NPS Form 10-900 OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Olivewood Cemetery
Other name/site number: Olive Wood Cemetery, Hollow Wood Cemetery, Hollywood Cemetery (HR-C401)
Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. Location

Street & number: 1300 Court Street
City or town: Houston State: Texas County: Harris
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☑ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☑ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
☐ national ☑ statewide ☐ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☑ A ☐ B ☑ C ☐ D

Chief Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Signature of certifying official / Title **Date**

Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official **Date**

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register.
___ removed from the National Register
___ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper **Date of Action**

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

X	Private
	Public - Local
	Public - State
	Public - Federal

Category of Property

	building(s)
x	district
	site
	structure
	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	1	Buildings
1[1]	0	Sites
1	0	Structures
0	0	Objects
2	1	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: FUNERARY: Cemetery

Current Functions: FUNERARY; Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification: N/A

Principal Exterior Materials: Stone/granite; Stone/marble; Concrete; Ceramic/tile

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-8 through 7-14)

[1] All grave markers, monuments, semicircular plots, trees, curbing, and interior fencing are considered contributing features of the overall site.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: D (Cemeteries)

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage/Black; Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture (*all state level of significance*)

Period of Significance: 1875-1961

Significant Dates: 1875

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): N/A

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-15 through 8-47)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 9-48 through 9-54)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
- _ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- _ previously listed in the National Register
- _ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- _ designated a National Historic Landmark
- _ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- _ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:
- _ State historic preservation office
- _ Other state agency
- _ Federal agency
- x Local government (African American History Research Center at the Gregory Campus)
- _ University
- x Other – (Descendants of Olivewood)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): HR-C401

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 7.5 (7.455) acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (**See Map 2**)

A	29.773140 Latitude	-95.392482 Longitude
B	29.773442 Latitude	-95/392495 Longitude
C	29.773472 Latitude	-95.392845 Longitude
D	29.773648 Latitude	-95.392858 Longitude
E	29.773662 Latitude	-95.392657 Longitude
F	29.773807 Latitude	-95.392667 Longitude
G	29.773792 Latitude	-95.392510 Longitude
H	29.774041 Latitude	-95.392513 Longitude
I	29.774023 Latitude	-95.392662 Longitude
J	29.774822 Latitude	-95.392704 Longitude
K	29.774804 Latitude	-95.393128Longitude
L	29.775128 Latitude	-95.393160 Longitude
M	29.775476 Latitude	-95.392503 Longitude
N.	29.775486 Latitude	-95.392226 Longitude
O.	29.775407 Latitude	-95.391486 Longitude
P.	29.773156 Latitude	-95.391470 Longitude

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

Verbal Boundary Description: Two parcels, a 7.1094 acre rectangular parcel that comprises the majority of the property, and a 0.4715 acre tract that adjoins the larger parcel on the northwest corner. This acreage includes the original 5.5 acre cemetery tract as well as three historic additions, and is derived from a 2009 survey plat.

Boundary Justification: The boundary includes the original 5.5 acre cemetery tract as well as three historic additions to the cemetery that were added within the period of significance. Together, these parcels add up to a total of 7.455 acres that represents the historic cemetery boundaries.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Nesta Anderson, Ph.D. and Melanie Nichols, MSc (Legacy Cultural Resources); Margott Williams, Paul Jennings, Charles Cook, and Jasmine Lee (Descendants of Olivewood Cemetery)
Organization: Legacy Cultural Resources LLC, Descendants of Olivewood Cemetery, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT)
Street & number: 4304 Campo Verde Drive
City or Town: Austin State: TX Zip Code: 78749
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Date: 1/21/2026

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets MAP-55 through MAP-60)
Additional items (see continuation sheets FIGURE-61 through FIGURE-74)
Photographs (see continuation sheets PHOTO-75 through PHOTO-119)

Photograph Log

Name of Property: Olivewood Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Houston
County, State: Harris County, Texas
Photographer: Nesta Anderson, 09/18/2024, 01/17/2024, Rebekah Dobrasko, 11/17/2025

Photo 1
Cemetery overview
01/17/2025
Camera facing southeast

Photo 2
Northwest curve of elliptical drive
01/17/2025
Camera facing south

Photo 3
Semicircular plot at the curve of the ellipse
01/17/2025
Camera facing east southeast

Photo 4
East side of elliptical drive
11/17/2025
Camera facing south

Photo 5
West side of elliptical drive
11/17/2025
Camera facing south-southeast

Photo 6
View toward ellipse
11/17/2025
Camera facing north

Photo 7
Geometric grave plot to accommodate drive
09/18/2024
Camera facing northeast

Photo 8
Gully erosion
09/18/2024
Camera facing northeast

Photo 9
Tiles for the Josey plot
01/17/2025

Photo 10
Edwards, Hardy, Jackson, and Godfrey plot showing tilework
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 11
Moses Curtis marker with Oddfellows symbol
01/17/2025
Camera facing northwest

Photo 12
William Payne marker with Masonic symbol
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 13
Grave marker with diamond cut-out planter
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 14
Percy Whitfield marker with tile
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 15
Grave marker with plate
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 16
Jeffrey Williams grave marker with shell
01/17/2025

Photo 17
Johnnie Winfield grave marker with knife
01/17/2025
Camera facing southeast

Photo 18
Jane Righton, Major Righton, and Annie Righton grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing northeast

Photo 19
W.A. Harris grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing south

Photo 20
Curbing with FDS tile and planters
01/17/2025
Camera facing south

Photo 21
Lizzie Smith grave marker
01/17/2025

Photo 22
Mrs. Nellie Nettles grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 23
Charley Mitchell Jr. grave marker
09/18/2024
Camera facing west

Photo 24
Williams family plot with blue tile and upside down "s"
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 25
Charley Moore grave marker with reinforced concrete crib
01/17/2025
Camera facing northeast

Photo 26
Grave marker with arch formerly enclosed with glass
01/17/2025
Camera facing southeast

Photo 27
Concrete lion marking grave
01/17/2025
Camera facing east-northeast

Photo 28
Angel statue
01/17/2025
Camera facing east

Photo 29
John Stinson marker showing whitewash
01/17/2025
Camera facing east

Photo 30
Grave marker with floral design and shell
09/18/2024
Camera facing west

Photo 31
Isles grave marker with floral motif
01/17/2025
Camera facing northwest

Photo 32
H.W. Markham grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing southwest

Photo 33
Grave marker with scroll motif
01/17/2025
Camera facing southwest

Photo 34
Oddfellows marker resembling Woodmen of the World marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing southeast

Photo 35
Ferrill grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing east

Photo 36
Maggie Lyons grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing east-northeast

Photo 37
Grave marker with Classical Revival influence
01/17/2025
Camera facing northeast

Photo 38
Toliver grave marker with pipe (enclosed in PVC) marking burial
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 39
Alice F. Love (?) grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing east

Photo 40
Concrete and brick well or cistern
01/17/2025
Camera facing southeast

Photo 41
Doctor row
01/17/2025
Camera facing northeast

Photo 42
Headless statue
01/17/2025
Camera facing east

Photo 43
Rev. A.F. Jackson grave marker with floral motif
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 44
E. Mayo grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing west

Photo 45
Art deco influenced grave marker
01/17/2025
Camera facing southwest

Narrative Description

Olivewood Cemetery (sometimes referred to as "Hollow Wood" or "Hollywood" in city directories) is an African American cemetery established in 1875 and located at 1300 Court Street in Houston, Harris County. The cemetery holds the remains of a large number of Houston's prominent African American citizens who were significant in the community's development. Its immediate setting in the sixth ward west of downtown Houston was initially rural but became increasingly urban as Houston expanded westward, and today is characterized by mixed commercial and residential development.[2] The Olivewood Cemetery Association (written as "Olive Wood" in the nineteenth century) purchased 5.5 acres of land at the edge of the Houston city limits in 1875 to establish this private African American cemetery. Olivewood grew slightly over subsequent decades, ultimately comprising the 7.6 acre parcel it remains today (**Map 2**).

Designed in association with the Rural Cemetery Movement of the late nineteenth century, Olivewood is a community cemetery with a parklike setting, featuring an elliptical drive, maintained grass, ornamental plants, and mature trees. Grave markers within the cemetery contain a mix of professionally cut marble and granite headstones and sculptures as well as homemade concrete markers.[3] Many of the markers have ceramic tile embedded within the concrete that spell out the family surname or the deceased's name. These tiles often include upside down or reversed letters that may be tied to an African-influenced belief system. Metal pipes also mark a few of the burials, a custom associated with marking enslaved burials. The entire cemetery landscape is a contributing site, and the markers, curbing, interior fencing, grave tending items, the elliptical drive, and the trees are contributing features. A small number of statues, notable large-scale markers or monuments, and a semicircular plot that provides the inside shape for the curve of the elliptical drive are considered exemplary features for their architectural contributions. Apart from the cemetery site (contributing), the district includes a historic cistern (contributing) and a shed (non-contributing) that was built after the period of significance (1875-1961). Olivewood Cemetery retains integrity of location, design, materials, association, and feeling. The cemetery remained in use until 1961, when the last known burial occurred, and subsequently fell into disrepair until descendants rediscovered the cemetery in the late 1990s and established the Descendants of Olivewood non-profit group dedicated to its maintenance and preservation in 2003. Olivewood has an Official State of Texas Historic Marker (#14239), is a Historic Texas Cemetery, a City of Houston Historic Landmark, a contributing site for the proposed Emancipation National Historic Trail, is a member of the National Park Service's Reconstruction Era National Historic Network, and has been recognized as a "Site of Memory" in UNESCO's Slave Route Project.

Setting

The Olivewood Cemetery is in Houston's sixth ward, just south of Interstate Highway 10 and White Oak Bayou, which roughly parallel the northern cemetery boundary. The remaining sides are surrounded by mixed commercial and residential development and Summer Street, which is adjacent to the cemetery's southern boundary (**Maps 1-2**). Development occurred gradually, beginning around the turn of the twentieth century as Houston's city boundary

[2] Debra Blacklock-Sloan, "Olivewood Cemetery," Handbook of Texas Online, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/olivewood-cemetery, 2020

[3] Many terms are used interchangeably to reference how burials may be designated on the surface. Headstone, tombstone, monument, grave marker, or gravestone are the most common ways in which people refer to something that marks the location of a burial. In this document, grave marker is used for anything that marks a burial location. However, for particularly large, formal, markers that have significant height, mass, or include statues, the word monument may also be used to denote its more substantial physical presence.

expanded westward. At the time the cemetery was established in 1875, the area surrounding Olivewood was rural and located outside Houston's city limits.

Site

The cemetery is rectangular, consisting of approximately 7.5 acres of land kept clear by volunteers. The initial 5.5 acre tract was supplemented with an additional two acres in 1917, forming the core cemetery property. Minor conveyances in 1931 and 1948 briefly added additional acreage, but in 1958, the cemetery conveyed a total of 0.688 acres from the northern portion of the cemetery to Harris County Flood Control so that they could channelize White Oak Bayou.[4] Historically, cemetery access was from the southern side of the cemetery via ornate gates at the end of the elliptical drive. An alley led directly to the gates, providing vehicular access. After 1946, the southern entrance was blocked by a wall and access points shifted to the east and west sides of the cemetery.

Currently, the only access is via the west side. The southern gates are no longer present and the eastern access has been blocked by a business built next to the cemetery.[5] A metal perimeter fence installed after the period of significance encircles the cemetery and provides pedestrian access via a single entry gate. Visitors entering the cemetery are greeted by a non-historic-age, hand painted Olivewood Cemetery sign and an Official State of Texas Historical marker. A concrete sidewalk leads from the gate to a small parking area off Court Street. The east side of the parking area, which is paved and striped, is owned by the Descendants of Olivewood. There are five parking spaces available within this area. The portion of the parking lot owned by the Descendants of Olivewood is considered part of the nominated property.

Within the cemetery, vegetation includes maintained grass with a variety of mature trees scattered throughout (**Photo 1**). These trees represent a range of species and have survived several floods and storm damage that previously resulted in the loss of several of the cemetery's large trees. A few ornamental plants are visible near markers. Markers include a variety of materials including concrete, limestone, granite, and metal pipes. Many of the plots are enclosed with concrete curbing, and a few are enclosed with decorative wrought iron fences. Remnants of an elliptical driveway are visible at the south end of the cemetery, with geometrically shaped plots along the edges of the drive that maintain the drive's elliptical shape (**Photos 2-7**). No gravel, dirt, or asphalt remains visible within the drive.

The elliptical drive is a remnant of a planned cemetery landscape, and a semicircular plot with concrete pavement at the curve of the ellipse is especially significant as an element of this landscape (**Photo 3**). As a result, it has been listed as a contributing object along with statues and notable large-scale markers, some with identifiable stylistic influences. Many of these objects are located at the southern end of the cemetery along the edges of the drive (**Map 3**). This pattern shows that many of the exemplary contributing objects are concentrated within the southern portion of the cemetery along one of the defining design features of the cemetery.

Toward the northeast section of the cemetery, there is a large gully that extends from the eastern cemetery boundary through the northern part of the cemetery. The gully meanders to the north and south and cuts off easy access to the northernmost section of the cemetery. The original 1875 conveyance of the 5.5 acre cemetery tract references this gully, which appears to have extended across the tract at that time.[6] A petition filed in 1948 indicates that an adjacent property owner had constructed a drainage flume that was depositing water directly into the cemetery and

[4] Harris County Deed Records, Vol.383, 525; Vol. 849, 91; Vol.871, 731; Vol.999, 492; document 15878A.

[5] Antwanysha Johnson, "Protected Landmark Designation Report," Application submitted to City of Houston, June 7, 2023, 1-3.

[6] Harris County Deed Records, Vol. 15, 250.

causing erosion; while the gully is not specifically mentioned, it was likely impacted by these actions.[7] Since that time, run-off erosion from the development of adjacent commercial properties has enlarged this gully and created significant erosion that has impacted several historic burials (**Photo 8**), resulting in burials and markers being displaced from their original locations.[8] This ongoing erosion presents a challenge in safely maintaining this area of the cemetery, and access to burials in this area is difficult, as there are no safe means of ingress and egress into the ravine. A few concrete steps have been added to the north side of the gully along the eastern property line, but there is no corresponding means of access on the south side of the gully. A small land bridge remains to the northernmost cemetery section closest to White Oak Bayou. There are several marked burials in this northern area.

The Descendants of Olivewood group, co-founded by Ms. Margott Williams and Mr. Charles Cook (both of whom have ancestors buried in the cemetery), currently maintain the cemetery.[9] The group works with volunteers that help keep Olivewood from becoming overgrown. Prior to their involvement, the cemetery was overgrown and neglected for several decades. Historical aerial photographs show that in 1930 the cemetery was still maintained with an elliptical drive in the south along with scattered trees and monuments clustered heavily at the center of the cemetery (**Figure 1**). By 1944, at which time the cemetery had acquired additional acreage to become the 7.5 acre property, the historical aerial shows the elliptical drive with many large trees throughout the southern portion of the cemetery (**Figure 2**). The northern portion above the gully had extensive tree canopy cover. Markers are still visible on the 1957 aerial photograph, but by 1962, the tree canopy had thickened, making visual inspection of the monuments challenging (**Figure 3**). Throughout the 1960s-2009, the tree cover was so thick that no monuments were visible.[10]

Olivewood Cemetery Resources

The Olivewood Cemetery contains a variety of features that contribute to the district's eligibility. The cemetery Site (contributing), including grave markers, monuments, grave tending goods, tiles, curbing, interior fencing, driveways and roadways (current and past), parking space, ornamental plants and trees, and the overall landscape, contribute to the district's historical significance.[11] A small number of features —the Olivewood Cemetery sign, Official State of Texas Historic marker, and perimeter fence— post-date the period of significance. A historic brick and concrete cistern or well (contributing) is located near the southeast corner of the cemetery (**Map 4, Photo 40**). A small, temporary shed (non-contributing) located about 100 feet north of the entrance is used for storing tools and maintenance equipment. The Shed post-dates the period of significance (**Map 4**).

Table 1: Olivewood Cemetery Inventory

Name	Resource Type	C / NC
Cemetery Site	Site	C
Cistern	Structure	C
Shed	Building	NC

[7] Petition, J.P. Markham, Jr. representing Olivewood Cemetery Association vs. Schumacher Company, No.E 351, 068.
[8] Tanya Mitra and John C. Lohse. Olivewood Cemetery Drainage and Restoration Planning. Terracon, 2022, 1
[9] Joe Holley. "Group determined to bring city's oldest Black cemetery back to life," Houston Chronicle, May 31, 2021, 3
[10] National Environmental Title Research (NETR), https://historicaerials.com/viewer, accessed July 28, 2025
[11] Based on the 2023 topographic map associated with Mitra and Lohse 2022, there are approximately 690 markers and 487 trees represented at Olivewood. Other features, including curbing, fences, and walls, were not counted individually. The Descendants of Olivewood have records for more than 4,000 burials, suggesting additional markers could be present. Some markers have been located under the soil, indicating that markers and curbing may have been buried by previous flood events. .

Grave Markers, Monuments, and Iconography at Olivewood

Grave markers within Olivewood represent a wide range of styles and include both homemade and professionally produced markers. Homemade markers generally consist of poured or molded concrete with handwritten or molded inscriptions. Some concrete markers have tile embedded within them, spelling out a name or initials, sometimes with one or more letters placed upside down or backward. Another type of homemade marker present at Olivewood are metal pipes set vertically into the ground. This type of marker has roots in enslavement. Professionally produced markers include granite, limestone, marble, and concrete markers that have variously been sculpted, inscribed, molded, or cast. Concrete curbing is common for plots and sometimes individual graves. Some curbing also has tile embedded within the concrete to show the names of the plot owners. Tiles are white with either blue or black tiles used to form the letters. Some of the letters contain the actual letters in script or print, but many others were designed and installed to form letters (**Photos 9 and 10**).

Decorative themes include a variety of floral motifs represented on several markers. Leaves are one of the most common designs that can be observed on many of the commercially produced markers. This theme reflects the cemetery's overall parklike setting. Ornamental plantings were evident in many of the plots, and a wide variety of trees including some non-native species, are present throughout the cemetery. The effect is an emphasis on nature within a maintained setting; a characteristic of cemeteries tied to the Rural Cemetery Movement in the late nineteenth century. In addition, the emphasis on nature may represent a population who relied more on the natural world to provide for their needs, both physical and spiritual.

Table 2. Examples of Notable Contributing Features at Olivewood Cemetery

Feature	Photo Numbers
Elliptical drive	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Floral motif markers	26, 27
Formal or stylistic markers	13, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 37, 39, 45
Fraternal organization markers	11, 12, 30
Grave tending	14, 15, 16, 17, 26
Homemade markers	6,17, 18, 19, 25, 34, 35, 40
Planters	8, 16
Sculpture	21, 23, 24, 28, 29, 37, 38
Markers or curbing with tile	4, 5, 15, 16, 20
Marker with niche	22

Among the cemetery's more notable features are those of distinctive design elements, representative of a certain type of marker or monument, or historic association (**Table 2**). Both Masonic and Oddfellows grave markers are present within Olivewood, indicating that people within the community were members of fraternal organizations (**Photos 11 and 12**). One of the most notable Masonic markers is reminiscent of Woodmen of the World markers and is present in the southern portion of the cemetery. The marker, erected for Charles Ferguson (d.1906), is easily recognizable within the cemetery. Other organizations represented include the Knights of Pythias and a marker

inscribed "I.H.S." suggesting a sororal society is being referenced.[12] Most markers are associated with men, though several women interred in Olivewood were members of sororal organizations.

Professionally produced markers include those with Egyptian Revival, Classical Revival, and Art Deco influences, most of which are located in the southern portion of the cemetery. Notable examples of Egyptian Revival influenced markers include a monument for Albert Osborne (d.1879), who was the son of one of the signatories of Olivewood's charter. Another notable Egyptian Revival influenced marker commemorates Frank Vance (d.1910) and his wife Sarah (d.1942) along the elliptical drive. A marker with Classical Revival influence is also within the southern portion of the cemetery, toward the western edge. It marks the final resting place of Lula Wren (d.1912). An Art Deco influenced marker is present close to the southern gate. This monument marks the burial site for Dr. Wade Hampton Logan (d.1922).

Other design elements observed at Olivewood include those that evoke the Kongo cosmogram frequently referenced in African American archaeology. According to archaeologist David E. Bruner, the elliptical drive in the southern portion of Olivewood was bisected by an east-west entrance road, which has a similar arrangement to a Kongo cosmogram (discussed in Section 8). This cosmogram presents visually as a diagram with four cardinal points (often a cross) sometimes connected by a diamond or circle shape.[13]

Grave Tending at Olivewood

Though not part of the landscape design, there are many grave tending goods present at Olivewood. These include tiles, shells, a plate, and in one case, a knife (**Photos 14-17**). Grave tending items are material items which the living place on the ground surface of the grave or around the grave after burial and are sometimes referred to as grave offerings. Grave tending items may be items like artificial or fresh flowers, but also include items such as cutlery, flowerpots, dishes, and bottles. Offerings may be the last things used by the deceased before they passed and many times the objects are deliberately broken before being placed on the grave so that the dead cannot use the items as an anchor to the living world. Some people may believe these items contain traces of the deceased's essence and may serve to help keep the soul contained within the grave. Trees planted near or on the grave are often an example of grave tending since in some areas, trees are believed to be representations of how the soul fares in the afterlife. These views are most often associated with elements of Kongo beliefs that may have been carried from west Africa and then transformed into elements of African American culture.[14]

Ornamental Plantings

While many of Olivewood's ornamental plants have been mowed, only bloom in certain seasons, or are not visible due to overgrowth from recent rains, the variety of trees present within Olivewood is noticeable. Many trees have been lost due to storms and flooding, but among those that remain, there is an unusually wide variety of both native and non-native species. These different types of trees may have been chosen for aesthetics, a characteristic of cemeteries associated with the Rural Cemetery Movement.[15] In addition, the variety of trees present at Olivewood also points to a more practical use as a source of botanical medicines among African American communities. (discussed in Section 8). **Table 3** shows the trees present within Olivewood and their medicinal uses.

[12] David E. Bruner, Symbols for the Living: Synthesis, Invention, and Resistance in 19th to 20th Century Mortuary Practices From Montgomery and Harris County, Texas. (PhD Dissertation, SUNY Binghamton, 2007), 172
[13] Bruner, "Symbols for the Living,", 212-216
[14] Thompson, "Flash of the Spirit", 132-142
[15] Tanya Mitra and John C. Lohse. Olivewood Cemetery Drainage and Restoration Planning. Terracon, 2022

Table 3. Trees Documented at Olivewood and Medicinal uses[16]

Tree Type	Latin Name	Medicinal Uses*[17]
Ash	*Fraxinus berlandieriana, Fraxinus pennsylvanica, Fraxinus texensis, Zanthoxylum clava-herculis, Fraxinus americana*	* Laxative, diuretic, emetic, tonic after childbirth, fevers, lice, snakebite, sores, aphrodisiac, appetite stimulant
Birch	*Betula nigra*	*Diuretic, emetic, cathartic, blood purifier, for lactation, dysentery, colds, diarrhea, pneumonia, fever
Cottonwood	*Populus deltoides*	*Whooping cough, hip pain, infusions, colds, venereal disease, sunburn, tuberculosis, antiseptic, ringworm, post childbirth, bruises, boils, sores, aches, snakebites, sores
Elm	*Ulmus americana, Ulmus crassfolia, Ulmus alata, Ulmus rubra, Ulmus parvifolia*	(Red elm or slippery elm) – sore throat, constipation, ointment, indigestion, splinters
Hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis, Celtis laevigata*	Kidneys
Holly	*Ilex opaca, Ilex decidua, Ilex vomitoria*	Reference to holly tea for illness; also known as butchers broom.
Mulberry	*Morus rubra*	White Mulberry – diabetes, colds, flu, coughs, toothaches, snakebites, rheumatism, high blood pressure, headaches Red Mulberry – ringworm, fungal conditions, urinary aid, laxative, fever reducer, treat worms, cough, low energy, gout Black Mulberry – worms, expectorant, laxative, sore throat, kidney, liver, and blood functions (these last are for all three)
Oak	*Quercus michauxii, Quercus marilandica, Quercus laceyi, Quercus incana, Quercus buckleyi, Quercus macrocarpa, Quercus pagoda, Quercus muehlenbergii, Quercus gravesii, Quercus emoryi, Quercus grisea, Quercus virginiana, Quercus*	Oak bark used to treat swelling, inflammation, tooth decay, gum disease, ulcers, spleen/gallbladder, kidney stones, infections, cuts, burns, bites.

[16] Tree types are from Mitra and Lohse 2022 and Charles Cook, personal communication September 18, 2024. Medicinal uses are from Michele E. Lee, *Working the Roots: Over 400 Years of Traditional African American Healing*, 2017, and Herbert C. Covery, *African & American Slave Medicine: Herbal & Non-herbal Treatments*, Lanham 2007

[17] For entries marked with an *, the information comes from the Native American Ethnobotany Database, http://naeb.brit.org/uses/search/?string=birch. While we recognize that Native American uses for these plants may have been specific to their tribes, and that African Americans may not have used these resources the same way or at all, including the information does provide a better understanding of how these resources may have been used.

Tree Type	Latin Name	Medicinal Uses*[17]
	polymorpha, Quercus texana, Quercus lyrata, Quercus nigra, Quercus stellata, Quercus shumardii, Quercus falcata, Quercus alba, Quercus phellos	
Pecan	*Carya illinoinensis*	*Ringworm, Tuberculosis
Sassafras	*Sassafras albidum*	Arthritis, blindness, blood cleanser, clearing sinuses, colic, digestive problems, fever, gallstones, gout, head lice, high blood pressure, liver and kidney problems, malaria, measles, menstrual cramps, pain relief, rheumatism, scrofula, scurvy, treating open wounds, treating venereal disease.
Sycamore	*Platanus occidentalis*	*Dysentery, cathartic during menses, purgative, cough, rash, emetic, expelling afterbirth, measles, urinary support, TB, sore throat, rheumatism, scabs, eczema, ulcers
Tallow	*Triadica sebifera*	*Aches, sore gums

Integrity

Formally designed and platted in 1877, Olivewood Cemetery retains historic integrity of location, design, materials, association, and feeling. Although the setting around the cemetery has changed from rural to highly urban from the late nineteenth through twentieth centuries, cemetery boundaries have remained consistent with minor changes throughout the period of significance, indicating integrity of location. Grave markers, trees, plot locations, and the elliptical driveway reflect the design shown on the plat, demonstrating integrity of design. Original marker materials, including marble, granite, concrete, and ceramic tile can be observed throughout the cemetery with few examples of repair. Trees and grave tending items reflect their original forms and materials as well, all of which show integrity of materials. Markers, grave tending goods, and landscape illustrate both the influence of the Rural Cemetery Movement and African influenced belief systems, providing integrity of association and feeling.

Statement of Significance

Olivewood Cemetery is an excellent and rare example of an African American community cemetery with African American burial traditions and design elements that was founded in association with the Rural Cemetery Movement in the United States. Established in the early nineteenth century, the cemetery represents a wide range of community members, including leaders in education, the church, and local businesses. The community planned the cemetery during Reconstruction as a gathering place, with members of local churches, schools, and fraternal organizations working together to establish the cemetery association, purchase the cemetery land, and design the cemetery landscape. At a time when the only cemeteries available to African Americans were segregated city cemeteries, leaders in the African American community sought to establish a private space where they could interact with one another and honor their ancestors according to their own cultural traditions.

Olivewood has a formally designed landscape influenced by the Rural Cemetery Movement, with an elliptical drive that provides access to the cemetery, a parklike setting with a wide variety of planted trees, and a view of nearby White Oak Bayou. At the same time, it contains grave decoration and grave tending goods specifically associated with African American culture and African-influenced belief systems. Olivewood thus represents the coexistence of African-influenced belief systems and Christianity within a formal parklike aesthetic. The presence of stylized and homemade markers reflects the range of people buried in Olivewood, from prominent businessmen to laborers and laundresses who may have been economically less secure but proudly exercised their civil rights. Many of those interred in Olivewood had ties to state and national organizations, politics, and people; several people buried in Olivewood had connections to well-known African American intellectual Booker T. Washington and President Woodrow Wilson. Olivewood is Houston's first private African American cemetery and stands out for its integrity of location, design, materials, association, and feeling throughout the 1875-1961 period of significance. The Olivewood Cemetery is nominated for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for Ethnic Heritage: Black and Community Planning and Development, and under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture at the State Level of Significance. It meets Criteria Consideration D for cemeteries because its primary significance is derived from burials of Houston's early African American leaders and the unique merging of Rural Cemetery Movement landscape design and African-derived symbolism and burial practice.

Although Olivewood Cemetery was established during Reconstruction, an African American community was present in Houston prior to the Civil War. This community included enslaved people and free people of color who had varying degrees of interaction with one another. Members of this community shifted in and out of one another's lives as enslavers moved in and out of the city and chose to retain or sell those working for them. These experiences directly influenced the African American community's decision to create Olivewood as a private gathering place where people could reunite after being separated during enslavement.

Criterion A (Community Planning and Development)
Enslavement in Mexican Texas (1821–1836)

Houston was not incorporated until 1837 once Texas gained independence from Mexico. Enslavement was prohibited under Mexican law, though European Americans coming from the southeast still found a loophole. Rather than importing enslaved people, they made their enslaved people sign lifetime bonds of indenture before relocating to Mexico, effectively forcing illiterate individuals to consent to their own enslavement. The Mexican government disapproved this practice, but recognized Mexico's hold over the area was tenuous, given United

States' interest in acquiring Texas as a state.[18] Ultimately, Mexico passed a law in 1832 that limited indentures to 10 years, which nullified many existing contracts and prohibited new ones.[19]

Free Black people were allowed to own land and were considered citizens, making Mexico even more desirable for people of color.[20] Freedmen were granted admission to Mexico through emigration from the United States provided they had their free papers, and some enslaved people were able to escape to the area from the United States to reach freedom.[21] White enslavers often tracked these enslaved people to Mexico and demanded the government return them to slavery; the Mexican government spent a lot of time deliberating the issue and ultimately left it to local authorities.[22] While it was difficult to obtain freedom, there were provisions under the law that allowed for manumission and for enslaved individuals to purchase their own freedom.[23] While still not equal, freedmen living in Mexico did have more opportunities available to them than in the United States.

Enslavement in the Republic of Texas through the Civil War (1836–1865)

After the Texas Revolution, Black people living in Texas found themselves living in a country where enslavement was now legal. The Republic of Texas passed an 1837 law with several direct provisions addressing slavery that tightened restrictions on both enslaved people and free people of color, making it increasingly difficult for people of color to attain and maintain free status. Enslavers were no longer allowed to free their enslaved people without permission from Congress, and Congress itself was also prohibited from emancipating people. In the event that a person did win their freedom or was already free, the new Republic prohibited them becoming permanent Texas residents, codifying that "Africans, African-Americans, and Native Americans" were not citizens. In addition, the law stated that emigration of free Black people from anywhere outside Texas was illegal.[24]

The Republic of Texas prohibited the international slave trade as well, though it is well documented that illegal importation from the United States and elsewhere was occurring with some regularity. In Galveston, James Bowie worked with Jean Lafitte to import people in a flourishing trade, while brothers Monroe and Amos Edwards coordinated importations through the Brazos River and Galveston Bay, respectively. The Montgomery County trade ran through Benjamin Fort Smith, who had slave auction houses in Montgomery County and Harris County.[25] Heading into statehood, the Republic already had many provisions in place that rolled over into the new state constitution. The Texas Constitution of 1845 specified that enslaved people could be brought from elsewhere if they already had enslaved status.[26] Many Black people who had lived in Mexican Texas had to contend with a complete change in their legal status and access to freedom.

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[18] Alice L. Baumgartner, *South to Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to the Civil War*. (New York 2020), 62-63.
[19] Baumgartner, "*South to Freedom,"* 91
[20] Douglas Hales, "Free Blacks," *Handbook of Texas Online*, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/free-blacks, accessed July 11, 2025.
[21] Baumgartner notes that many escapees were caught and presented a difficult decision for the Mexican government. In returning enslaved people to their enslavers, they would be supporting slavery. However, facing off with the United States would give the latter an excuse to invade and seize land.
[22] Baumgartner, "South to Freedom," 85-87.
[23] James L. Glass, *Africans and African Americans in Harris and Contiguous Counties 1807-1859: A Preliminary Survey of Ten Counties in Southeast Texas Providing an Alphabetical Index of 589 Individuals Noted in 33 Sources*. (Kelvin Group Design Office, Houston, 1995), 2.
[24] Glass, "African and African Americans in Harris and Contiguous Counties 1807-1859", iii.
[25] Glass, "African and African Americans in Harris and Contiguous Counties 1807-1859", iv.
[26] Constitution of Texas (1845), Article VIII: Slaves. Tarleton Law Library and Jamail Center for Legal Research. Available at https://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/constitutions/texas-1845-en/article-8-slaves, accessed 7/9/2025.

By the time Texas joined the United States in 1845, approximately 30,000 enslaved people lived in Texas. This number continued to increase as more enslavers moved to the new state. Enslaved people did not have a legal path to freedom under the new state government and were minimally protected as property under the law. Enslavement primarily occurred in East Texas, with variation in the scope and size of the associated agricultural enterprises. Large plantations like those in many of the southern states flourished in the counties around Houston where the river floodplains provided optimal soil conditions for cash crops.[27]

While the Republic sought to remove free Black people in Texas through passing laws prohibiting them from living in the country, the new state understood there was still a free Black population living in Texas and passed other laws that attempted to force them out of free status. This included doling out severe punishments for infractions (e.g. whipping, forced labor on public projects) and a law that paved the way for free people to reenter slavery by choosing their enslaver.[28] Overall, the United States' annexation of Texas only cemented the repressive practices against enslaved people and free people of color.

African Americans in Antebellum Houston

Despite the restrictive laws that had been passed by the Republic and later, the state of Texas, local communities did not necessarily follow or enforce the laws. As communities acknowledged interdependent relationships between people of different classes and colors, enslaved and free people found ways to establish some control over their own lives. This was often more visible in urban areas, and Houston provides a good example of how African Americans began not only to establish vital relationships within their local cities, but also to lay the groundwork for establishing their post-emancipation communities.

Enslaved People

By 1850, 517 enslaved people were living in Houston, along with 1,861 other residents. These numbers reflected Texas' booming population, which tripled between 1850 and 1860. During the 1850s, more than 250,000 enslaved people were moved west of the Mississippi.[29] While many of these enslaved individuals were brought to support attempts at large-scale, cash crop agriculture, other enslaved people accompanied enslavers who arrived in urban areas including Houston. In urban areas, enslaved people typically worked as domestic help for the enslaver's family or were hired out to work for others for manual labor or menial tasks.[30] Sometimes enslavers contracted directly with those hiring their enslaved, but it was also common to allow enslaved people to hire themselves out and find their own quarters, affording them a small degree of choice and control.[31]

Enslaved people living in urban areas would have had much more contact with free Black and White people than those enslaved people in rural areas, allowing them to form relationships and establish community. Of course, activities of enslaved people were regulated in urban areas, and they were prohibited from having weapons,

[27] Randolph B. "Mike" Campbell, "Slavery." (2023) Handbook of Texas online. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/slavery, accessed 07.30.2025.
[28] Hales. "Free Blacks," accessed 07.30.2025.
[29] Mary Susan Jackson, *The People of Houston in the 1850s*, (PhD Dissertation, Indiana University, 1974), p.45; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African American Slaves*. (Belknap Press, Cambridge, 2004), 169.
[30] Paul Lack, "Slavery, Urban," Handbook of Texas Online, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/slavery-urban accessed July 12, 2025.
[31] Robert S. Shelton, "On Empire's Shore: Free and Unfree Workers in Galveston, Texas, 1840-1860," *Journal of Social History*, Vol.40, No.3, 717.

gambling, or gathering in groups of more than four if all four people were associated with different enslavers. Enslaved people in Houston had an 8pm to 9pm curfew as well, and needed passes to be out on the streets.[32] However, there were exceptions (such as church), and reports suggest these rules were not always strictly enforced. Travelers to Houston often made observations about the large number of "upscale" "Blacks" in and around the city, implying that there was more freedom among people of color in Houston.[33] In addition, an 1857 *Houston Tri Weekly Telegraph* article claimed that no one enforced the curfew for enslaved people, and that in some places, African Americans lived their lives almost completely unsupervised.[34] Although this claim may have been an exaggeration, urban slavery in Houston appears to have afforded enslaved individuals some degree of control not typically provided to enslaved people living and working in more rural areas.

It is likely that economics were a significant factor in White owners hiring out enslaved individuals. Jones writes that enslaved people were rented out for $200–$300 per year in 1850 but would sell for $2000. This allowed lower or middle class White people to take advantage of enslaved labor without the substantial capital outlay and for enslavers to bring in more cash than they would typically pay to invest in acquiring additional enslaved people.[35] It was not just individuals who took advantage of this system; the city of Galveston contracted directly with a slave auctioneer to have enslaved people fill in low spots throughout the city. The enslaver received $1.25 per enslaved person per day and $1.50 per White person per day; making substantial profit off the enslaved people who did not have to be paid as the Whites laborers did.[36]

Unintentionally, this hiring practice allowed enslaved individuals to have close and frequent contact with lower class White people, which created a variety of relationships between the two groups. In Houston, the Houston Mechanics Association actively tried to undercut the use of enslaved labor to protect White positions.[37] In Galveston, ordinances were passed to try to reinforce the color boundary. However, enslaved men and White laborers (often immigrants) worked side-by-side at jobs that included construction work, rolling cotton for the presses, domestic labor, laundry services, cleaning and janitorial jobs, and working at Galveston's docks. These daily interactions spilled over into social interactions at dances, beaches, saloons, and other settings that facilitated shared interactions.[38]

Free People of Color

In 1840, the Republic passed a law that attempted to prohibit the existence of free Black people in Texas. The law imposed penalties for free people of color trying to enter the state and for free Black people who had not left the Republic by 1842. The penalty was a $1,000 fine, that if it could not be paid, resulted in the person being sold into slavery for a year. If at the end of that year, the formerly free person could not come up with the bond, they would

[32] Howard James Jones, *The Red Diary: A Chronological History of Black Americans in Houston and Some Neighboring Harris County Communities – 122 Years Later*. (Nortex Press, 1991), 5,8,18.
[33] Mary Louise Passey, *Freedmantown: The evolution of a black neighborhood in Houston, 1865-1880*. (Master's Thesis, Rice University, 1993), 20.
[34] Jackson, "The People of Houston in the 1850s", 117.
[35] Jones, "The Red Diary," 17.
[36] Shelton, "On Empire's Shore," 20. The article does not clarify how the auctioneer had access to White labor. He may have served as a general contractor for day labor or possibly he had access to indentured or imprisoned Whites that could be hired out. Regardless, this is not meant to suggest that Whites were treated as enslaved people or experienced the same oppression and trauma as enslaved Blacks.
[37] Jackson, "The People of Houston in the 1850s," 118
[38] Shelton, "On Empire's Shore."

be sold into slavery for the remainder of their life.[39] The City of Houston reinforced this law by passing ordinances to empower law enforcement to arrest free Black people for living in the city.[40]

Despite these legislative attempts to intimidate free Black people into leaving the area, free people of color continued to live in the state. In Houston, many of these individuals gained the support of the White community. In part, this was due to the labor needs in the growing city, but it was also due to free people developing relationships with White resident and contributing to the larger community.[41] For example, Henry Tucker opened a barbershop in 1842, the same year that served as the deadline for free Black people to leave the Republic.[42] Tucker had petitioned the Congress to remain in the country, with the support of 34 White citizens. A few years later, Tucker petitioned Congress again, this time with 39 White residents supporting him. The latter petition explicitly stated that the White people supporting Tucker were not in favor of free Black people coming into the country but that they supported Tucker's continued residence. Congress never acted on these petitions, nor for any other free Black person's petitions they received from Harris County. Whether these petitions were a preemptive measure to gain approval before the law was passed or to provide a measure of protection despite the laws and ordinances, Black people in Houston had established a place within the larger community.[43]

Filed petitions and court records indicate that there were free Black people living in Houston who not only had support from the local White community, but who were also able to carve out their own livelihoods. For example, Fanny McFarland, who had petitioned the legislature with the support of 77 White residents, including the mayor, made a living from real estate transfers, making her one of the earliest Black real estate brokers. Zylpha Husk, who petitioned with 61 White people supporting her in 1840 and with a different 49 White supporters again in 1841, worked as a washer woman to support herself and her teenage daughter.[44] While not an entrepreneur like Tucker or McFarland, Husk was able to provide for her family and to network enough to establish her positive reputation within the community.

Court records also indicate that no free Black people were convicted for illegally residing in the Republic, and that the courts afforded due process to free people of color in Houston. Three free women of color sued White men to maintain their free status and judges found in favor of all three, not mentioning the statute requiring them to leave Texas or asking for any documentation from Congress proving their free status. Other records suggest that there were consensual intimate relationships between White men and Black women (which would have been illegal), in which the free Black women inherited or received property from the men and were awarded property rights.[45]

By 1850, only seven free Black people were reported to live in Harris County (three of whom were children), though Marks notes that numerous other sources cite the presence of free Black people in Houston in and around this time.[46] The 1860 census shows only eight free people of color, none of whom had been accounted for in the 1850 census. Fannie McFarland was one of those individuals, and worked as a domestic servant at that time.[47]

Reconstruction Era Houston and Emergence of a New Community (1865–1877)

[39] Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, Vol.2 (1898): 325-326.
[40] John Garrison Marks. "Community Bonds in the Bayou City: Free Blacks and Local Reputation in Early Houston," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol.117, No.3 (2014), 271
[41] Marks, "Community Bonds in the Bayou City"
[42] Jones, "The Red Diary," 11.
[43] Marks, "Community Bonds in the Bayou City," 275-276.
[44] Marks, "Community Bonds in the Bayou City," 275; Jones, "The Red Diary"
[45] Marks, "Community Bonds in the Bayou City," 277-281
[46] 1850 Harris County Census
[47] Marks, "Community Bonds in the Bayou City," 274.

After the Civil War, free African Americans flocked to Houston. Following emancipation, many African Americans placed newspaper ads looking for family and friends, hoping to establish their new lives together in Houston.[48] Houston provided opportunities for non-agricultural labor, as well as opportunities to obtain land. Houston also had a higher standard of living for free people of color than in more rural areas of Texas.[49] Newly free African Americans congregated in Houston's third and fourth wards (**Figure 4**), possibly due to these areas having more available land; much of the land newly free Black people purchased was on the outskirts of these areas.[50] It is likely that these areas had less desirable land and that they were the areas in which White landowners were willing to sell to Black individuals.

The fourth ward eventually became known as Freedmen's Town, but the 1870 census indicates that initially it was more mixed with White and Black residents. It lacked amenities such as streetcars and other public support services, making it a less attractive area to wealthier residents.[51] A Black Methodist church had been established in conjunction with a White Methodist church in the fourth ward in the 1850s, providing new arrivals with a meeting place. Shortly after the Civil War, two more Black churches, the Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church and Antioch Baptist Church, were established in the fourth ward, providing more support for the emerging neighborhood. While many of Houston's Black professionals lived in the fourth ward throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Black Houstonians also lived elsewhere throughout the city and worked together regardless of residence to establish a Black community.[52]

The Development of Olivewood Cemetery

Although many African Americans lived in Freedmen's Town, there were also many people who lived in other wards. Olivewood Cemetery was established in 1875 at the outer edge of where the first and sixth ward lines meet (the sixth ward is located between the first and fourth wards) outside the Houston city limits. This location meant that most of Houston's African American community did not live close to Olivewood. At the time Olivewood was established, cemeteries that were available to the African American population were White cemeteries with segregated burial sections for Blacks. No private cemeteries existed in the city for the Black population.

In 1874, several members of Houston's African American community formed a cemetery association with the intent of establishing a private cemetery. They filed a charter with the state for the group, called the "Olive Wood Cemetery Association," to outline the group's duties and responsibilities. At the time of the group's establishment, they did not have a parcel of land where the cemetery would be situated, so one of the Association's tasks was to locate land where "enclosures, improvements, and adornments, avenues &c." would be situated. The Association itself was to consist of seven members that would be elected from its stockholders at annual meetings. Shares were priced at $15 each. The charter was to be in place for 20 years unless dissolved before that date.[53]

Signatories to the charter agreement included E.P. Turner, Edward Williams, George Hooper, and David Orsborn (sic).[54] It appears that E.P. Turner, a White lawyer, served as a witness. The 1870 Harris County Census shows that

[48] Classified ad, *Southwestern Christian Advocate*, (New Orleans, LA) October 4, 1877.
[49] Passey, "Freedmantown," 28, 49.
[50] Passey, "Freedmantown," 58
[51] Passey, "Freedmantown," 62
[52] Wintz, Cary D. "The Fourth Ward: A Historic African-American Community in Houston," *Handbook of Texas Online*. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/fourth-ward-houston, accessed 07.30.2025
[53] "Olive Wood Cemetery Association Charter," Harris County Deed Records Vol.15:251-252.
[54] "Olive Wood Cemetery Association Charter,"

Edmund Turner (34) was living with his wife Lucy (22) in his father-in-law's household in Houston's third ward.[55] Edmund, a lawyer, had served in the Confederate Army, which seems incongruous with assisting the African American community.[56] However, as a witness he was not involved in the transaction other than as a legal formality.

The signatories to this charter were local businessmen living with their families. Edward Williams was a carpenter, George Hooper was a barber, and David Osborne was a blacksmith.[57] The 1870 census shows that Williams (41) lived with his wife Sabrina (41), Eliza Wofford (18), Susan Hamilton (88) and Unice (sic) Williams (1). Eliza worked as a domestic servant, which either suggests she boarded with the Williams family or that the family had enough income to pay her as their own household help (the 1870 Harris County Census does not provide information about relationships). Susan was Edward's mother-in-law.

By 1880, records indicate that the Williams family was likely receiving additional income by taking in boarders. In the 1880 Harris County Census, the household included Edward (48), Sabrina (48), Minnie (11), Susan Hamilton, and three boarders: Ed Burton (20), Joe Johnson (29) and Boston Jones (48). The boarders all worked as laborers.[58] Their presence in the household indicates that the Williams family was earning extra money that may have helped them buy shares in Olivewood or make other purchases. Susan died in 1880 and Edward died in 1882. Both were buried in plot 166 at Olivewood.[59]

David Osborne was a Houston resident who lived in the third ward. In 1870, Osborne (42) was living as a blacksmith with his wife Elizabeth (41), sons Benjamin (23) and Albert (13), as well as Daniel Easter (23) and Emma Easter (23). Benjamin and Daniel were listed as being blacksmiths, while Elizabeth and Emma worked as domestic servants.[60] This arrangement suggests that the Easters may have been boarders who provided the Osbornes with extra income. By 1880, the household had shrunk to include David (51), Elizabeth (50) and their daughter Katie (17). David continued to work as a blacksmith, but Elizabeth and Katie were housekeeping, suggesting that they were not working outside the home and that the family was financially stable enough to only have one person as the primary wage-earner.[61] Albert died in 1879 and was buried in Olivewood. Elizabeth died in 1886, and David also buried her in Olivewood.[62] Researchers did not find a burial record for David, though he is likely also interred in Olivewood.

George Hooper could not be found in the 1870 Harris County Census but had appeared as a resident of Houston by 1880. Hooper (38) was a barber living with his wife Louise (35), children Rosa (11) and Florance (sic) (10), as well as his mother-in-law Pheby Wilson (58).[63] George appears to have passed away prior to 1900, as the census shows Louise as the head of the household living with her sister Eugenia Ward (44), niece Louise (14), nephews Frederick S (14) and Lawrence B (11), and Pheby (79). Louise owned the property where they were living, suggesting the family was financially stable.[64] Historians did not find a record of interment for George Hooper, though Eugenia Ward is buried at Olivewood in plot 267.[65] It is likely that Hooper was buried in Olivewood.

[55] Harris County Census Records, 1870, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[56] "Death of Captain E.P. Turner," *Virginia Gazette*, 08.10.1907
[57] Harris County Census Records 1870 and 1880, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[58] Harris County Census Records 1880, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[59] "Cemetery Records," Descendents of Olivewood. http://www.descendantsofolivewood.org Accessed 7/3/2025.
[60] Harris County Census Records 1870, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[61] Harris County Census Records 1880, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[62] Descendants of Olivewood, "Cemetery Records," http://www.descendantsofolivewood.org accessed 7/3/2025
[63] Harris County Census Records 1880. Available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[64] Harris County Census Records 1900, available online at http://www.ancestry.com
[65] Descendants of Olivewood., "Cemetery Records,"accessed 7/3/2025.

The charter had been in place for about a year and a half before the cemetery association found a tract of land to acquire. The land was situated west of the city limits, in an area that had not yet been developed. An 1890 city map shows the property well outside the city boundary and southwest of the county poor farm (**Figure 5**), with no information to identify the area as a cemetery and no development visible around the property. It was situated in what would become Houston's sixth ward.

In 1875, the Olivewood Cemetery was established when Sarah Slocumb, Harrison Slocomb, Elizabeth Morin, and A.C. Morin conveyed a 5.5 acre tract of land to the "Olive Wood Cemetery."[66] Interestingly, the deed only contains signatures of the grantors, so it is unknown who represented the cemetery association for this transaction. However, in 1881, the cemetery association filed a plat for the cemetery that included a list of stockholders that totaled 22 shares. These initial stockholders (**Table 3**) included a variety of citizens, mostly men. Many of these community members likely worked together in a professional capacity, attended the same churches, and/or were members of the same organization. For example, in 1871, Frank Vance, Jerry Smith, and Tom Freeman all served as trustees at the First Methodist Episcopal Church.[67] In 1880, Milton A. Baker was a boarder in Leo James' household.[68] These connections were essential to establishing the Olivewood community.

Table 4. Olivewood Shareholders in 1881

Name	Occupation	Ward Resided	Number of Shares
Frank Vance	Investor/Ice Cream Manufacturer	3	2
Ed Williams	Carpenter	4	2
Jerry Smith	Woodchopper/Preacher	Not given; lived in Smokeville Settlement then east of Precinct 8	2
Dave Osborne	Blacksmith	3	2
Milton A. Baker	Street Broker/Real Estate Agent	3	2
Elias Dibel (sic)	Preacher/Carpenter	1	1
Matilda Dickerson	Wash and Iron	Not given/Lived in Justice Precinct 1	1 (she also had a house full of boarders including her daughter and son in law. Frank and Julia Mimms)
Abe Russell	Whitewasher	3	1
Aaron Jefferson	Gardener	4	1
L.L. James	Laborer	Not provided	1 (he is mulatto; had both mulatto and White

[66] Harris County Deed Records Vol.15:250-251; The Harris County 1870 Census indicates that Sarah Slocomb, Alexander C. Morin, and Elizabeth Morin were all White. Find-A-Grave for Sarah Choate Slocumb (sic) indicates she was Elizabeth Morin's mother, but had divorced Joseph Martin (Elizabeth's father), and remarried to John R. Slocomb. Harrison Slocomb did not appear in the 1870 Harris County Census, but did appear as the child of John and Sarah Slocomb in the 1850 Bastrop County Census Record. All were recorded as White. Sarah is buried at Glenwood Cemetery in Houston.
[67] Harris County Deed Records Vol.9B, 592
[68] Harris County Census Records 1880. Available online at http://www.ancestry.com

Name	Occupation	Ward Resided	Number of Shares
			boarders, including Milton Baker in 1880)
Jim Kyle	Blacksmith	In an area with unnamed streets between San Felipe and the bayou (Buffalo)	1
Joe Sanders	Works with Blacksmith	4	1
Tom Freeman	Drayman	4	1
Dave Righton	Schoolteacher	3	1
Henry Franklin	Porter at Dry Goods Store	3	1
Monroe Butter (sic)	Carpenter	Not provided	1

While it is unknown exactly why this tract of land was selected, there is some indication that burials may have already existed on part of the property. At least one headstone marks two burials that predate the cemetery's establishment with recorded interment dates of 1869 and 1871 for Jane Righton and Major Righton respectively (**Photo 18**). In addition, at least two sources reference Olivewood's possible proximity to an antebellum burial site, possibly for enslaved people.[69] Other factors that likely influenced the decision were finding a seller willing to sell land to African Americans, affordability, setting and proximity to water, and the desire to have a place that could be developed into a beautiful site where families could reunite after emancipation.[70] The proximity of Glenwood, a private White cemetery established shortly before Olivewood and created as a parklike cemetery, also may have inspired the community to establish Olivewood nearby.

Olivewood's acreage remained constant through the turn of the twentieth century. A 1900 plat map shows that the cemetery was a few blocks northwest of Cheney Junction and Industrial Oil Mills, an indication of Houston's development to the west (**Figure 6**). The cemetery expanded in 1917 when J.O. Ross and W.J. Moore conveyed Lots 6 through 27 from the J.H. Bisbee addition and Lots 1 through 11 of Block G, of the Forest Park Annex Addition to the Olivewood Cemetery Company. This expansion added two acres to the cemetery (**Figure 7**).[71] In 1931, the cemetery added additional land. Either Otto Bokemeyer or Joe Hardeman conveyed Lot 2 of the J.R. Bisbee addition to the cemetery association, and Hardeman also conveyed part of a three acre tract in Lot 21 Block 3 of the Hollingsworth survey that year.[72] By 1934, development south of the cemetery had substantially increased (**Figure 8**). In 1946, a business south of the cemetery erected a wall that blocked the only means of ingress and egress to the cemetery, which was on the south side. In response, the Olivewood Cemetery Association negotiated with the city to acquire a small easement on the west (current access) to allow access to the cemetery. This tract measured 50 feet by 55.5 feet.[73] A 1948 petition notes that there have been burials interred throughout the cemetery with the exception of the northernmost 150 feet.[74] In 1958, the cemetery association conveyed a 0.027 acre parcel and a 0.661 acre parcel from the northwestern and northeastern corners of the property to Harris County Flood

[69] Bruner, "Symbols for the Living" 207; Lisa M. Mouton, *Life After Death: How Olivewood's Cemetery Records Resurrect the History of Houston's Black Community*, (Masters Thesis, Sam Houston State University, 2018), 30.
[70] As noted previously, water divides the worlds of the living and the dead in the cosmogram. Proximity to water provides a bridge to the afterlife. Having a specific place where families and friends could look for one another (even if it was through grave markers), and was safe was likely a priority for a displaced community.
[71] Harris County Deed Records, Vol.383, 525.
[72] Harris County Deed Records, Vol.849, 91 and Vol.871, 731
[73] Harris County Deed Records vol.999, 492.
[74] Petition, J.P. Markham, Jr. representing Olivewood Cemetery Association vs. Schumacher Company, No.E 351, 068.

Control District for the realignment of White Oak Bayou.[75] In 1961, Lots 1, 4, and 5 were acquired via tax sale and gifted to Texas Southern University. Lot number 1 had been previously purchased by Olivewood from the city in 1951. Lots 4 and 5 contain burials. The last known burial in Olivewood was in 1961.

Criterion A (Ethnic Heritage: Black)

Building an African American community in Houston involved creating organizations that would provide a framework for action and social networking, especially in a city that was experiencing a large influx of new residents after the Civil War. Most Black Texans understood that their success depended on collaboration with one another rather than reliance solely on government. They accomplished this by relying on three facets of community organization: education, the church, and fraternal organizations. These three institutions are strongly interrelated. Paul Lawrence Dunbar notes that, "[r]ather than the Black church and African American secret, mutual aid, and fraternal organizations embodying separate and distinct means of social protest, these organizations complemented each other and have played interrelated roles in the way the Black community addressed social, political, and economic problems."[76] The school, the church, and the fraternal organization all provided opportunities for people of varying backgrounds (formerly enslaved individuals, free Black people, emerging professionals, blue collar workers) to elevate and begin taking their places as valuable members of society. Many of Olivewood's interred were teachers, school administrators, church leaders, and members of Black fraternal organizations. Olivewood, as a formally designed, planned, and private cemetery, represents a physical manifestation of how the Black community of Houston created a space to claim their position as equal citizens immediately after the Civil War through the twentieth century.

Education

As Houston's African American population increased after the war, many newly free African Americans were eager to begin their formal education, which was one of the core tenets promised with the establishment of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, (or Freedmen's Bureau). The Freedmen's Bureau was established in 1865 to assist with property ownership, voting, education, and physical safety for newly free African Americans.[77] By the middle of 1866, the Bureau was overseeing 90 schools throughout the state that served 4,590 students, over a third of whom were adults.[78] However, the Freedmen's Bureau could not keep pace with community needs and much of the effort to establish schools came from African American communities themselves.

In Houston, free people of color bought more than 50% of all the books sold in the city in 1865, demonstrating their desire for education. Across the state, communities organized their own schools, often with assistance from the Bureau in the form of reimbursements for money raised locally. Communities often found their own teachers as well, and many benevolent societies funded African Americans from the north in traveling to Texas to teach. Churches were also essential to the success of early schools, as they often provided meeting space for classes. By actively organizing, community members ensured the support of the Freedmen's Bureau, who in turn helped reimburse the cost of building rents or at times, teachers' salaries.[79]

[75] Harris County Deed Records, document 15878A.
[76] Paul Lawrence Dunbar. "Hidden in Plain Sight: African American Secret Societies and Black Freemasonry," *Journal of African American Studies*, December 2012, vol. 16(4): 623.
[77] Nancy Cohen-Lack. "A Struggle for Sovereignty: National Consolidation, Emancipation, and Free Labor in Texas, 1865," *The Journal of Southern History*, 58(2, 1992), 83.
[78] Barry A. Crouch, *The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Texas*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
[79] James M. Smallwood, "Early 'Freedom Schools': Black Self-Help and Education in Reconstruction Texas, a Case Study,"

After the Freedmen's Bureau was dissolved by Congress in 1872, the state took over the education system, often discriminating against Black teachers who had traveled from the northern states to teach in Texas. A free school system was established in 1871, but was revoked in the 1876 Constitution, which put the burden back onto communities, often resulting in a tuition charge. However, this did not deter African American communities, who had continued working together with churches and benevolent societies to provide for education. Barnes Institute in Galveston, for example, had been a Bureau-run school that trained teachers and was converted to a private school funded by the American Missionary Society until it closed in 1875. African American communities were not deterred and continued to establish and open schools including Paul Quinn College in Austin in 1875. By 1877, there were 678 Black schools in Texas, and in 1878, this number had increased to 905.[80]

A number of people interred within Olivewood had ties to education, and many educators interred in Olivewood achieved prominence within the Houston community (**Table 4**). Of the 802 women known to be buried in Olivewood, 14, or 3.6 %, were teachers.

Table 5. Individuals Interred in Olivewood with Educational Ties

Name	Dates	Additional Information
Charles H. Atherton	1863–1928	First Principal of Houston Colored High School (now Booker T. Washington High School) and professor and dean at Prairie View A&M.
Margaret Ayers	1894–1919.	Teacher
J. Bandy	Unknown	Teacher
Mamie Beauchamp	1892–1921	Teacher at the Hart School.
Gladys Blackshear	1898–1930	Teacher
Lillie Chester	1904–1934	Teacher
Pink Christie	1860–1911	First grade teacher at the Douglass School.
Buchanan H. Grimes	1860–1938	Hired initially as a janitor, passed teacher's exam in 1894, was principal of Dunbar School. Grimes Elementary named after him.
Olive Hardeway	1896–1923	Teacher
J. Will Jones	1879–1946	J. Will Jones Elementary named after him.
Alice D. Logan	1876–1940	Served as Dean of Women at Wiley College
Mary McCarter	1883–1915	Teacher
Paula Patten	1872–1930	Teacher
Alice Phelps	1897–1923	Teacher
Lillian Reeves	1896–1938	Teacher

Negro History Bulletin, Vol.41(1, 1978):790-793.
[80] Smallwood, "Early 'Freedom Schools,'", 792

Name	Dates	Additional Information
James D. Ryan	1872–1940	Early principal of Houston's Colored High School (now Booker T. Washington High School). First Principal of Jack Yates High School, president of the Colored Teachers State Association. James Ryan Middle School named after him.
Olive Smith	1885–1919	Teacher
Ida Turner	1874–1927	Teacher

Churches

Church provided community support, a meeting place, and were instrumental in supporting community education efforts during Reconstruction. In addition to providing meeting places for worship and education, churches also organized mutual aid societies, such as the Freemen's Aid Society, which was organized by the Trinity Methodist Church.[81] Black residents establishing their own churches allowed them to support other worthwhile endeavors that served their flock and their community.

White enslavers promoted church among the enslaved, thinking that it would provide moral guidance and acceptance of their enslavement on earth with the promise of an afterlife of freedom. For the enslaved, however, church services provided an opportunity to gather as a community that could exchange information and gossip. The White attitude toward free Black people was similarly paternalistic, with the idea that Whites alone could provide moral guidance to people who were regarded as lesser.[82]

Initially, African American access to formalized church services in Houston was via those churches that allowed both enslaved people and White people to attend services (though not at the same time). In 1843, Houston's Methodist congregation reported that it had 32 Black members, though it is unclear whether they were all enslaved or if any free people attended.[83] Slavery was a contentious issue within the national Methodist organization. In 1845, along with other slave holding states, Texas Methodists voted to join the newly organized denomination of the Methodist Episcopal Church withdrawing from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Francis Wilson was appointed to serve as a missionary to the church's African American members, and Houston's African Mission became part of the Black methodist church (renamed the African Methodist Church).[84] They constructed a church building for the mission at the corner of Milam and Texas Streets in the third ward by 1851.

After emancipation, the African Methodist Church served as a school run by Mrs. M.L. Capshaw. Eventually, Reverend David Elias Dibble, one of Olivewood Cemetery's founders, stepped into the leadership role as pastor. Reverend Dibble, who had been certified as a minister in 1864, worked with Richard Brock and other church

[81] Jones, "The Red Diary," 31
[82] See Lawrence S. Little, "The African Methodist Episcopal Church Media and Racial Discourse, 1880-1900," The North Star: A Journal of African American Religious History, Vol.2 (no.1, fall, 1998).
[83] Jones, "The Red Diary," 11; First Methodist Church Houston, "Historic Snapshots of First Methodist: Houston," 2025 https://www.fmhouston.com/about/history/, accessed 7/16/2025.
[84] Spellmann, Norman W. "Methodist Church," *Handbook of Texas Online*, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/methodist-church, accessed July 16, 2025.

members to build a new church in 1865. This church became the Trinity United Methodist Church in Houston.[85] Reverend Dibble had been enslaved prior to the Civil War, and became an important leader in Houston's African American community. In addition to founding Olivewood and Trinity United Methodist Church, he co-founded Emancipation Park in Houston, the Mutual Aid Society, the Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge Free & Accepted Masons of Texas, and Magnolia Lodge No. 3.[86]

Methodists were not the only denomination serving the enslaved community. The Baptist church also held services for enslaved people, and were convinced enslaved people needed White guidance, likely one of the reasons African Americans left the church in droves after emancipation. Texas' first Black Baptist church was founded in Galveston in 1865, and in Houston, the Antioch Baptist Church (NRHP 1976) was organized in 1866.[87] Organizers included John Wheeler, Henry Styles, Edward Smith, Preston Greenhill, Daniel Riley, T.L. Brown, Sandy Parker, Wash Rhodes, Isaac Wiliams, Rhyna Moore, Margaret Jones, and Cynthia Hill. Reverend Parker filled in for the Reverend Israel Campbell, who first organized services under a brush arbor along Buffalo Bayou. In 1866, Reverend John Henry "Jack" Yates took over as full time minister. Yates, a fixture of the fourth ward, established the Houston Baptist Academy to help teach community members academic basics so that they could start their own businesses. The Academy became Houston College, which was itself a forerunner of Texas Southern University.[88] Reverend Sandy Parker, Mr. Isaac Williams, and Ms. Margaret Jones were all buried at Olivewood Cemetery.

Fraternal Societies, Benevolent Societies, and Secret Societies

Fraternal organizations were designed to provide a degree of mutual aid and allowed its members to network and gain political and leadership skills. Many of these organizations specifically provided aid for funerals and burial insurance, but there also was an emphasis on identity and civil rights.[89] Most groups also supported education and some provided scholarships.[90] Black participation in fraternal or mutual aid societies has precursors in Africa, and more recently, dates to the American Revolution.[91]

Historian Anne Butler noted that fraternal organizations were sometimes divided into two categories: secret societies and benevolent societies. There was substantial overlap between the two, as both were oriented to assist their members in building and buttressing community structure and development through financial support and social networks. However, secret societies had secret rituals, were typically gender restricted (males only), and had an infrastructure for uniting local, regional, and national branches of their organizations. Benevolent societies were often locally based, offered mixed gender membership, and were focused on mutual aid at the community level.[92]

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[85] Jones, "The Red Diary," 15-20, 28; Amber Land. "Rev. David Elias Dibble," Emancipation Park Conservancy, https://epconservancy.org/rev-david-elias-dibble/, 2021, accessed July 16, 2025.
[86] Land, "Rev. David Elias Dibble,"; Caleb McDaniel, "Elias Dibble," http://wiki.wcaleb.rice.edu/Elias%20Dibble, accessed February 23, 2026.
[87] John W. Storey, "Baptist Church," *Handbook of Texas Online*, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/baptist-church, accessed July 16, 2025.
[88] Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, "Our History" https://antiochdowntown.com/our-history/, accessed July 16, 2025.
[89] Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "Hidden in Plain Sight," *Journal of African American Studies*, Vol.16 (4, 2012); 622-637.
[90] Theda Skocpol, and Jennifer Lynn Oser, "Organization despite Adversity: The Origins and Development of African American Fraternal Associations," *Social Science History*, 28, (no.3 2004): 423
[91] Betty M. Kyuk, "The African Derivation of Black Fraternal Orders in the United States," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol.25, (no.4, 1983): 577; Joe W. Trotter "African American Fraternal Associations in American History: An Introduction, *Social Science History*, Vol.28, (no.2 2004): 359; Theda Skocpol, Ariane Liazos, and Marshall Ganz. *What a Mighty Power We Can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality*. (Princeton University Press, 2006), 4-35.
[92]Anne Butler. "Black Fraternal and Benevolent Societies in Nineteenth-Century America," *African American Fraternities and*

At Olivewood, grave markers with Masonic and Oddfellows insignia indicate that people using Olivewood were members of organizations that would fall into the secret society category.

The first documented African American participation in an organized American fraternal organization was in 1775, when a free man of color named Prince Hall asked to be apprenticed to the Masons. He and 14 other Black men were admitted to a Boston lodge but were denied a Masonic charter from the state's Grand Lodge. They pivoted to petition the Grand Lodge of England in 1782, eventually breaking with England and forming their own Grand Lodge in 1847. Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois both were members of the Prince Hall Masons.[93]

The Oddfellows and the Masons were the two organizations that allowed free Black people to become members, though these permissions were granted from England rather than in the U.S. In part, this may be because many of these early organizations had antislavery movements attached to them. By late nineteenth century, there were Black versions of Elks, Masons, and Odd Fellows, along with Knights of Pythias. In addition, independent orders like United Brothers of Friendship and Sisters of the Mysterious Ten, Independent Order of St. Luke, and the Grand United Order of the Reformers had been established. Although Whites had allowed the formation of parallel orders, they sued many of their Black counterparts for using similar rituals and names in the period between the 1890s and 1930s; two lawsuits made it to the Supreme Court.[94] This was a victory for the Black organizations, as not only did they win their case, but it also provided an opportunity for Black lawyers to argue the case at a high level.[95] During that time, fraternal organizations had drastically increased in popularity, and by the 1920s, there were 60 nationally visible organizations with 2.2 million members and $20 million of property.[96]

After the Civil War, the number of fraternal organizations increased as newly free Black people sought cooperatives that would work to overcome ongoing slavery and racism. While not everyone could afford monthly dues, with several different organizations available to join, many people could find one that they could afford.[97] In addition, societies offered different benefits; some provided sickness and disability benefits, pensions for families of the deceased, funeral and burial assistance, and even credit unions. There were also variations in how fraternal societies paid out funds.[98] Since insurance companies did not provide Black people with coverage until the mid-1920s, these societies were the way people of color could participate in the economic system with a social safety net.[99]

While early fraternal organizations were restricted to men only, during Reconstruction, the freemasons created auxiliary societies for Black women. In 1875, the freemasons established a chapter of The Order of the Eastern Star

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Sororities: The Legacy and the Vision, edited by Tamara L. Brown, Gregory S. Parks, and Clarenda M. Phillips, 2005, 67

[93] Skocpol, et al. "What a Mighty Power We Can Be," 34-35.

[94] Ancient Egyptian Arabic order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine et al. v. Michaux et al., 279 U.S. 737 (1929); this was actually the second U.S. Supreme Court case in which Black fraternal organizations fought for their rights to continue, the first was Creswill et al. v. Grand Lodge Knights Pythias of Georgia, 133 Ga. 837 (1910), reversed, 225 U.S. 246 (1912); for more information, see Ariane Liazos and Marshall Ganz, "Duty to the Race: African American Fraternal Orders and the Legal Defense of the Right to Organize," Social Science History, Vol.28, (No.3 2004), 485-534; Trotter, "African American Fraternal Associations in American History," and Skocpol et al. "What a Mighty Power We Can Be," 138.

[95] Trotter, "African American Fraternal Associations in American History," 355-356; it should be noted that Black lawyers were critical in legal defense, but that in some cases, such as the 1929 Supreme Court case, a White lawyer was hired to argue before the court.

[96] Skocpol et al., "What a Mighty Power We Can Be," 11-15

[97] Dunbar, "Hidden in Plain Sight," 629

[98] Robert L. Harris Jr., "Early Black Benevolent Societies," *The Massachusetts Review*," Autumn, Vol.20 (3, 1979): 614

[99] Skocpol et al., "Organization despite Adversity," 421

for Black women in Washington, D.C., one of the first sororal societies available to Black women.[100] (White women had already established two sororal organizations by this time, including the Order of the Eastern Star in 1855.) For African American men and women, membership in these fraternal organizations provided important economic and social support. For example, an important component of Prince Hall Freemasonry was the financial ability of members to bury their dead. They were also able to have African-influenced ceremonies and celebrations surrounding burial. In contrast, benevolent societies formed during this time were more typically open to both men and women. Black women were active in getting these mutual aid societies up and running.[101]

People Interred in Olivewood Cemetery

The people interred in Olivewood Cemetery represent a cross-section of Houston's African American community. Educators, preachers, veterans, domestic servants, blacksmiths, businessmen, and laborers are all represented among the people interred at Olivewood. In addition, many burials at Olivewood represent notable individuals who were prominent in the African American community as well as the larger Houston and Texas communities (**Table 6**).

Table 6. Prominent African Americans buried in Olivewood Cemetery

Name	Date of birth/death	Occupation	Noteworthy Information
Richard Allen	ca.1830–1909	Builder	• Co-founder of Gregory Institute and Emancipation Park • House of Representatives in 1871 and 1873 • Nominated for Lieutenant Governor 1878 (First African American for a state-wide office[102]) • U.S. Customs Collector for Port of Houston
Charles H. Atherton	1863–1928	Educator	• Native of Jamaica • First principal of Houston Colored High School (now Booker T. Washington High School) • Professor and Dean at Prairie View A&M University
Milton A. Baker	1838–1905	Real Estate Investor	• Baker and his wife successfully sued the Houston and Central Texas Railway in 1882 under the Civil Rights Act after being denied the purchase of first-class tickets.
J.B. Bell	1858–1917	Grocer; Real Estate Investor; Philanthropist	• Member of Executive Board of National Negro Business League • Worked with Booker T. Washington to persuade Andrew Carnegie to fund a Colored Carnegie Library in Houston (First Black public library west of Mississippi River) • Wealthiest African American in Texas at the time of his death
Richard Brock	1824–1906	Blacksmith	• Houston Alderman in 1870 • Co-founder of Emancipation Park • Co-founder of first African American Masonic Lodge in

[100] The Order of the Eastern Star, like the Masons, were considered a secret society.
[101] Dunbar, "Hidden in Plain Sight," 631-632
[102] Alwyn Barr and Cary D. Wintz. "Richard Allen," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed December 23, 2025. https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/allen-richard

Name	Date of birth/death	Occupation	Noteworthy Information
			Houston • Richard Brock Elementary named after him
Rev. V.M. Cole	1834–1894	Pastor	• Pastor of Trinity Methodist Church, one of the first African American churches in Houston
Ruby Jackson Dale	1896–1934	Housewife	• Suffragist, and one of the first women voters in Harris County
Rev. Elias Dibble	1811–1885	Minister	• Founder of the African Mission of the Houston Methodist Church in 1847 • Founder of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church in 1865, first solely African American congregation in Houston
Nancy Edwards	1811–1883	Unknown	• Born in Africa; married to Tenola Edwards
Tenola Edwards	1785–1891	Minister	• Born in Africa • Registered to vote in 1867, the first time African Americans were allowed to vote in Texas • Minister for Methodist Episcopal Church
R.J. Evans	1853-1921	Politician	• Served in the Texas House of Representatives • Fought against segregated railroad cars • Fought against the convict lease system • Introduced a resolution to celebrate Juneteenth
Rev. Lucy F. Farrow	1851–1911	Minister	• One of the founders of the modern Pentecostal movement • Niece of Frederick Douglass
Henry Ferguson	1847-1901		• Republican party chairman • Secretary of the Harris County school board • State policeman and sheriff of Fort Bend County • Fort Bend County tax assessor
Dr. David George Ferrill	1865–1902	Dentist	• Prominent Houston dentist
Dr. Russell F. Ferrill	1863–1947	Doctor	• Prominent Houston doctor
Charles M. Ferguson	ca.1860–1906	Politician	• Served as Fort Bend County District Clerk (Three terms before being driven out during Jaybird-Woodpecker conflict in 1888.) • Elected delegate to national Republican party conventions from 1892-1904 • Leader of the Grand Order of Oddfellows in Texas
Annie M. Fuller	1849-1916	Housekeeper	• Confederate veteran widow (Almond Fuller)
Lucy Gray	1800–1887	Formerly enslaved	• Enslaved by William Fairfax and Millie Gray, founders of Christ Church Cathedral in Houston. • Mother of Ellen Gray Vance, Frank Vance's widow
Buchanan H.	1860–1938	Educator	• Worked as a janitor in the school system, passed teachers

Name	Date of birth/death	Occupation	Noteworthy Information
Grimes			exam in 1894 • Principal of Dunbar School • Grimes Elementary named for him
J.J. Hardeway	1868–1926	Businessman	• Prominent Houston businessman
J.Will Jones	1879–1946	Postal Clerk, Educator	• Co-founder of the National Alliance of Postal Employees • J. Will Jones Elementary named for him.
Joseph Vance Lewis	1863–1925	Lawyer	• Prominent Houston lawyer • Author of "Out of the Ditch: A True Story of an Ex-Slave"
Alice D. Logan	1876–1940	Educator	• Dean of Women at Wiley College • Wife of Rev. Wade Hampton Logan
Rev. Wade Hampton Logan	1857–1922	Minister	• Pastor of Trinity Methodist church • Served as District Supervisor for Texas Methodist Conference • Husband of Alice D. Logan
Rev. Van H. McKinney	1865–1928	Printer, Publisher	• Founded first African American printing company in Houston. • Editor and publisher of the weekly newspaper, The Houston Van. • Pastor of Highland Chapel in La Marque (now the McKinney Memorial United Methodist Church)
Rev. C.C. Minegan	1847–1917	Pastor	• Civil War veteran • Pastor of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church in Galveston • Pastor of Trinity Methodist in Houston • Trustee at Wiley College
Mason B. Patten	1871–1920	Postal clerk, labor and civil rights activist	• President of the National Alliance of Postal Employees (two terms) • Founding member of first National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chapter in Houston • Father of Thelma Patten, first female African American physician in Houston
Rev. D.H.R. Rankin	1869–1943	Pastor	• Pastor of the Damascus Baptist Church • Moderator of Independent District Association
James D. Ryan	1872–1940	Educator	• Early principal of Houston's Colored High School (now Booker T. Washington High School) • First principal of Jack Yates High School • President of the Colored Teachers State Association in Texas • James Ryan Middle School named for him
Horace Scott	1881–1954	Postal worker	• One of the first Black mail carriers in Houston • Father of journalist Emmett J. Scott

Name	Date of birth/death	Occupation	Noteworthy Information
Rev. Henry Stewart	1832–1885	Minister	• Came to Texas as Freedmen's Bureau agent during Reconstruction (born in Kentucky) • Founded the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist church in 1866
Hilliard Taylor	1848–1913	Businessman	• Houston city alderman in 1871 • Founded the all-Black town Boley, Oklahoma in 1904
Frank Vance	1833–1910	Ice Cream Manufacturer	• Prominent political figure during Reconstruction • Recognized as one of the wealthiest African Americans in Houston • Superintendent of Olivewood • Member of the Magnolia Lodge of Colored Masons

Many of the people listed in Table 6 represent leaders in the education, church, and business arenas, reflecting the importance of education, the church, and leadership organizations including fraternal societies in establishing a successful social and business community. These people were community-oriented and often had leadership roles in organizing African American events such as Emancipation Day (Juneteenth).[103] Many of these individuals were also politically active and had positions of leadership at the local, state, and national levels. Through these individuals, the Houston African American community was linked to state and national politics and worked with activists like Booker T. Washington to promote the importance of Civil Rights.

These connections helped community leaders to become significant to Houston beyond the African American community, sometimes across the color line. For example, a *Houston Post* article announcing Frank Vance's death notes, "He was respected by his white friends and held in the highest esteem by the members of his own race."[104] Though it does not specifically mention White people, the notice for John Taylor's death mentions that he was "well known in railroad circles" as a porter for the private car of Captain G.A. Quinlan, and that "he was a highly respected citizen among all who knew him."[105] This suggests that Mr. Taylor was well regarded by both White and Black citizens.

Voting

Many of these community leaders were anxious to participate in government after having been denied the right to vote for their entire lives. After Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867, African American men were granted the right to vote, and voter registration efforts began across the country.[106]

Texas voter rolls included information about each registrant such as address, how long they had been in the state and county, naturalization information and a signature. Additional information often included whether a registrant was Mexican, African American, or a former Confederate. The first entry in the Harris County Voter Registration list is dated June 12, 1867. On that day, 65 African American men and 13 White men registered to vote. Over time, African American voter registration continued to outpace White registration. At least 33 men interred in Olivewood are represented on this voter list (**Table 7**).

[103] "For Emancipation Day," *The Houston Daily Post*, Tuesday, June 14, 1898, 6.
[104] "Frank Vance Dead," *The Houston Post*, December 26, 1910, 9
[105] "Notices," *The Houston Post,* September 17, 1910. He was interred in Olivewood and was a member of the Colored Odd Fellows.
[106] Marsha J. Tyson Darling, "A Right Deferred: African American Voter Suppression after Reconstruction," *History Now*, 51 (2018), 1.

Table 7. Men interred in Olivewood who appear in the 1867 Voter Rolls

Name	Dates of Birth/Death
Richard Allen	1831–1909
Milton Baker	1839–1905
Cornelius Baker	Unknown–1884
Dan Braxton	1835–1915
Richard Brock	1824–1906
Larkin Cluff	1838–1916
Elias Dibble	1811–1885
Jesse Dixon	1845–1910
Robert Edwards	1845–1910
Tenola Edwards	Unknown
Walker Evans	1835–1916
Henry Franklin	1843–1923
Thomas Freeman	1835–1887
Richard Green	1836–1915
Henry Grigsby	1835–1913
Louis Hansborogh	1836-1923
Joshua Jenkins	1838–1913
Jim Johnson	1845–1920
Oliver Johnson	1826–1913
Samuel Johnson	1837–1917
Henry Jones	Unknown
George Mathews	1839–1924
Alfred Pipkins	1829–1889
Willis Simms	1845–1896
Alfred Smith	1845–1911
Joshua Smith	Unknown–1897
David Thompson	1842–1926
Edward Thompson	Unknown–1906
Frank Vance	1833–1910
Joe Warner	1845–1925
Henry Williams	1841–1915
James Williamson	1831–1916
William Wilson	Unknown–1915

War Veterans and Decoration Day

Veterans buried at Olivewood include soldiers who fought in the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World Wars I and II (WWI and WWII). Many of these individuals have been identified as being buried in Olivewood through archival records, though nine individuals are marked with extant headstones. At least five of the men served in the Union Army during the Civil War and one confirmed Buffalo Soldier is buried there as well (**Table 8**).

Table 8. Known veterans interred at Olivewood

Name	Date of Birth/ Death	Marker[107]	Lot #	Conflict	Additional Information
Henry Franklin	1843–1923	Possibly	Unknown	Civil War	Served in the 50th U.S. Colored Infantry, organized from the 12th Louisiana Infantry.
Miles Gordon	1840–1913	Unknown	Unknown	Civil War	USCT 70th Infantry
Oliver Johnson	1826–1913	Unknown	Unknown	Civil War	16th U.S. Colored Infantry based in Nashville
Sampson Marshall	1837–1912	Unknown	Unknown	Civil War	24th USCT Infantry
Rev. Christopher Columbus Minegan	1847–1917	Yes	120	Civil War	Union Navy, 41st regiment
Alfred Pipkins	1821–1889	Yes	177?	Civil War	G1 Arkansas Colored Infantry, G 46 USC Infantry
Joshua Smith	Unknown–1897	Yes	195	Civil War	Possibly 1st U.S. Colored Cavalry
Corporal Allen E. Beason	1865–1910	Unknown	Unknown	Spanish-American War	U.S. Buffalo Soldier, Tenth Cavalry Regiment
J. Leon Jones	1876–1912	Unknown	Unknown	Spanish-American War	U.S. 9th Volunteer Infantry, Quartermaster
Edward L. Roscoe	1859–1915	Unknown	Unknown	Spanish-American War	U.S. 9th Volunteer Infantry – Company I
Private Joseph Adams	1890–1919	Possibly	369	WWI	335 LAB or Battalion N
Raymond Adams	1899–1936	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	Company D. 405 Reserve Labor BN
Private First Class Isaac Alexander	1886–1958	Possibly	W38	WWI	8th Engineers Service Company Forest Corps
Private Julious Alexander	1895–1921	Possibly	W38	WWI	Texas Private 1 CL 8 Engineers

[107] This information comes from the Descendants of Olivewood, who are working to verify whether markers for these individuals are present. Some markers don't have enough information to definitively associate them with specific individuals or there is an indication that a marker may be associated with a particular person, but it has not yet been able to be verified. For these interments, it is possible a marker is present, but it has not yet been confirmed.

Name	Date of Birth/ Death	Marker[107]	Lot #	Conflict	Additional Information
Private Oliver J. Allen Sr.	1897–1938	Possibly	173	WWI	412 Res. Labor BN OM
Private Wilson "Willie" Andrew	1894–1920	Possibly	91	WWI	Tennessee 410 Res. Labor Bn.
Private Earnest Brown	1898–1933	Possibly	SW3	WWI	Infantry
Private Eli Collins	1895–1958	Possibly	W34	WWI	410 Reserve Labor Bn.
William Odis Conner	1886–1921	Yes	W39	WWI	U.S. Army
Allen Cook Jr.	1896–1925	Possibly	258	WWI	332 Serv BN
Private Lawrence Hugh Cook	1897–1936	Possibly	258	WWI	165 Depot Brigade
Schallie Davis	1894–1931	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
Jack Dugar	1892–1923	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
Sergeant Elmore Edwin Elliott	1889–1932	Possibly	397	WWI	165 Depot Brigade
Private Oscar Beste Godfrey	1896–1940	Possibly	255	WWI	165 Depot Brigade
Private Eugene Harrison	1894–1918	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
John W. Hicks Sr.	1893–1952	Possibly	79	WWI	513 Service BN Engineer Corps
Private Hobert Holdman	1896–1961	Possibly	115	WWI	165 Depot Brigade
Fred Jones	1889–1926	Yes	316	WWI	
Earl Andrew Josey	1887–1961	Possibly	W37	WWI	Company 2 165 Depot Brigade
Private Willie Ollie Loggins	1895–1934	Possibly	SW3	WWI	165 Depot Brigade
Jesse Manning	1885–1932	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	Unit 9th Regular U.S. Volunteers, Company G
Private Andy McCall	1896–1918	Unknown	E2	WWI	
Louis	1891–1929	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	

Name	Date of Birth/ Death	Marker[107]	Lot #	Conflict	Additional Information
McCampbell					
Corporal John McCray	1895–1937	Possibly	381	WWI	Texas Corps 322, Service BN
Private Benjamin Harrison Miller	1889–1929	Possibly	400?	WWI	305 Stev. Regiment
Randolph McKinley Mitchell	1983–1947	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	Draft card found -unclear if he served
Cain Howard Nelson Sr.	1892–1961	Yes	44	WWI	
John B. "Johnnie" Overton	1891–1926	Yes	415	WWI	
Private Will Parlor	1886–1931	Possibly	SW3	WWI	509 Engineers
Willie H. Patten	1893–1960	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
Louis E. Pereault	1890–1928	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
Dewey Arthur Putney	1899–1918	Yes	82	WWI	
Alphonso Roscoe	1890–1955	Possibly	420	WWI	157 Depot Bridge
Private Charles "Charlie" Sidney	1894–1936	Possibly	W4	WWI	1654 D[pt Brogade
Italy Snell	1893–1937	Possibly	397	WWI	8 Engineer Service Company
Robert Todd	1891–1933	Unknown	Unknown	WWI	
Private Caucious Aurelius Wilson	1888–1954	Possibly	Unknown	WW1	165 Depot Brigade
Esthus Addison	1921–1955	Possibly	115	WWII	USNR World War II
Private James Allen Ford	1902–1951	Possibly	364	WWII	Co.D 405 Reserve Labor B.N.
Private Henry Alfred Murphy	1914–1941	Possibly	Unknown	WWII	U.S. Army
Private Lee William Thompson	1906–1943	Possibly	257	WWII	45 Engineer General Service Regiment

Name	Date of Birth/ Death	Marker[107]	Lot #	Conflict	Additional Information
Eugene Warren	1903–1948	Possibly	415	WWII	CK3C USNR
Private First Class Roosevelt Davis	1932–1957	Possibly	Unknown	Unknown	U.S. Army
Private Samuel Theo Jones	1929–1955	Possibly	Unknown	Unknown	U.S. Army
Glenn Staten	1925–1980	Unknown	Possibly 6	Unknown	

The Olivewood community was proud of their veterans and celebrated Decoration Day yearly. Decoration Day was the precursor to Memorial Day and was first observed in the late 1860s to commemorate the fallen soldiers who had died in the Civil War. Officially, the first Decoration Day was observed in 1868 with future president James A. Garfield giving a speech at Arlington National Cemetery. A crowd of 5,000 people attended to hear the speech and lay flowers on soldiers' graves. This annual practice continued and in 1971 was declared the national holiday of Memorial Day.[108]

Olivewood hosted the first Decoration Day celebration for the African American community in Houston in 1898. Several religious leaders from the community spoke at the event, and the cemetery organization asked lot owners to participate in decorating graves prior to the celebration.[109] The event was well attended, and reports indicate that in addition to memorializing friends and relatives, Olivewood participants focused on celebrating the Union soldiers buried at the cemetery.[110]

Decoration Day celebrations remained a tradition at Olivewood for several decades and continues in a similar manner to this day. The cemetery association cleaned the graves prior to the annual celebration. They also used Decoration Day as the deadline for unpaid accounts for lot owners. The secretary provided notice in the newspaper and informed those who were delinquent that they could pay at the celebration. Those who did not provide payment were at risk of losing their lots to be resold to others.[111] Given that the notices coincided with these celebrations, it is likely there was a consistently a good turnout to celebrate.

Women of Olivewood

Many of the women interred in Olivewood worked at home or as domestic help outside the home. Domestic work was a necessary profession that nevertheless afforded little opportunity for community recognition. According to the Descendants of Olivewood cemetery records, there are 1,685 burials in Olivewood, approximately 802 of whom are women that died between 1869–1966. This number is an estimate, as the records reviewed did not record

[108] National Park Service, "First Official National Decoration Day," https://www.nps.gov/articles/first-official-national-decoration-day.htm, accessed December 16, 2025.
[109] "Observance by Colored People," *The Houston Daily Post*, May 18, 1898.
[110] "Decoration Day as Observed Yesterday by Colored Citizens," *The Houston Daily Post*, Tuesday, May 31, 1898.
[111] "Official Notice," *The Houston Informer and the Texas Freeman*, May 9, 1931; "Decoration Day at the Olivewood Cemetery," *The Houston Informer and the Texas Freeman,* May 28, 1932; "Notice," *The Houston Informer and the Texas Freeman*, May 20, 1933; "Notice!" *The Houston Informer and the Texas Freeman,* May 27, 1933.

biological sex. Researchers inferred sex from names and/or from the presence of maiden names, which were not always recorded. As a result, this dataset may contain some errors.[112]

Within this group, approximately 495 women had some sort of occupation listed on their death certificates. Most women were doing some kind of domestic work for employment, though there is some ambiguity as to whether they were working inside or outside the home. Professions associated with this type of work included: housework, housekeeping, housekeeper, domestic, housewife, laundress, and cook. Of these, women who were listed as housewives worked within the home, while domestics, laundresses, and cooks worked outside their homes. However, housework, housekeeping, and housekeeper are unspecified regarding work location. This sample indicates that approximately 12% (96 individuals) were listed as housewives that worked within the home. Those women definitely working outside the home accounted for about 35% of the sample. Another 7.6% were ambiguous, and could have worked in the home, outside the home, or both.

This data provides a general understanding of the overall community contribution and possible economic status of the women interred at Olivewood. Most women employed in domestic work were working outside their own home, indicating they made regular contributions to their household economies. Women working outside the home were likely working in household or domestic positions because they were the easiest to find in Houston, but some women were able to focus on a particular aspect of household work, such as laundry or cooking rather than serving as general domestic help. Others provided even more specialized services; two women were caterers, and a few worked as seamstresses (**Table 9**).

The majority of these occupations could have served both White and Black communities, but likely mostly assisted White residents who had the economic means to hire out for chores they themselves did not want to do. However, a few occupations noted among the women in this sample were essential services that were typically those provided within and for the Black community. These occupations were often held in high regard within that community due to the specialized knowledge and skill set required. Among the Olivewood sample, they include hairdressing and midwives.

Just over 10% of the women in this sample worked at home without bringing in outside income. This may suggest that they were better off economically and were able to afford staying home without bringing in additional income. Conversely, it may also indicate that these women were unable to find work outside the home. Regardless, the women interred in Olivewood either worked to have sufficient resources to be able to afford burial in Olivewood or who were able to obtain funds for purchase of a burial plot.

Table 9. Occupations for Women Interred in Olivewood

Listed Occupation	Number of Individuals	Percentage of Total	Outside the Home
Catering/Cateress	2	0.2%	Yes
Cleaner and Presser	1	0.1%	Unknown
Cook	14	1.7%	Yes
Domestic	241	30%	Yes
Dressmaker	2	0.2%	Unknown
Hairdressing	1	0.1%	Unknown
Housekeeping	19	2.4%	Unknown

[112] Descendants of Olivewood, "Cemetery Records," accessed July 6, 2025.

Listed Occupation	Number of Individuals	Percentage of Total	Outside the Home
Housekeeper	12	1.5%	Unknown
Housewife	96	12%	No
Housework	30	3.7%	Unknown
Laborer	7	0.9%	Yes
Laundress	29	3.6%	Unknown
Manicurist	1	0.1%	Unknown
Midwife	3	0.4%	Yes
Musician	1	0.1%	Yes
Nurse	1	0.1%	Yes
Retired (no other info)	8	1%	No
Seamstress	4	0.5%	Unknown
Teachers	13	1.6%	Yes

In addition to contributing to their household economies, many of these women also likely belonged to fraternal societies and contributed labor, money, time, and organizational efforts to Houston's African American community. These contributions were not always included in death certificate data. Annie Josey, however, had a note that she was Queen of the Neches Chamber, suggesting she may have been involved in a fraternal organization. Emma Scott's funeral notice specifically stated that her funeral was hosted by the Goddess of Hope Temple No. 11, Sisters of the Mysterious Ten, indicating she was a member.[113] The 1920 *Houston Red Book*, which provided an overview of Houston's African American community, indicates there were several women's fraternal organizations that were active at that time, which would have provided many opportunities for women to join.[114]

Some of these women were noted as having been formerly enslaved (e.g. Lucy Gray), or born in Africa (Patsy Lee, Nancy Edwards), while others were listed as having been wives of Confederate veterans (E.G. Annie M. Fuller, Jane Sasser). The range of experiences that these women represented highlights the variety of social positions Olivewood Cemetery represents within Houston's African American community.

Suffragists in Olivewood

Women interred in Olivewood also demonstrated a strong interest in participating in government. Although they organized and advocated for women's voting rights in the United States, most Black women were not included in the larger suffragist movement by their White counterparts. In Texas, the Texas Woman Suffrage Association, which began in Houston, denied the El Paso Colored Woman's Club membership in 1918, believing their inclusion would alienate existing members.[115]

Although African American women legally won the right to vote under the 1918 amendment, they faced obstacles their white counterparts did not. Poll taxes disenfranchised those who were economically insecure, laws were passed that prohibited women of color from voting in primary elections, and voter intimidation by the Ku Klux

[113] "Funeral of Emma H. Scott," *The Houston Post*, November 27, 1901, 7

[114] *The Red Book of Houston: A Compendium of Social, Professional, Religious, Educational and Industrial Interests of Houston's Colored Population*, Sotex Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, 1920.

[115] Janet Humphrey, "Texas Equal Suffrage Association," *Handbook of Texas Online*, https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/texas-equal-suffrage-association, accessed February 23, 2026.

Klan were some of the realities that Black women voters faced.[116] This is not to suggest that African American women did not vote; in Houston, many of the women interred in Olivewood have been identified as voters after the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified.

At least 15 women have been identified as voters who, upon cross checking with the list of women interred in Olivewood appeared to have come from a range of economic backgrounds (**Table 10**). At least one woman, Rosa Yocome, ran for public office. Yocome ran as a candidate to be a U.S. Representative on the Black and Tan ticket.[117] The Black and Tan ticket was opposite the faction of the Republican Party referred to as "Lily White," plainly indicating divisions along racial lines.[118] According to the *Houston Informer*, Yocome was the first woman in the country to be nominated by a political party to run for office.[119] Other women had successfully run for office around this time, including U.S. Representative Jeanette Rankin from Montana and Nellie Gray Robertson, who was elected the Hood County Texas Attorney in 1918, but it is unclear whether their respective political parties nominated them for election or endorsed them after primary elections.[120]

Table 10. Known suffragists buried at Olivewood.

Name	Date of Birth/Death
Florence Bland	1896–1933
Ruby Jackson Dale	1896–1934
Mamie Jones	1884–1935
Amanda C. Blount McDavid	1872–1931
Isabella M. Shaw Mitchell	1866–1932
Irine Brock Phelps	1886–1932
Mrs. Viola Rich	1889–1955
Izora L. Rozier	1895–1933
Josie Sasser	1883–1944
Cora Taylor	1889–1952
Mamie Thomas	Unknown–1935
Della Perkins Turner	1897–1923
Sarah B. Clemons Vance	1876–1932
Emma Gibson Wilkins	1883–1927
Rosa L. Yocome	1874–1923

Criterion C (Landscape Architecture)

[116] Nancy Baker Jones, "African American Women's Suffrage," *Women in Texas History*, Ruth Winegarten Foundation, https://www.womenintexashistory.org/audio/african-american-womens-suffrage/, accessed February 23, 2026.
[117] "Black & Tan Ticket," *The Houston Informer*, Saturday, September 11, 1920.
[118] Jones, 2026
[119] "Black and Tan Candidates Accept Nominations in Brilliant Speeches; They Will Wage Vigorous Campaign., *The Houston Informer*, Saturday, September 11, 1920, 1
[120] United States House of Representatives, "Rankin, Jeannette, 1880-1973," History, Art & Archives,, https://history.house.gov/People/detail/20147, 2026; Lori J. Kaspar, "Meet Nellie Gray Robertson, the first female county attorney in Texas," Texas District & County Attorneys Association, https://www.tdcaa.com/journal/meet-nellie-gray-robertson-the-first-female-county-attorney-in-texas/, 2014

Olivewood Cemetery has a formally designed and planned landscape, with a geometrically patterned driveway and ornamental plantings that hold significance for the community it represents. Olivewood Cemetery founders envisioned a space that resembled a park with neat, orderly rows, ornamental plants and trees, and an elliptical driveway in the center. The cemetery association created a formal plat of this design (see **Figure 14**) and filed it with the Harris County Clerk in 1877. The design shown on this plat is evident on the current landscape and provides an example of the Rural Cemetery Movement that began in America during the early nineteenth century and developed into a popular movement after the Civil War.[121]

Rural Cemetery Movement

The Rural Cemetery Movement, which began in the 1830s and continued through the twentieth century reflected gradually shifting European and American attitudes toward death, which influenced cemetery design. Prior to the 1830s, the word cemetery was rarely used, as burials were typically interred in churchyards or in public common spaces, more practically referred to as graveyards.[122] Smaller communities did not anticipate community planning and development that inevitably comes with population growth and religious burials focused on consecrated ground under or adjacent to the church. As the population increased and epidemics surged in the nineteenth century, additional spatial and sanitation concerns grew for these cemeteries. Added to these concerns were the activities of Resurrection Men who would exhume the recently deceased and sell the bodies for medical practice and experimentation.[123]

The beginnings of the Rural Cemetery Movement are credited to Scottish architect John Claudius Loudon (1782-1843), who published many of his observations and thoughts on cemeteries just as many European cities were looking to establish new cemeteries further away from city centers.[124] His writings are full of observations on the landscapes of these new cemeteries, noting advantages and aesthetics of the short grass, walkways, and buildings within the cemeteries. Loudon eventually published a book of his writings that specifically addressed principles of landscape architecture for public cemeteries, including his observations on cemetery management. He advocated for cemeteries to be located on well-drained high ground with a focus on ornamentation and design. He recommended cemeteries be enclosed by fencing, pier installation to identify plots, and tree planting. He was opposed to planting flowers.[125] Ultimately, Loudon felt that in addition to improving cemetery conditions, these improvements could improve moral sentiments for all classes and would serve as a historical record.[126]

Loudon's work caught the attention of J. Jay Smith in America. Smith issued his own book, which was largely a regurgitation of Loudon's cemetery book.[127] In it, Smith parroted Loudon's ideas about the moral, social, and

[121] David Charles Sloane, "Memory and Landscape: Nature and the History of the American Cemetery," *A Journal of Place*, 6(1, 2010):4.
[122] Aaron Sachs, "American Arcadia: Mount Auburn Cemetery and the Nineteenth-Century Landscape Tradition," *Environmental History*, Vol.15(2, 2010):208.
[123] James Stevens Curl, "The Architecture and Planning of the Nineteenth-Century Cemetery," *Garden History*, Vol.3 (3, 1975):16.
[124] See John Claudius Loudon, *On the laying out , planting, and managing of cemeteries; and on the improvement of churchyards*, London, 1843; Loudon was also editor for *The Gardener's Magazine* and the *Magazine of Natural History*.
[125] James Stevens Curl, "John Claudius Loudon and the Garden Cemetery Movement," *Garden History* Vol.11(2, 1983): 134, 142-145.
[126] Curl, "The Architecture and Planning of the Nineteenth Century Cemetery," 25
[127] John Jay Smith, *Designs for Monuments and Mural Tablets: Adapted to Rural Cemeteries, Church Yards, Churches and Chapels. With a Preliminary Essay on the Laying Out, Planting and Managing of Cemeteries and on the Improvement of Church Yards. On the Basis of Loudon's Work*, Barlett & Welford, 1846.

medical benefits of rural settings for these cemeteries.[128] Like in the United Kingdom, late eighteenth and early nineteenth century cemeteries in America were typically found in churchyards, small family plots, potters fields, or private vaults, most of which were located within urban areas. These cemeteries were typically crowded, unsanitary, and difficult to maintain.[129]

The idea of rural cemeteries had already caught the attention of Americans by the time Smith's work was published. In the late 1820s, Dr. Jacob Bigelow led a group of interested people to collaborate with the Massachusetts Horticultural Society on planning a rural cemetery in Cambridge outside of Boston. The cemetery was to be run as a non-profit enterprise, with plot sales going toward maintenance. A full-time staff would be responsible for this maintenance, and the cemetery would be fenced to help provide security. Plots were to be available to anyone who wanted to buy one.[130] In 1831, the Mount Auburn Cemetery (NRHP & NHL, 1975) was dedicated in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was the first rural garden cemetery in the U.S.[131]

Although the Massachusetts Horticultural Society parted ways with Bigelow, Mount Auburn's design incorporated and highlighted the natural beauty of the landscape. Roads and paths were designed to follow the natural topography within the cemetery and were named after trees and flowers. The landscape also included small ponds, pavilions, and highly ornamental tombs.[132] The goal of the cemetery design was to preserve the natural beauty of the cemetery and incorporate art that included not only built features but the cemetery layout. Marker materials were regulated and plots had to be fenced in metal or stone. Fencing burial plots is a characteristic of the rural cemetery, with iron being prevalent prior to he 1850s when the preference changed to curbing.[133]

Mount Auburn's design attracted public crowds and the cemetery became a popular tourist destination. Creators believed the cemetery setting provided an atmosphere of positive moral and social influences for visitors. The cemetery became such an attraction for the public that it influenced the development of public parks.[134] Other notable examples of cemeteries established as part of the Rural Cemetery Movement include the Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.

Rural Cemeteries in Texas

In Texas, examples of cemeteries that represent the Rural Cemetery Movement include Glenwood Cemetery (1872) in Houston, Oakwood Annex (1915) in Austin, Oakland Cemetery (1892) in Dallas, and Oakwood Cemetery (1878) in Waco. All display elements of formal design that include curving roads and/or pathways, ornamental plantings, and when they were initially established, were located outside the city limits (**Figures 9-12**). These cemeteries were meant to serve the White population though Oakwood Annex (and the associated main Oakwood Cemetery) did have dedicated, segregated sections for Black and Latino burials. Glenwood, Oakland, and Oakwood in Waco are all run by private foundations while the Oakwood Annex is managed by the City of Austin.

[128] Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly*, Vol.26(1, 1974): 56.
[129] Diane Jones, "The City of the Dead: The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery. *Landscape Journal* 30(2, 2011):230.
[130] French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution," 42-45
[131] Patricia Weslowski and Kathlyn Hatch, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachussetts, National Register Nomination, 1975.
[132] Jones, "The City of the Dead," 231
[133] French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution," 48-52.
[134]French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution," 56.

Houston's Glenwood Cemetery has, by far, the most elaborate design of these examples. The built resources complement the natural topography, with winding roads, walls, steps, and monuments set into the hillside, and small ponds where the topography is flat. These features, together with the cemetery's rural setting and location just outside the city make Glenwood a prime example of the Rural Cemetery Movement popular at that time. The cemetery predates Olivewood by a few years and was specifically designed for wealthy, White Houstonians. Glenwood likely made an impression on Olivewood's founders, who were working to establish their place as equals in American society. Though Glenwood had significantly more financial resources, Olivewood's founders pooled resources to develop something similar that would be feasible within their financial means.

When Olivewood is compared with nearby Glenwood, there are obvious design differences. Olivewood's design with orderly rows of plots and an elliptical drive is simple in comparison to Glenwood's highly designed manmade features including roads, walls, steps, ponds, and monuments that are integrated into the rolling topography. Olivewood relies on natural water sources for their parklike setting while Glenwood created ponds to accentuate their setting. However, like Glenwood, Olivewood's design does follow the natural features of the land. At Olivewood, the plots are laid out around the gully, and roughly follow White Oak Bayou on the north. Glenwood's roads curve around natural topographic features. Also like Glenwood, Olivewood has many ornamental plants and trees throughout the cemetery. Both cemeteries, though they vary in complexity, exhibit design features typical of the Rural Cemetery Movement.

Of these Texas cemetery examples, Olivewood is the only one that is exclusively designed by and for African Americans. Other privately established African American cemeteries in Texas include Bethany Cemetery in Austin, Plummer Cemetery in Austin, Evergreen Negro Cemetery in Houston, San Marcos-Blanco Cemetery in San Marcos, and Mt. Olive Cemetery in Stephenville. None of these cemeteries appears to have a designed landscape, but rather consist of a grid of burial plots or clusters of small plots. Bethany Cemetery in Austin has a plat, but it consists of a simple grid plan for burial plots (**Figure 13**) with no other design elements. While these cemeteries do have some evidence of African American burial practices, none have a formally designed landscape. For this reason, Olivewood also stands out from other privately created nineteenth-century African American cemeteries in Texas.

African American Rural Cemeteries and Burial Traditions

There is little documentation for cemeteries established as part of the Rural Cemetery Movement that served the broader African American community in the U.S. One exception is in Baltimore, where the African American community created a private cemetery called Mount Auburn for Black burials in 1872.[135] The cemetery fits into the Rural Cemetery Movement, but also has distinctive elements attributed to African American culture. Jones argues that the designed landscape at this cemetery coupled with the African American cultural overlay created a design of place for that community. As Jones notes, land possession during enslavement was connected to possession of oneself, and labor on that land was connected to subjugation.[136] In creating a place within the framework of the rural cemetery and adding in distinctive cultural touches, African Americans were able to explore their changing relationship to the natural and social worlds in a safe environment.

Burial practices within the African American community are rooted in cultural knowledge and behavior developed by people of African descent before, during, and after enslavement. Specialized knowledge of plant use, spiritual

[135] It is unclear whether the African American Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore was named after the famous Mount Auburn Cemetery in Philadelphia.
[136] Jones, "The City of the Dead," 231-232.

practices connected to landscape, and a relationship with nature based on stewardship all informed how African Americans interacted with and influenced the design of the rural cemetery.[137]

One of the most noticeable design influences is evident in grave tending or grave offerings associated with burials. Grave offerings are linked to burial practices documented in west and central Africa, and grave decoration was more specifically linked to the BaKongo people of west Africa. Based on the belief that death was part of a complete cycle that included a spirit world, grave offerings were meant to provide the dead with things that would be needed in the afterlife, including everyday items such as dishes or bottles and personal items that would have been used before death. Many times, these objects were deliberately broken before being placed on the grave to prevent spirits from leaving the spirit world and coming back to the world of the living. As the tradition has evolved, these objects sometimes consisted of just glass or ceramic fragments. Shells that are left as offerings or that decorate the grave are thought to represent travel and, in some cases, the Middle Passage. In leaving shells on the grave, there is a belief that they may help guide spirits back to homelands or to new lands, such as the spirit world.[138] Plants were also important, as they were believed to be tied to the spirit world and helped keep spirits from accessing the world of the living; tree roots in particular were supposed to anchor the spiritual world underground.[139]

Olivewood Cemetery

The 1877 Plat for Olivewood shows a planned landscape with defined burial plots, a graceful elliptical drive, and a gully and stream crossing the northern portion of the cemetery (**Figure 14**). The cemetery is nestled in the curve of White Oak Bayou, but retains space between the bayou and plots. A 1948 petition confirms that 150 feet between the bayou and the cemetery has remained free of burials.[140] The plat and subsequent records do not provide information about who designed the cemetery landscape or whether there were one or more individuals responsible for ensuring that the landscape plan was followed as the cemetery grew.

Grave Markers

Grave markers and curbing delineate many of these plots shown on the 1877 aerial, providing a visual confirmation that the cemetery was laid out according to plan. For plots at the curves of the elliptical drive, the plat shows they have been shaped to accommodate the curves and include curves or geometric shapes. This is evident within the cemetery as well (see **Photos 3 and 7**). Clear paths and rows remain within the cemetery, and no visible evidence of interments outside plot lines are present.

Grave markers represent both Victorian iconography and Olivewood's African American history and legacy. Formal markers include cut and shaped marble and granite that has been professionally carved with inscriptions and designs. Many Olivewood markers have floral designs, which were popular in conjunction with the Rural Cemetery Movement (**Photos 30-31**). These designs represented nature, the key theme of these rural cemeteries.[141] Sculptures are also prevalent at Olivewood and include angels and lions (**Photos 27-28, 41-42**). These sculptures along with large monuments reflect the trend toward installing monumental architecture and elaborate sculptures in cemeteries

[137] Jones, "The City of the Dead," 234
[138] Charlotte King, "Separated by Death and Color: The African American Cemetery of New Philadelphia, Illinois," *Historical Archaeology*, 44(1, 2010):126-127.
[139] King, "Separated by Death and Color," 134.
[140] Petition, J.P. Markham, Jr. representing Olivewood Cemetery Association vs. Schumacher Company, No.E 351, 068.
[141] Wilson Center Digital Humanities Lab, "Gravestones and Symbolism: A Brief History of American Gravestone Design," https://digilab.libs.uga.edu/cemetery/exhibits/show/history/symbols. University of Georgia.

during the Rural Cemetery Movement. The monuments often reflected a variety of stylistic influences, which is evident at Olivewood.[142] Obelisks show an Egyptian Revival influence, while Classical Revival-influenced monuments and markers and an Art Deco inspired marker are also present at Olivewood (**Photos 28, 33, 35, 37, 45**).

Markers include carved granite and marble monuments and statues that were likely produced by a monument company, modest concrete markers that may not have been professionally made, and metal pipes marking burial locations. Concrete curbing, pavements, and markers sometimes include white (a color tied to the spirit world) and tiles that spell out initials or surnames. Around the turn of the twentieth century, white was the most popular color, but by the 1920s, other colors rose in popularity, and presumably became more widely available.[143] Interestingly, black, brown, and blue tiles have also been observed on grave markers and curbing at the nearby Glenwood Cemetery (HR-C194) on Washington Avenue, a private White cemetery that was established in 1872, just a few years prior to Olivewood.

This variety of markers represents a range of traditions, some African in origin, and others from Christianity. The white, blue, and black tile may represent associations with west African religious beliefs, more specifically with Yoruba deities like Yemaya, who is the goddess associated with water and the colors blue and white. She is viewed as the mother who shepherds and protects her children, not unlike the Virgin Mary in Christianity. She is also associated with shells, which appear in several areas of Olivewood as grave tending items.[144]

Backward or upside-down letter are present on several of these markers (**Photos 19-20**), and appear to be intentional. Olivewood descendants note that reversed or upside-down letters at Olivewood are deliberate and represent a traditional West African practice.[145] Though the literature does not extensively document this practice, there are a few references to upside down and backwards letters that may provide insight. For example, noted African American art historian Robert Farris Thompson has documented that in one of the languages of the Kongo, "to be upside down" means "to die." He notes that there are traditional African American grave decorations that include inverted flowerpots that may reflect this. It is possible that these inverted letters represent the transition between the earthly and ancestral realms.[146]

Even more elusive are references to backward letters. The only practices that seem to reference backward actions have to do with hoodoo or conjure. Backward actions seem to be prescribed in rituals to reverse bad luck or illness, and may also work to confuse spirits who may be inclined to follow someone home.[147]

Elliptical Drive as Cosmogram

As mentioned previously, Olivewood's elliptical drive was bisected by an east-west entrance road, which has a similar arrangement to a Kongo cosmogram (discussed in Section 8). This cosmogram presents visually as a diagram with four cardinal points (often a cross) sometimes connected by a diamond or circle shape. The Kongo cosmogram is a symbol of the intersection between the living and the dead in which the middle is typically seen as

[142] French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution," 49.
[143] Standard Tile, "100 Years of Tile Design," February 21, 2025. https://standardtilenj.com/blogs/blog/100-years-of-tile-1920-tile-design, accessed July 29, 2025.
[144] Miguel Barnet, "The Religious System of Santeria" in *Sacred Possessions: Vodou, Santeria, Obeah, and the Caribbean*, Margarite Fernandez Olmos and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, editors, 1997, 92-93.
[145] Charles Cook, Margott Williams, and Paul Jennings, personal communication, September 18, 2024.
[146] Thompson, "Flash of the Spirit," 142
[147] Puckett, "Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro,"; Thompson, "Flash of the Spirit," 144-145

water that divides the worlds, and directionality indicating movements of the sun. Many west African societies viewed death as a part of a cycle tied to the movements of the sun; when the sun set, it was said to be shining in the land of the spirits. Most researchers do not infer a one-to-one meaning and worldview between how the Kongo interpreted this symbol and how African Americans would have interpreted the symbol, but rather acknowledge that there are African influences on worldview that are unique to people of the African Diaspora. Bruner argues that the symbol system based around cardinal directions as found in the Kongo cosmogram is present in diamond motifs found on markers within the cemetery (Photo 13).[148] Christian symbolism also assigns meaning to the cross, as a symbol of Christ, who was the living embodiment of the transition between life, death, and resurrection. Both viewpoints may be simultaneously represented by this symbol.

There were also practical considerations that may have influenced the construction of an east-west entrance road. The entrance to the cemetery was via Brown Alley, which led to a gate in the south fence of the cemetery (Figures 1-3, 7, 8). In 1946, the Schumacher Company bought the land immediately south of the cemetery and constructed a wall that prohibited access to the cemetery. The cemetery sued to gain access via the southern gate, but in the meantime was forced to carry burials by hand from the street on the west. An east-west oriented entrance road would have facilitated this access.

Medicinal Plants

Though many of the trees and plants in Olivewood Cemetery were chosen for their aesthetics in accordance with the Rural Cemetery Movement, the variety of trees at Olivewood also likely points to their use as a traditional source of botanical medicines in the African American community (**Table 3**). During enslavement and Reconstruction, when the cemetery was established, it was rare for African American people to use White doctors. Enslavers sometimes employed doctors for their enslaved people (primarily if it concerned loss of reproduction or a life or death situation), but most white doctors would not treat Black people. As a result, African Americans developed natural remedies for treatment. Planting these types of resources in the cemetery may have provided Houston's African American community with a source for medical treatment, which would have been a valuable resource in an urban area, especially for midwives.

Criteria Consideration D (Cemeteries)

Olivewood Cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D (Cemeteries) because its primary significance is derived from burials of Houston's early African American leaders and the unique merging of Rural Cemetery Movement design and African-derived symbolism and burial practice. Olivewood cemetery's landscape design, with its ornamental plantings, and paths that follow the natural features of the land, is characteristic of the Rural Cemetery Movement. At the same time, the trees, the cosmogram, color choice, inverted or backward letters, and grave tending items including shells, plates, and ceramics, are specifically tied to African American burial culture and African-derived belief systems. This cultural dualism is worthy of additional research, and it is likely that additional information is present within the graves themselves. African influenced burial inclusions in other African American cemeteries have included fraternal organization ribbon badges and medals, shells, necklaces of colored beads, and pierced coins as well as other items.[149] As Houston's first private African American cemetery, Olivewood has the

[148] Bruner, "Symbols for the Living,", 212-216.

[149] Nesta Anderson and Melanie Nichols are currently working on writing the analysis of these types of burial inclusions from the First Street Cemetery in Waco, Texas. In addition, these types of items have been documented in Allen Parkway Village Cemetery in Houston and Dallas Freedman's Cemetery in Dallas. See Eugene Fosteer and Linda Nance with contributions by Ed Baxter, Sharon Derrick, Ph.D., Eugene Foster, Victor Galan, Derek Green, Glen S. Greene, PhD, Steven D. Hoyt, J.K. Wagner & Company, Inc., Marianne Marek, Allan Meyers, PhD, Linda A. Nance, Michael Nash, and d. gentry Steele, Ph.D.,

distinction of representing an emerging social community during Reconstruction and a cross section of economic classes represented within that community.

Conclusion

Prior to establishing Olivewood Cemetery, African American people living in Houston were relegated to burying loved ones within segregated sections of public cemeteries or somewhere in a family plot outside the city limits, which required land ownership. They had no input over where their loved ones were buried, the aesthetics of the burial site or cemetery, or whether they would be permitted to leave grave decorations or grave tending items on the graves. In establishing Olivewood, Houston's African American community created a space that emulated current trends in cemetery landscape design, effectively showing their desire to participate as equals in society. Yet they also retained their own burial traditions, creating a space uniquely suited to their community needs. The Olivewood Cemetery is a rare example of a cemetery tied to the Rural Cemetery Movement in the United Staes that also has distinctive African American burial traditions. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Baltimore is another known example that blends these two specific cultural elements, but so far, no other cemeteries like this appear to have been identified in Texas.

Olivewood Cemetery is significant under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Ethnic Heritage/Black at the state level of significance for its associations with the development of Houston's African American community from the Reconstruction era through the twentieth century. Olivewood is also significant under Criterion C for Landscape Architecture at the state level of significance for its unique landscape architecture that is a combination of design elements associated with the Rural Cemetery Movement in America and with distinctive African American burial traditions. As Olivewood's primary significance is associated with Black leaders of transcendent importance within their community, and its distinctive design features, it meets Criterion Consideration D for Cemeteries.

Archaeological Investigation Report Allen Parkway Village, 41HR886, Houston, Harris County, Texas, PBS&J, 2002; James M. Davidson, *Mediating Race and Class through the Death Experience: Power Relations and Resistance Strategies of an African0American Community, Dallas, Texas (1869-1907)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2004.

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1920 Available online at https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/35/
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1940 Available online at https://www.ancestry.com/search/categories/35/

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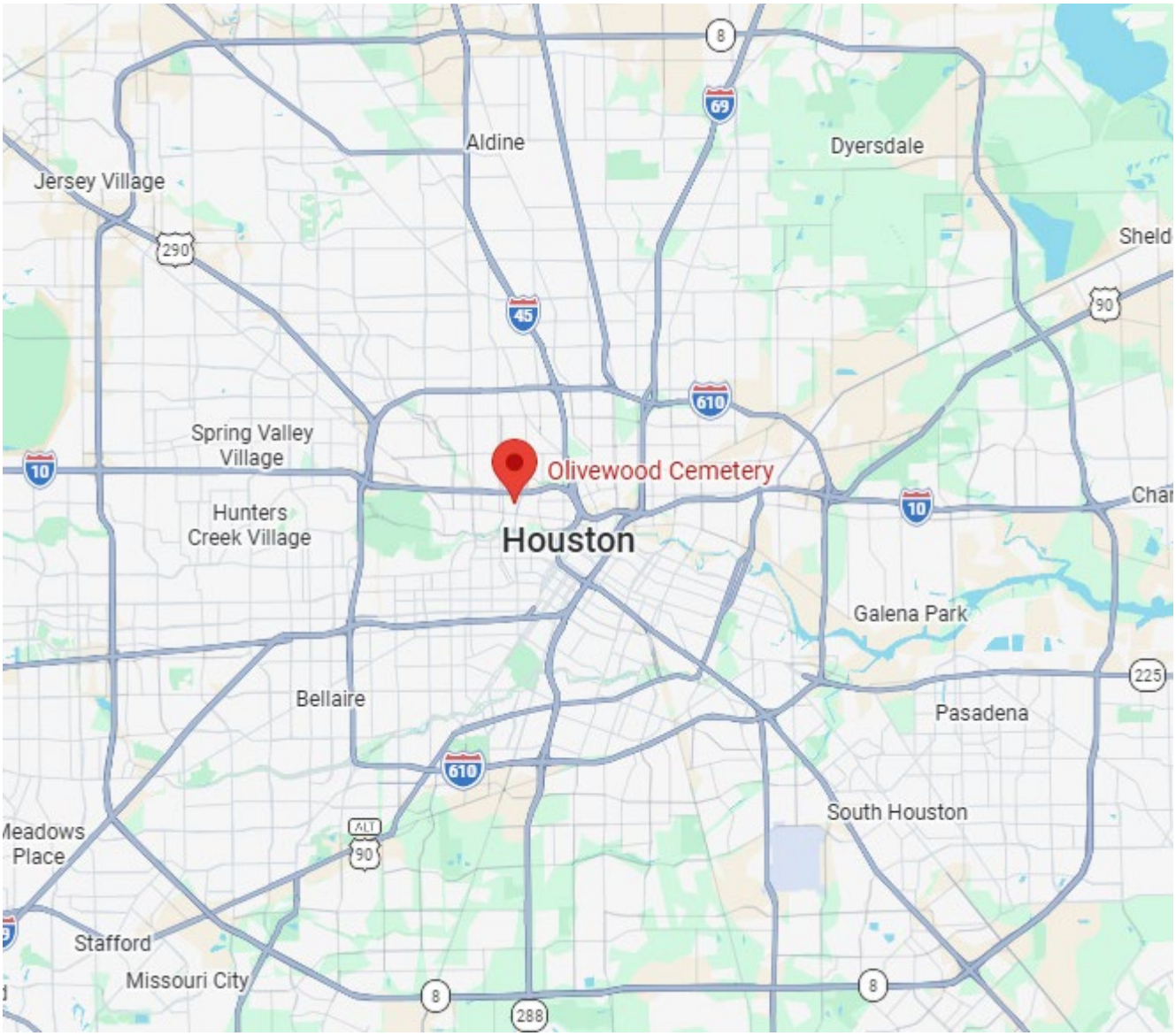
Maps

Map 1. Olivewood Cemetery, Houston, Harris County, TX (Source: Google Maps)



Map 2. Olivewood Cemetery NRHP Boundary, Google Earth, accessed 2.26.2026

Map 2.1. Northern half of boundary of Olivewood Cemetery

Map 2.2. Southern half of boundary of Olivewood Cemetery

Map 3. Site map showing photo locations for notable cemetery markers and statues

Map 4. Site Map: Olivewood Cemetery Site (Contributing), Shed (Non-contributing) and Cistern (Contributing)

Figures

Figure 1
1930 Aerial Photograph
Historicaerials.com

Figure 2
1944 Aerial Photograph
Google Earth

Figure 3
1962 Aerial Photograph
Historicaerials.com

Figure 4
1895 City of Houston and Environs Map, Whitty & Stott, Library of Congress

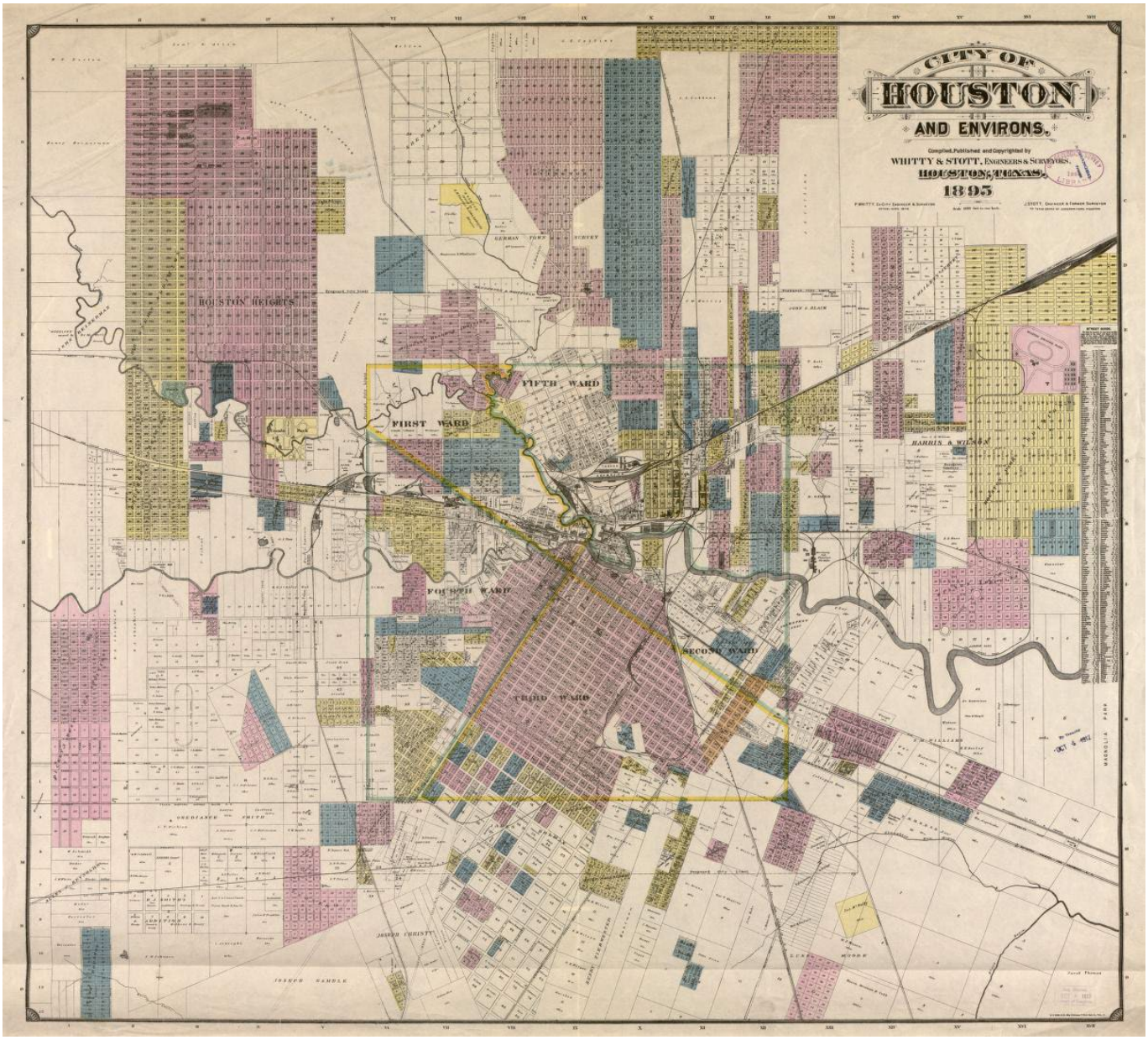


Figure 5
1890 Official Map of the City of Houston and Adjoining Surveys, Porter, Pollard & Ruby. 1890
Library of Congress

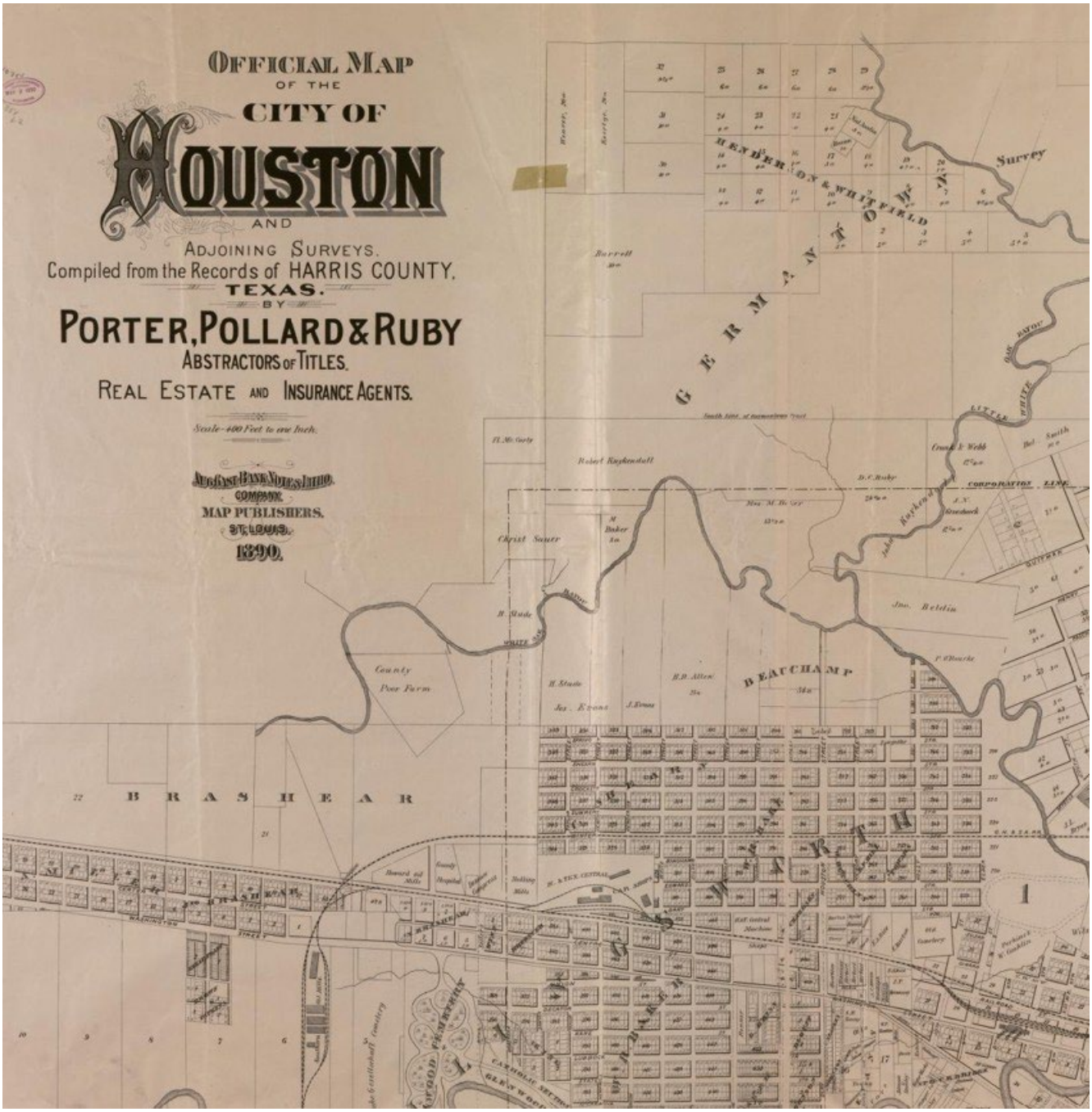


Figure 6
1900 Plat Map showing Cheney Junction near Olivewood
1900, Unknown source

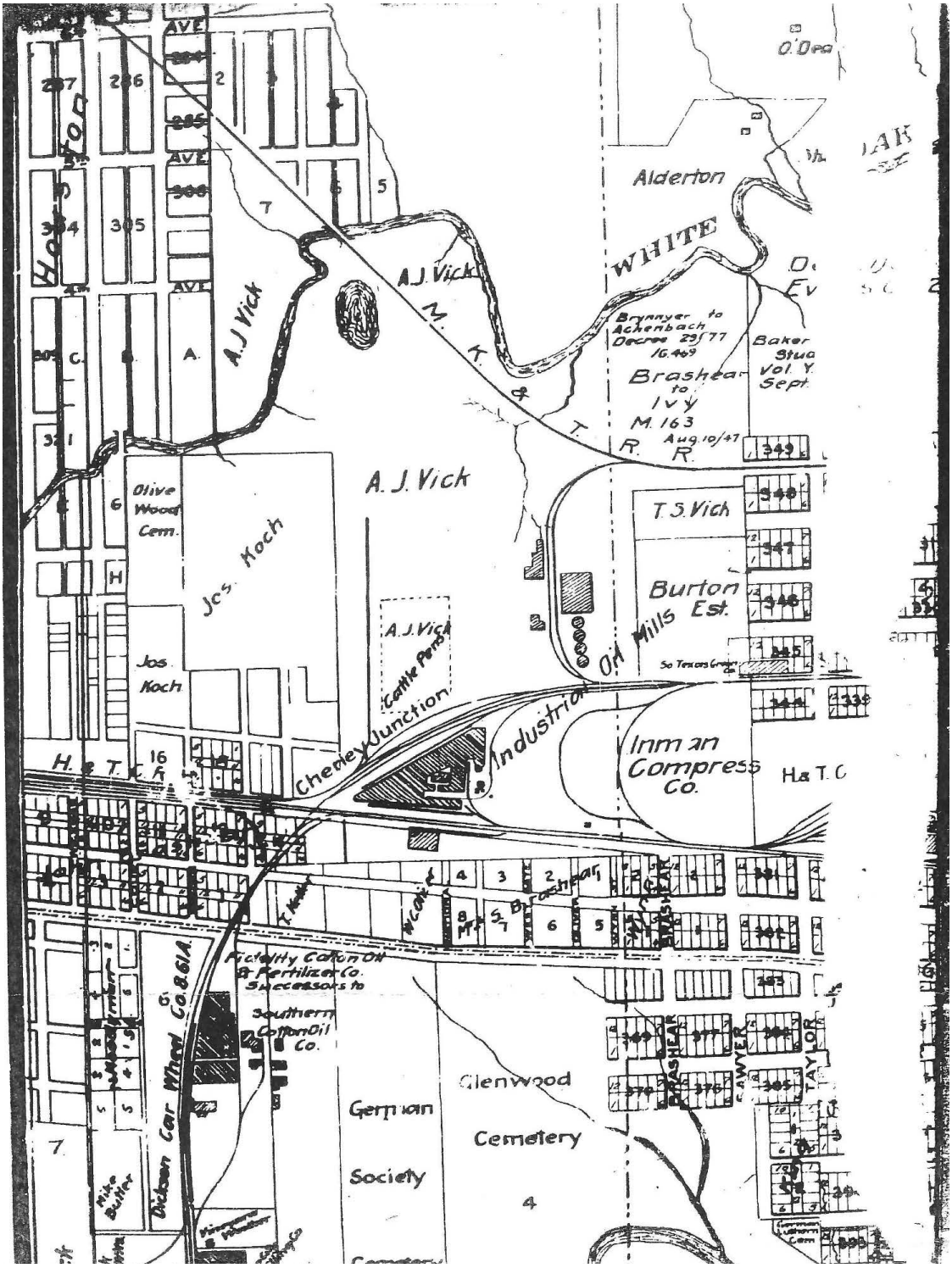


Figure 7
1924 Sanborn Map
Library of Congress

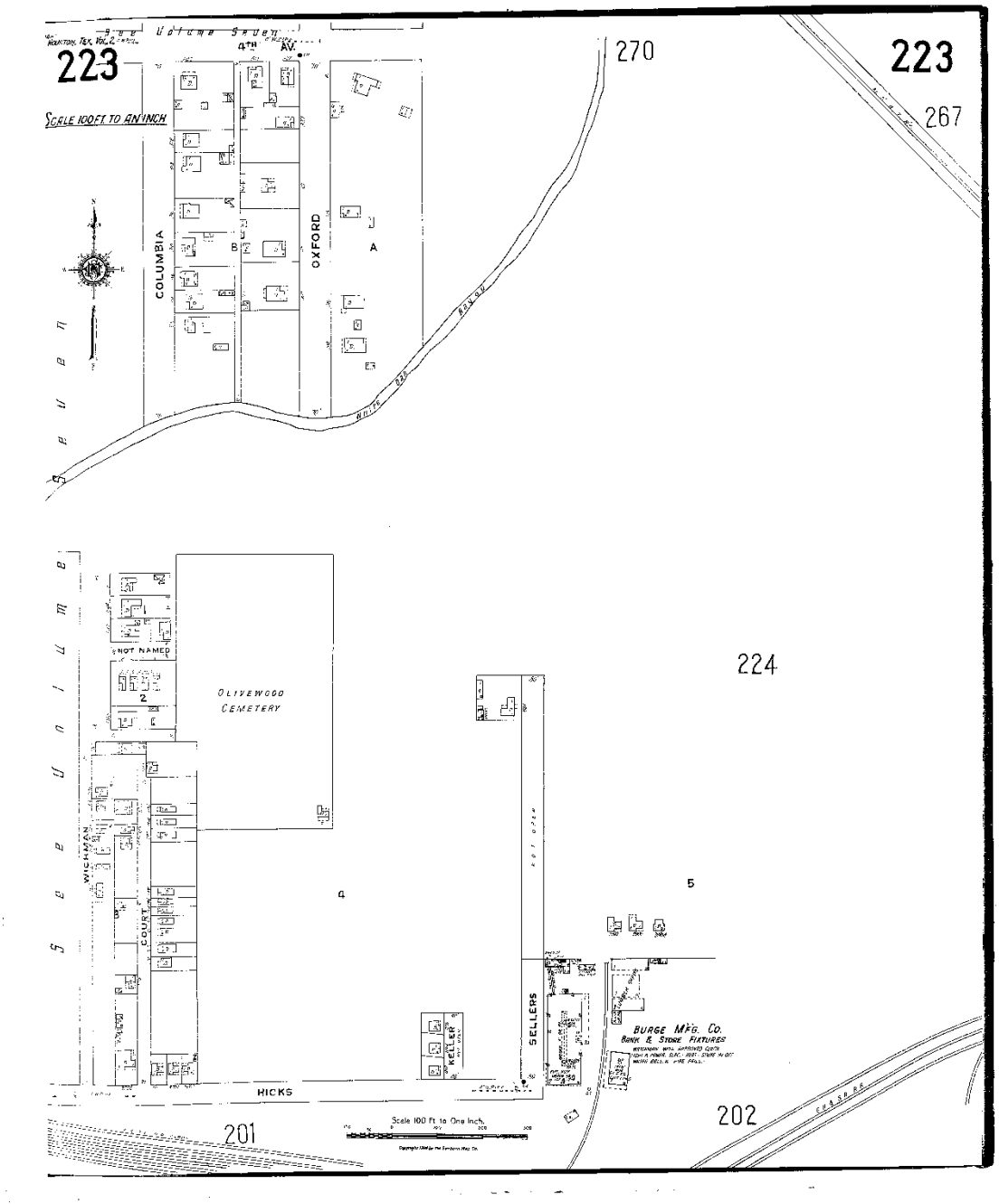


Figure 8
1934 Sanborn Map
Library of Congress

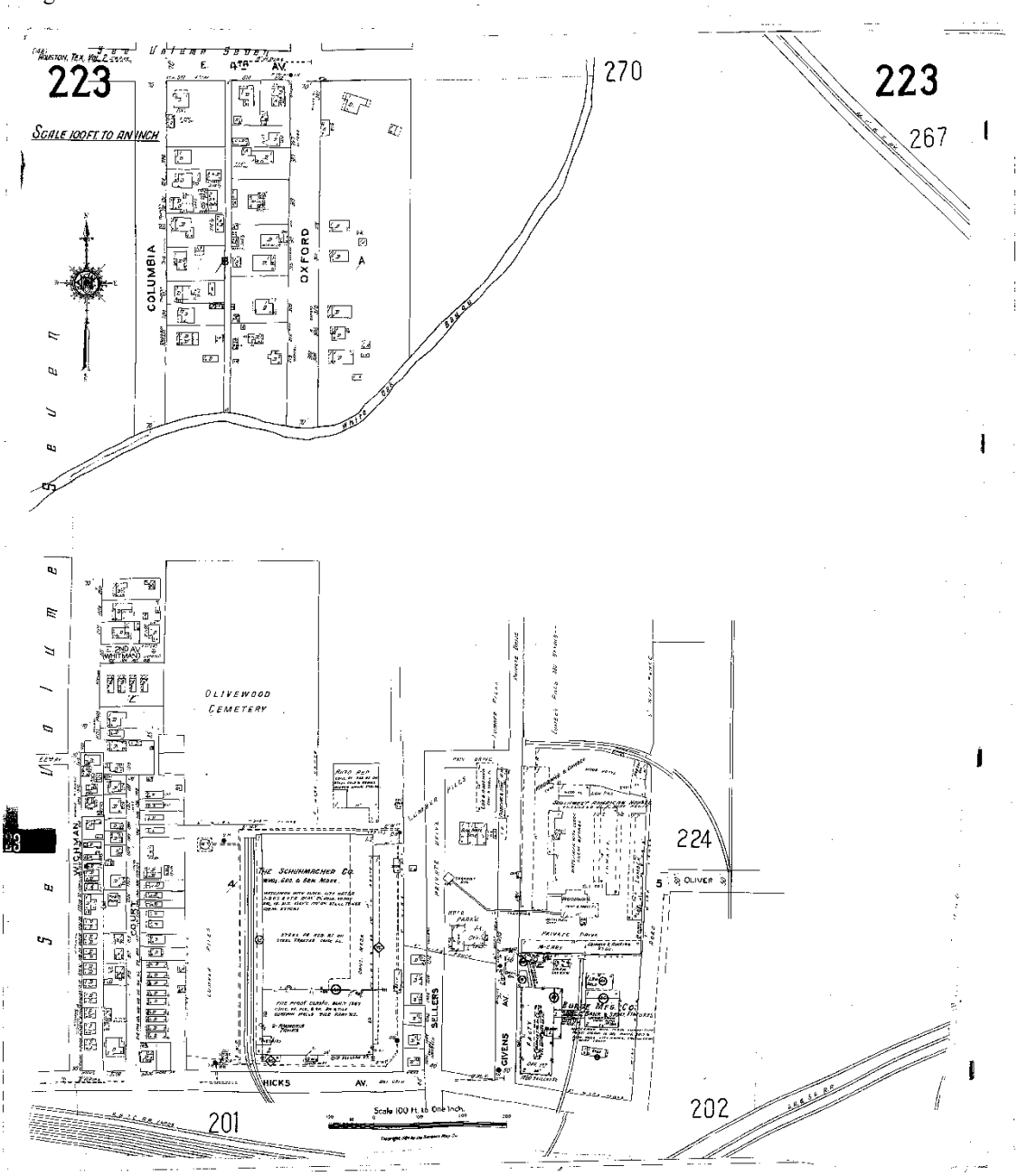


Figure 9
Oakwood Cemetery Annex Plat 1915
Travis County Plat Book 3, p.126

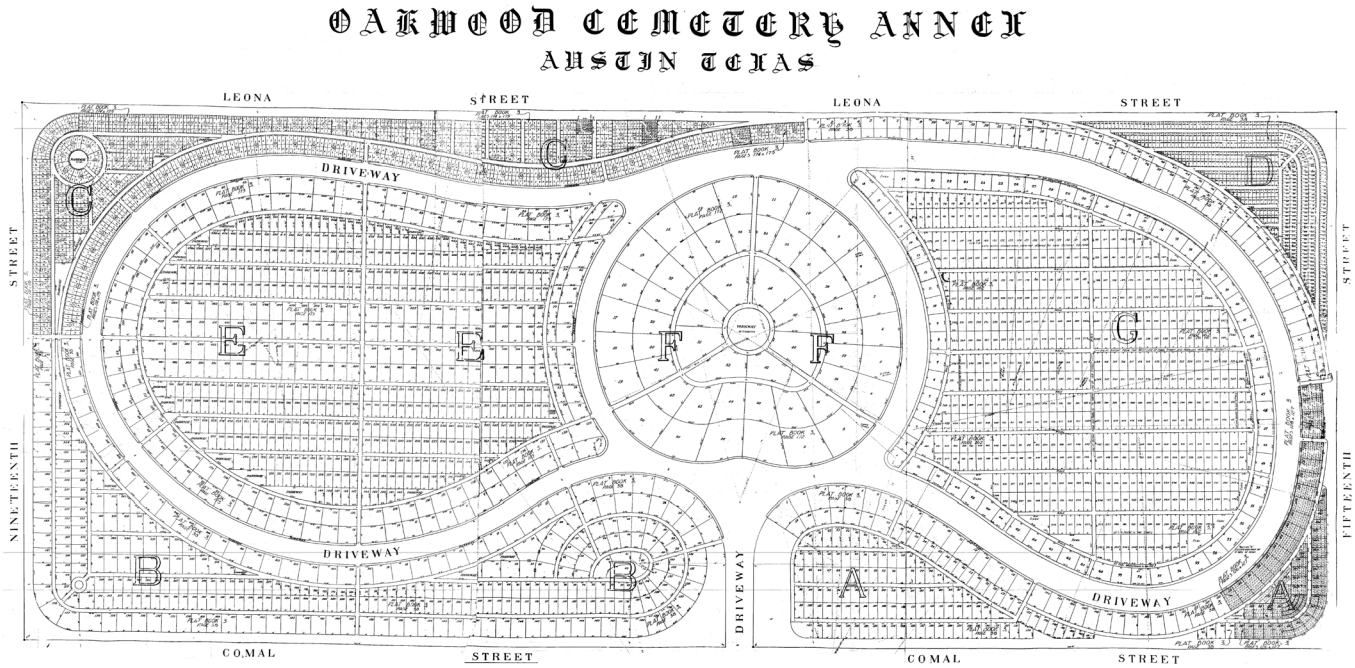


Figure 10
Oakland Cemetery Plat 1976
Powell & Powell Engineers Drawing E-99

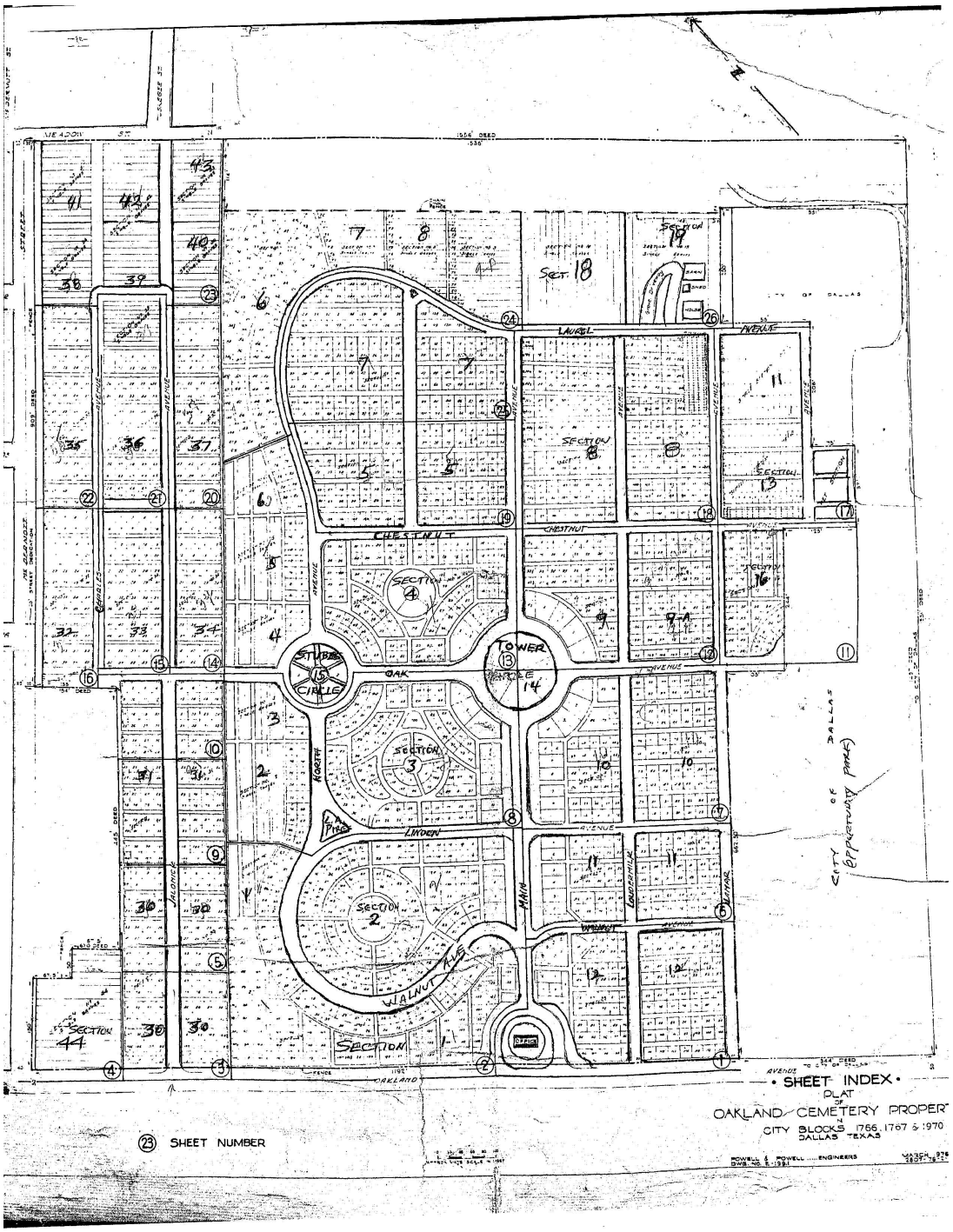


Figure 11
1958 Aerial Photograph Oakwood Cemetery, Waco
Historicaerials.com

Figure 12
1930 Aerial Photograph, Glenwood Cemetery, Houston
Historicaerials.com

Figure 13
Bethany Cemetery Plat
Travis County Deed Records

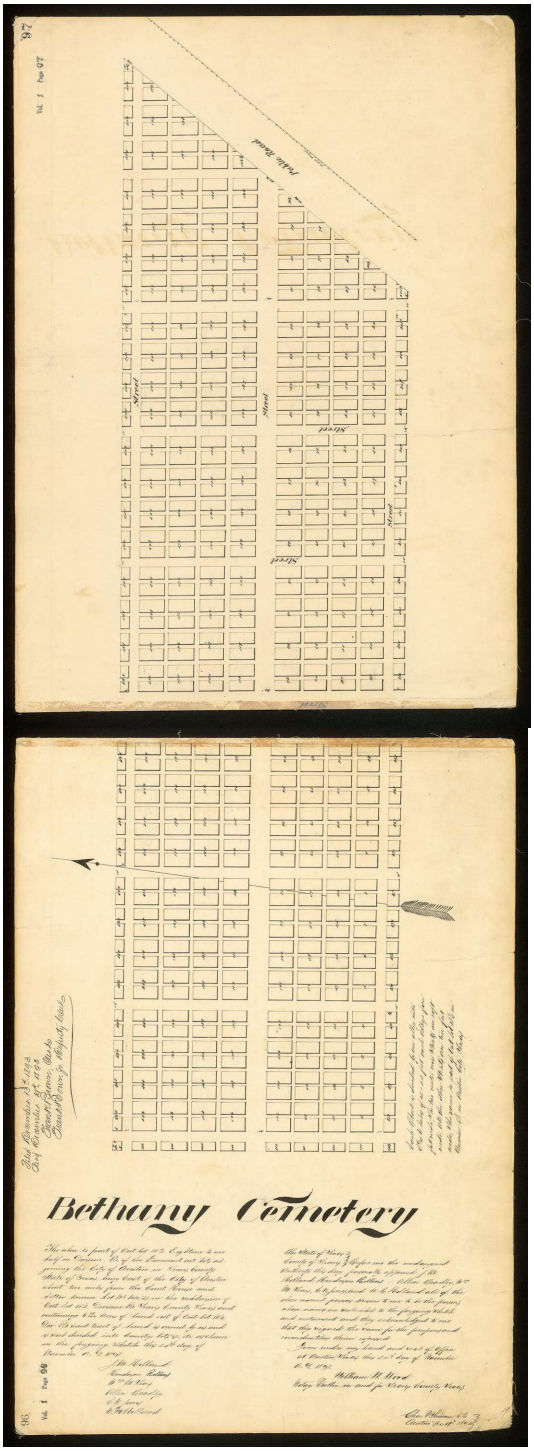
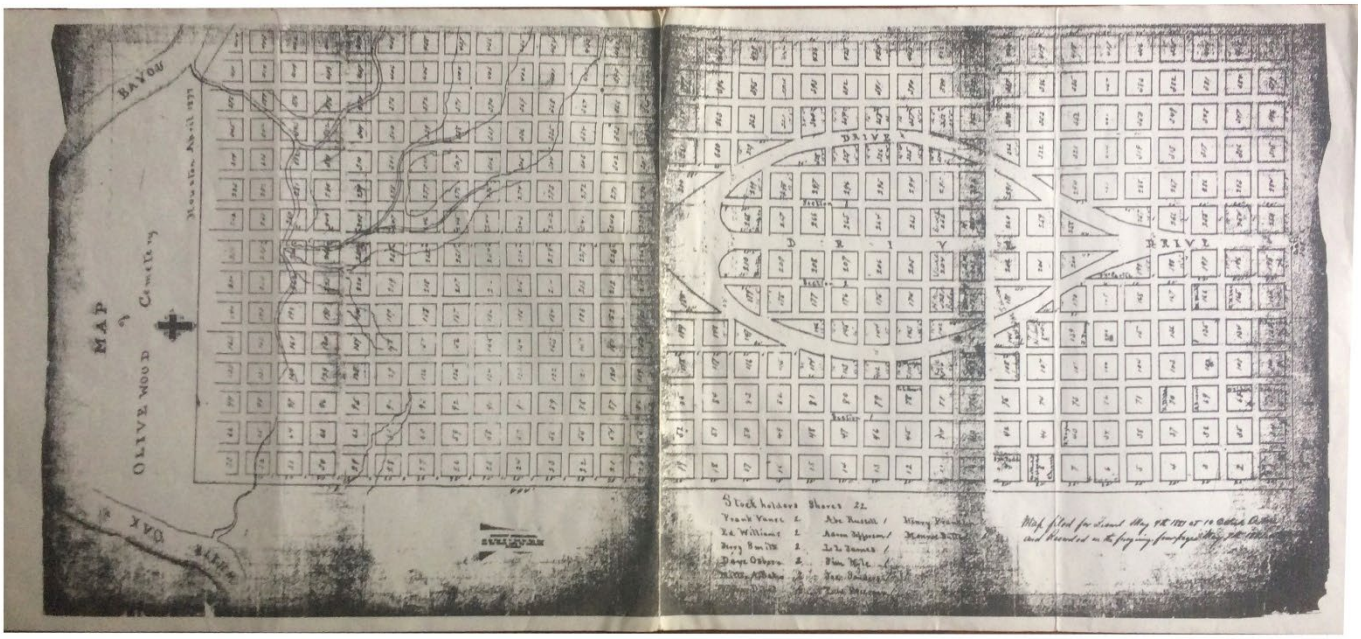


Figure 14
1877 Plat Map
Harris County Deed Records



Current Photographs

Photo 1. Cemetery Overview, camera facing southeast

Photo 2. Northwest curve of elliptical drive, camera facing south (Note curved and trapezoidal curbing to maintain driveway shape.)

Photo 3. Semicircular plot at the curve of the ellipse, camera facing east southeast

Photo 4. East side of elliptical drive, camera facing south

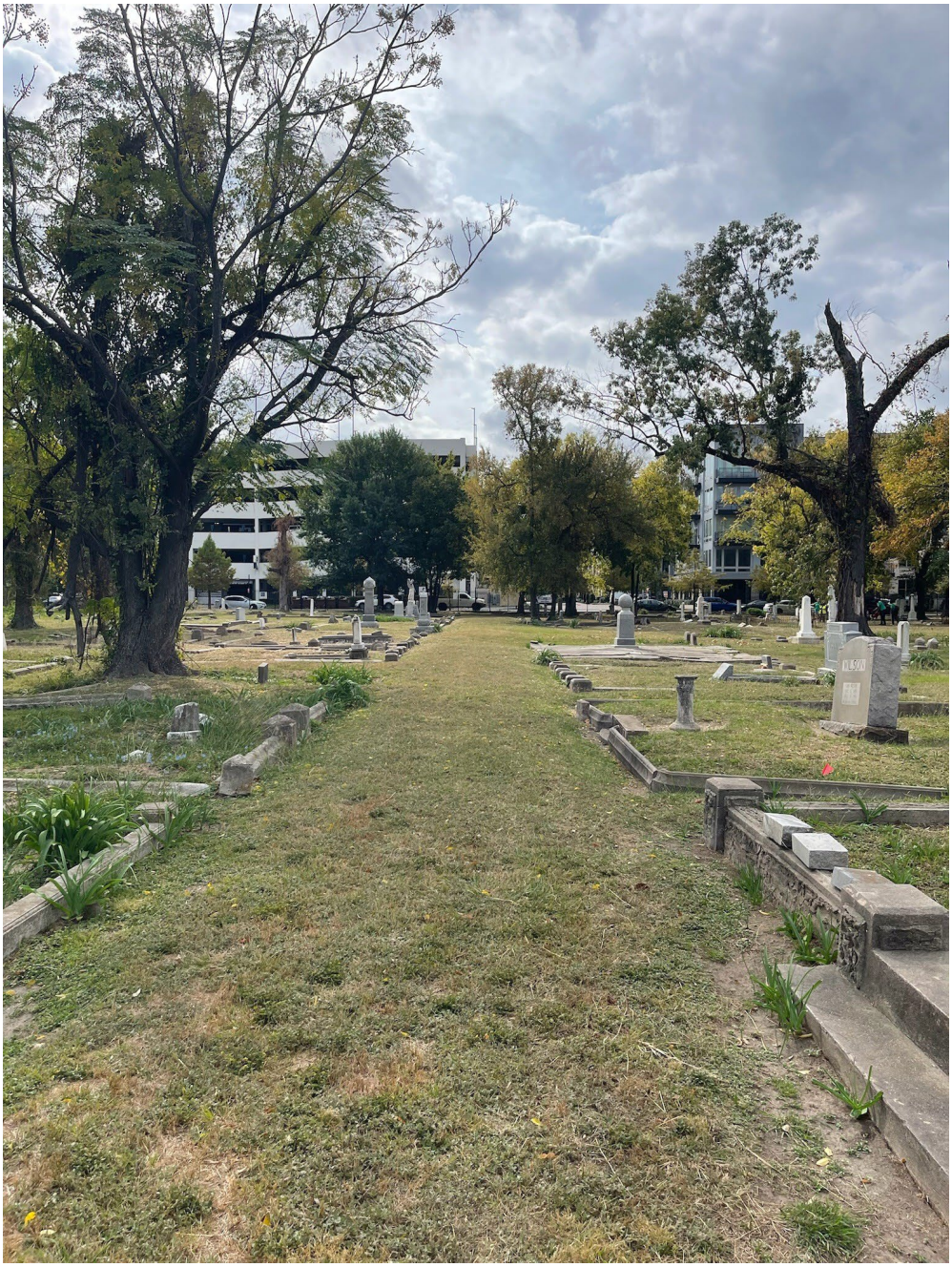


Photo 5. West side of elliptical drive, camera facing south-southeast

Photo 6. View toward ellipse, camera facing north

Photo 7. Geometric grave plot to accommodate drive, camera facing northeast

Photo 8. Gully erosion, camera facing northeast

Photo 9. Tiles at the Josey Plot

Photo 10. Edwards, Hardy, Jackson, and Godfrey plot showing tilework, camera facing west

Photo 11. Moses Curtis marker with Oddfellows symbol, camera facing northwest

Photo 12. William Payne marker with Masonic symbol, camera facing west

Photo 13. Grave marker with diamond cut out planter, camera facing west

Photo 14. Percy Whitfield marker with tile, camera facing west

Photo 15. Grave marker with plate, camera facing west

Photo 16. Jeffrey Williams grave marker with shell

Photo 17. Johnnie Winfield grave marker with knife, camera facing southeast

Photo 18. Jane Righton, Major Righton, and Annie Righton grave marker, camera facing northeast

Photo 19. W.A. Harris grave marker, camera facing south

Photo 20. Curbing with FDS tile and planters, camera facing south

Photo 21. Lizzie Smith grave marker

Photo 22. Mrs. Nellie Nettles grave marker, camera facing west

Photo 23. Charley Mitchell Jr. grave marker, camera facing west

Photo 24. Williams family plot with blue tile and upside down "s", camera facing west

Photo 25. Charley Moore grave marker with reinforced concrete crib, camera facing northeast

Photo 26. Grave marker with arch formerly enclosed with glass, camera facing southwest

Photo 27. Concrete Lion marking grave, camera facing east-northeast

Photo 28. Angel Statue, camera facing east

Photo 29. John Stinson marker showing whitewash, camera facing east

Photo 30. Grave marker with floral design and shell, camera facing west

Photo 31. Isles grave marker with floral motif, camera facing northwest

Photo 32. H.W. Markham grave marker, camera facing southwest

Photo 33. Grave marker with scroll motif, camera facing southwest

Photo 34. Oddfellows marker resembling Woodmen of the World marker, camera facing southeast

Photo 35. Ferrill grave marker, camera facing east

Photo 36. Maggie Lyons grave marker, camera facing east-northeast

Photo 37. Grave marker with Classical Revival influence, camera facing northeast

Photo 38. Toliver grave marker with pipe (in PVC) marking burial, camera facing west

Photo 39. Alice F. Love (?) Grave marker, camera facing east

Photo 40. Concrete and brick well or cistern, camera facing southeast

Photo 41. Doctor row, camera facing northeast

Photo 42. Headless statue, camera facing east

Photo 43. Rev. A.F. Jackson gravestone with floral motif, camera facing west

Photo 44. E. Mayo grave marker, camera facing west

Photo 45. Art deco influenced grave marker, camera facing southwest