owner estimates 10-15 burials in the south end of the site, with fieldstones and hand carved stones thought to mark the graves of enslaved persons. Newer graves on site are located closer to the road. Approximately five burials were located, including two markers and one stone, and an additional depression. Due to the time of year the site was surveyed and lack of custodial care, a winter visit is recommended to confirm additional resources or site features. The oldest burial dates to 1809.

Threats to this site include **custodial care and severe overgrowth**, which obscure the burial markers and location of depressions or stones. There is a high likelihood that numerous burials for enslaved persons exist here, based on the research and existing documented markers. Additional research about the African American persons buried here as well as GPR survey during an appropriate season would assist in more accurately determining the number and types of graves at Hope Cemetery. An effort to locate descendants would also prove useful in documenting and planning for the site. Given Pvt. Kanaday's military service, veterans' organizations may also provide some assistance for this cemetery. Descendants, a friends group, or a neighborhood/community sponsor might also be recruited to provide regular checks and maintenance, including clearing of vegetation and marker cleaning.

## Moore Cemetery



Moore Cemetery is located on Hobson Drive west of Old Hickory Blvd. and south of Interstate 24. In recent years, this road has been made into a gated private drive and much of it cannot be traversed by vehicles, so the survey team accessed it by foot. This site was previously surveyed for the DCCS on November 7, 1999. Due to a large adjacent planned development, community advocate Twana Chick of Cane Ridge Community Club brought the site to MHC staff's attention again in the summer of 2022 and put staff in contact with living descendant Houston Hill. Moore Cemetery is a family graveyard and a "mirror" site, meaning that African American burials are in an adjacent but segregated section from their Euro-American counterparts.

The original survey noted at least twelve burials at Moore Cemetery. Of those, six stone markers were visible on site, one of which had an illegible inscription. There is one horizontal, flat, single block stone marker (Bertha) and four upright segmental top tablets set into rectangular bases.

One additional square-top marker may serve as a footstone or may mark a child's grave. The marker for B.R. Moore exhibits an engraving akin to a broken pediment with center cross motif. Those interred here include Bertha Moore Alley (1893-1938), B. F. Moore (1888 –1918), W. H. Moore (1845 –1905), and spouses W. G. Moore (1821 –1902) and Amanda Moore (1822 –1903). Men in the family served as farm laborers and Amanda Moore worked as a housekeeper who succumbed to Spanish Flu. Several women in the family married into the Hill, Guthrie, and Kimbro families who are well known in Cane Ridge. Living descendant Houston E. Hill of Antioch is the grandson of Bertha Moore Alley and son of Edward W. Hill, the latter of whom is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery.

This restricted-access site is moderately hilly, an open lawn enclosed by a chain link fence and surrounded by forest with generally overgrown understory. Descendants currently maintain the cemetery, which includes yucca plants and vinca. Based on oral history from his family and his own childhood recollections of Moore Cemetery, Houston Hill advised MHC that there are burials of enslaved persons located outside of the fenced area. The survey team looked for evidence of unmarked burials on the southeast, southwest, and northwest sides of the fenced area, but due to vegetative overgrowth depressions and potential field stones were not discernable. *Moore Farm and Southeast Park Heritage Development Report* (MTSU, 2017) noted that the Moores were "vital members of the local community, as farmers and business people" and that "the ruins of a second home, belonging to William H. and Allie Moore, can still be found beside the Moore family cemetery at the end of an original stretch of macadamized road lying just to the west of I-24."

Threats to this site include **custodial care** (biological growth/illegible inscriptions on markers) and **undocumented suspected graves** of enslaved persons. An impending adjacent **large-scale planned development** (I-24 PUD Century Farms) may also impact the site in terms of future access and maintenance abilities. GPR during winter and extension of the fencing to enclose all burials is recommended by staff.



## Pasqueit Cemetery



Pasqueit Cemetery\* lies deep onto a large, heavily wooded parcel slated for development (I-24 PUD Century Farms) off Hobson Drive, roughly due west of the Old Hickory Blvd./I-24 juncture. There are no marked trails or foot paths, so the survey team was led to the site by community advocate Twana Chick, who had visited the cemetery in previous years. This is a vernacular/informal “mirror” graveyard on a moderately hilly site. This site had not previously been surveyed. Ms. Chick contacted MHC staff in May 2022 regarding proposed development plans that would involve the cemetery and, in tandem with living descendant Carl Gadsey, requested a field visit to properly document the site.

The cemetery sits within a generally open understory area of dense mature forest, with sections of wire fence visible along the east side. Vinca is present throughout. Near the northwest corner of the cemetery, two large carved gray limestone headstones for Mary Jane Pasqueit (1832-1852) and Elizabeth Ann (no legible dates) lie at grade, partially obscured by dirt and overgrowth and due to sustained weathering. These are lying face up on the ground but their apparent bases, two rectangular stones with visible rebar sticking up, sit nearby. It is unclear if the markers have been moved from their original location, as their bases are not situated in a straight line and at least one of the bases is readily mobile. Very near to these two headstones lie several large stone members that appear to be pieces of two or three box tombs. The box tombs and two large headstones appear to form the main family plot. A few feet south/southeast of this cluster (plot) is an arch-top footstone with the initials “H.P.” (believed to represent Henry Pasqueit, c. 1883-1934) and an upright stone with no visible inscription.

Located generally southwest and south from the primary cluster of markers are numerous gray limestone field stones and unmarked depressions. The group photographed 14 visible field stones, and Ms. Chick estimates at least 50 stones exist based upon prior visits. These stones are small (roughly cantaloupe to honeydew size) but stand upright and exhibit deliberate placement with east-west traditional Christian burial orientation. Fieldstones and roughly 3-5 depressions are mostly concentrated at the southern end of the site, with some scattered slightly north and east of there as well. These are believed to be burials of enslaved persons associated with an historical farm or estate in this area. A 2018 survey conducted by Jenny Andrews (MTSU Center for Historic Preservation) on file with the MHC documented 12 headstones (field stone grave markers), 3 irregular field stones (possible grave markers), the two inscribed headstones, and the plot containing the stone box tombs.

Threats to this site include impending large-scale suburban **development, undocumented and potentially unmarked burials** of enslaved persons, and **damaged markers**. MHC provided a detailed site visit summary to the developers, including GPS coordinates of the site boundaries based upon visible features. Current plans for the development account for the surveyed area and call for fencing and public access. GPR and a winter visit are recommended by staff.

*\*Note: Spellings like Pasquiet, Pasquett, and Paskeet have also been seen in historical documentation. The cemetery is also known and referred to in historical documentation as Gadsey family burial ground.*



## Peebles Cemetery



Peebles Cemetery is located north of Old Hickory Boulevard and west of Alexis Drive atop a ridge in an overgrown meadow. A c. 1930s bungalow stands on the property west of the cemetery. While this property retains some farmland, once prevalent throughout this area of Davidson County, there is now encroaching suburban development on all sides of the parcel. Peebles Cemetery is considered abandoned due to lack of maintenance and the condition of its markers. The 2022 survey was the first recording for the DCCS.

There are a total of eight markers in this cemetery, which generally date to the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Interments at Peebles Cemetery include Anderson Peebles (1833-1912), Margaret Peebles (1837-1900), Emma Baker Peebles (1861-1898), Bettie May Peebles (1885-1897), and James Monroe Peebles (1857-1931). One large marker stands on a rectangular base with the inscription “PEEBLES”; this marker is nearly squared, but with a very slight point centered in its top and a leaf motif engraved at the upper end of its face. Two additional markers also stand nearby, one that reads “BABY INFANT SON & DAUGHTER” and one that appears to contain the name Leslie and the year 1889 in its inscription.

Justice Anderson Peebles was elected as Assessor for the 7<sup>th</sup> District and Davidson County Coroner. According to his obituary, he was well known and popular in this and surrounding sections, having served as a member of the Davidson County court for 36 years. Squire Anderson Peebles was also a Confederate veteran. He was seen as a man of the strictest integrity. As a Magistrate, he looked closely after the interests of the people of the county. As a Confederate soldier, he measured fully up to the highest standard and met every duty with unflinching courage. Squire Peebles had a son named William Peebles who worked with his brother, James, in the grocery business.

With the exception of the large pointed-top marker, stones are small, flat, rectangular markers with minimalistic design that appear similar to styles seen in the 1920s or 1930s. This design pattern could indicate that older markers (or perhaps fieldstones) were replaced en masse or alternatively that the graves were not marked until that time. While inscriptions on the stones were generally legible, some stones have fragments or chunks missing at their edges. A couple of the markers are clustered very closely together and directly adjacent to a tree, which may have displaced one marker from its original location.

Threats to this site include encroaching **development, damaged markers, and vegetative overgrowth**. Stump removal may be appropriate to avoid further off setting the markers, and regular clearance of overgrowth is recommended by staff. Fencing with signage may also help aid in its protection.