

PRIDE AND PRESERVATION

Mountain View Cemetery



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*A Partnership between the African-American Churches
of Radford, Virginia, and Radford University*

vfh



RU, churches team up to reclaim cemetery

A \$125,000 grant would help support Mountain View Cemetery and create an oral history.

By Paul Dellinger
paul.dellinger@roanoke.com
(276) 228-4752

RADFORD — Some of the graves at Mountain View Cemetery are of slaves or their descendants. Others are those of black service people who fought for freedom in two world wars, Korea or Vietnam.

Separated by generations and life situations, some still have one thing in common: Their identities and the location of their resting places are unknown.

Mountain View was established in the late 1890s as a black cemetery along what is now Rock Road. That was when blacks could not be buried in white cemeteries. After the civil rights movement and desegregation laws, that changed.

"So the cemetery started to become less used," said Teresa Dickens, service learning coordinator and assistant director at Radford University's Experiential Learning and Career Development Center. And over the years, it fell into a state of disrepair and the burial sites were themselves



Mountain View was established in the late 1890s as a black cemetery along what is now Rock Road.

PAUL DELLINGER | The Roanoke Times

buried under weeds and brush.

In 2001, an effort was made to clear the cemetery's 5 or so acres of debris. It resulted in five traditionally black churches — Zion Hill Baptist, First Baptist, New Mount Olive United Methodist, Church of God in Christ and Liberty Full Gospel Fellowship — trying to keep it up.

Representatives of those churches approached Radford University for assistance. For the last five years, Radford University students have helped keep up the cemetery as part of a service-learning program. "As we have done that, we realized we wanted to do something more permanent," Dickens said.

Part of that something will

be an oral history project. At the end of February, 22 students working in pairs will begin interviewing 11 church members not only about the cemetery but about their own pasts.

The students from Melinda Wagner's anthropology classes will record the interviews on videotape and also transcribe them. The project is expected

to last for at least a semester. The resulting materials will be archived at the Christiansburg Institute, which started in 1866 as a high school for black students from Southwest Virginia and has been a cultural and history center since 1996.

Kathryn Jordan, director of the university's Experiential

See CEMETERY, 9

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Chapter One

The Need for Heritage Preservation: Developing a Plan for Revitalization

By *Mary B. LaLone, Professor of Anthropology, Radford University*

With student researchers *Morgan L. Hawkins, Ashley N. Herwald, Laura L. Hale, Phelan W. Kelly, Lydia Rathbun, Louis A. Campbell, and Iris Dickerson*

*Cemetery revitalization links the past and the present—it requires development of a plan to retrieve the past in ways that feasibly can be carried out by today's communities. One such community is Radford, Virginia, where the historic African-American Mountain View Cemetery is in need of restoration and renewal. In 2007, Radford University anthropologist Mary LaLone and a group of her students began work on the cemetery project, which resulted in a consulting report, **Mountain View Cemetery: Ideas and Recommendations** (Lalone et al. 2007). Dr. LaLone specializes in applying an anthro-planning approach to work with communities on cultural heritage preservation projects. In this chapter she and her students:*

- ❖ *Explain the need for developing a heritage preservation plan for Mountain View Cemetery;*
- ❖ *Describe the team's research investigation and methods used to develop a plan;*
- ❖ *Point out special features of African-American burial patterns present at Mountain View Cemetery and emphasize the importance of balancing heritage preservation with caretaking needs in the restoration plan; and*
- ❖ *Present the team's recommendations and phasing suggestions for cemetery revitalization.*

Background

The history of Mountain View Cemetery reflects the changing social, economic, and political landscapes of African-Americans in southwest Virginia. The cemetery is located on Rock Road, in a section believed to have been part of the famous Wilderness Road, blazed in the late 1700s as an early thoroughfare to connect travelers to the West. The Rock Road area, which once experienced the traffic of pioneers, became home to many of Radford's African-Americans during segregation, and through integration (Carter 2/22/07; Virginia Tourism Corporation 2008; Green 2003, 2008).

As with many African-American cemeteries, the land was in customary use as a burial site long before this designation was clearly recorded in deeds. Ms. Carter, a member of one of the cemetery's lead churches, has been conducting archival research to track down the historic deeds to the land. So far, the earliest deed she has located dates back to 1912 when the site was owned by Samuel Palmer and was a part of the Pettis Methodist Church. The cemetery was much smaller then and was called the Samuel Palmer Cemetery, after the gentleman who owned it. It wasn't until 1919 that the site expanded to make it the five-acre plot it is today. According to Ms. Carter, this additional land was donated by Elizabeth Adams to the African-American community for use as a cemetery.

After a fire in which all records of those buried in the cemetery were lost, the Pettis Methodist Church relocated to the west end of the property and was renamed New Mount Olive Methodist Church. The church later moved to its current location on nearby Russell Avenue (Carter 2/22/07).

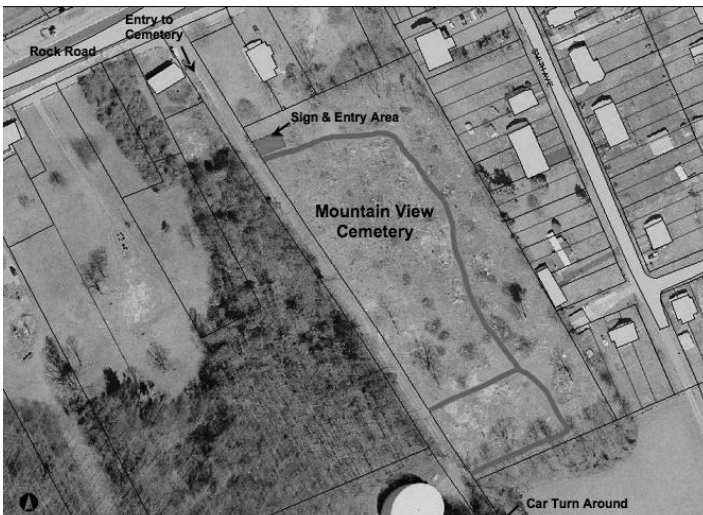
Mountain View Cemetery continued to be used during the 20th century, but the dual social forces of integration and modernization led to a steady reduction in burials and a great decline in site maintenance. Following integration, many of Radford's African-American community members began using cemeteries that were once closed to them. Also, during integration many of the younger generation migrated out of the region to find jobs and broaden their economic horizons. Eventually, as families moved away or chose to be buried in other cemeteries, the Mountain View Cemetery began its decline.

By the 1990s, the site had become so overgrown with trees and vegetation that it was neither very visible nor remembered as a cemetery site to those outside the African-American community. This brought concern to the community families and churches, especially concern for the vanishing heritage that the cemetery represents. As the 1990s drew to a close, Shawn Price, a former Radford University student with generations of family buried at Mountain View, initiated a first effort to clear and restore the cemetery (Gangloff 2001). A community-based movement grew out of this venture, bringing together community members and churches to reclaim the cemetery and honor its historic value. Five local African-American churches have felt a special sense of attachment to the cemetery: First Baptist Church, New Mount Olive United Methodist Church, Liberty Full Gospel Fellowship, Church of God in Christ Lorene, and Zion Hill Baptist Church. Members of the churches joined together to form a cooperative grassroots community group, and the

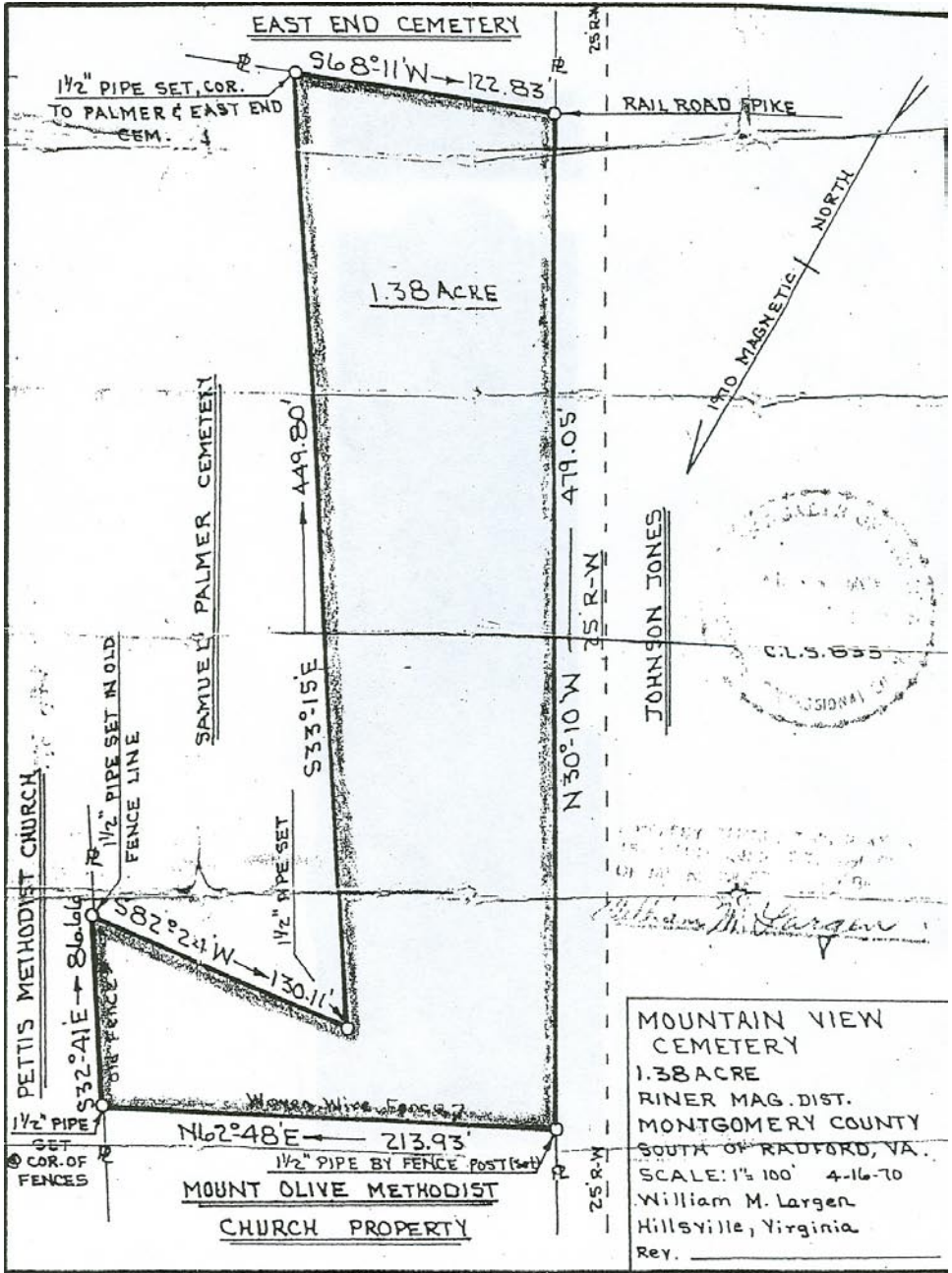
Mountain View Cemetery Committee was born.

Radford University's Center for Experiential Learning, spearheaded by Dr. Kathryn Jordan and Teresa Dickens, joined the effort and Mountain View Cemetery became a key project for service learning activities. Through their efforts, university-community Clean-Up Days have made great inroads into clearing trash and brush from the cemetery. They also actively enlisted assistance from professors, classes, and student groups to develop service learning projects focused on preserving the cemetery and the history it represents. Now, this movement has become a multidisciplinary effort involving Radford University students, faculty, staff, and community members working together to revive a piece of Radford's history.

The Mountain View Cemetery contains many family plots. A large number of gravesites are unidentified and are only marked by stones, plants, or depressions. Some gravesite identities are known through markers, records, and oral traditions passed down in the collective family-community memory. The family knowledge is now being linked to the archaeological record, with new information coming to light through the survey work of Dr. Cliff Boyd and his students. (That work is detailed in Chapter 2.) Clearly, it is important to continue the documentation work and retrieve as much of the African-American history from Mountain View Cemetery as possible. Beyond historical identification/retrieval, however, the heritage preservation challenge for the community is to find ways to develop a plan for restoration and long-term maintenance of the cemetery.



Overview Map of the Mountain View Cemetery, generated from City of Radford Geographic Information System website in 2007 and overlaid with information showing the path and proposed Entry Area. The walking path, which makes use of an existing minimally-marked roadbed, would best be limited to foot-traffic to minimize disturbance. The Sign and Entry Area in the northwest corner is located at the logical first point of entry in a section that appears to be free of burials.



NO-70-A-49

Deed map of the Mountain View Cemetery (Montgomery County, Virginia, 4/16/70). This map marks where the Pettis Methodist Church and Mount Olive Methodist Church were located prior to their destruction. The section of the map, located to the left of the backward "L," was Samuel Palmer's Cemetery, which was a part of the Pettis Methodist Church. The property outlined as a backward "L" was given by Elizabeth Adams in 1919. These two properties combined make up the five-acre Mountain View Cemetery (Carter 2/22/07).

The Applied Anthropology Project: Developing a Plan of Action

In 2007, my “Applied Anthropology” class was given a significant heritage preservation problem to solve:

Mountain View Cemetery, a material piece and symbol of Radford’s African-American heritage, had fallen into disrepair. The community-university grassroots effort to reclaim the cemetery had begun, and was in need of a studied plan-of-action to guide community-based efforts for preservation and maintenance of the site as a focal point of family, community, and regional pride.

The challenge posed to the class was to work as a consulting team under my direction, and to “apply” their anthropological skills to research the problem, then to prepare a consulting report with a set of recommendations for revitalizing and maintaining the Mountain View cemetery as a community-focused heritage site.

Applied Anthropology takes research skills, methods, and concerns – in this case, focusing on issues of heritage preservation – and puts them “to work,” applying them to projects involving community problem-solving and policy-making. When anthropological methods and perspectives are utilized in planning projects, such as this one, it is an approach that I’ve termed anthro-planning (LaLone 2005a; in press). In this particular project, we attempted to research ways to address the community’s desire and need to revitalize and care for the cemetery landscape while also carefully handling heritage preservation.

The project was carried out from January to April 2007. The specific goal was to focus the team’s efforts on researching and developing a set of recommendations for the cemetery’s revitalization, including restoration and maintenance, funding, and designation as a historic site. A team of seven undergraduate students worked collaboratively for the 15-week period of investigation and writing. The students carried out a substantial research pursuit and learned their craft experientially while simultaneously assisting the community heritage preservation effort. To me, this is the best form of “service learning.” The class was organized to carry the team through the full process of an Applied Anthropology consulting project.

The project began with an **Orientation Stage** designed to give the research team the necessary background and a sense of the problem, including the following:

- ❖ Mountain View Cemetery history (through discussions with community committee leader Sarah Carter 2/22/07, 2/27/07);
- ❖ Concerns of the Mountain View Cemetery Committee about maintaining the cemetery site (though an orientation session with Committee members on 1/23/07);

- ❖ Review of work undertaken elsewhere across the country to restore African-American cemeteries (through excellent materials from the Chicora Foundation, Inc. 2008a-g; Lynn Rainville 2008a,b; and Lynette Strangstad 1986, 1988);
- ❖ Literature on Applied Anthropologists' roles in community planning (including publications by Margaret Gwynne 2003; Alexander Ervin 2004; and Mary LaLone 2005a, b, and in press).

Next came the **Research Stage** in which the group engaged in more in-depth "fact-finding." The team broke into two groups to investigate the following topics:

1. Revitalization of the Physical Site Landscaping Maintenance & Caretaking Signs & Entry Area Security & Trash Removal	Principal Researchers Laura L. Hale Louis A. Campbell Lydia Rathbun Phelan W. Kelly
2. Historic, Funding & Organizational Aspects Historic Recognition Funding Organization & Sustainability	Principal Researchers Morgan L. Hawkins Ashley N. Herwald Iris Dickerson

The fact-finding stage involved investigation of multiple types of materials, including library and internet sources on African-American cemetery restoration and procedures for cemetery restoration/maintenance in general (see Bibliography), site visits to other African-American cemeteries for potential models, and interviews with knowledgeable resource people on specialized topics. For example, Commonwealth of Virginia archaeologist Tom Klatka gave advice on obtaining historic designation for the cemetery; Dr. Lynn Rainville of Sweet Briar College near Lynchburg, Va., discussed her work on African-American cemetery preservation in Virginia's Albemarle and Amherst counties; and Roger Hale, a landscape expert from Salem, Va., reviewed various aspects of physical landscaping for the site.

Without doubt, the most significant part of the research involved learning about community desires and needs for the cemetery. The team acquired community-based information in a variety of ways:

- ❖ Some important feelings/desires/needs were conveyed directly to the team during project planning (11/13/06), the team orientation meeting with members of the Committee (1/23/07), a cemetery site visit with community members (2/10/07), and class visits from community members on numerous occasions. Community members who gave time and valued input include Lulabelle Lewis, George and Betty Turner, Sarah Carter, Queen Alexander, and Carlton English;
- ❖ Information was conveyed to the team by Center for Experiential Learning staff member Teresa Dickens, who has worked extensively with the Mountain View Cemetery Committee over the past six years;

- ❖ Additional valuable information was conveyed by community members at a question-and-answer session with Dr. Rainville during her visit to Radford University (3/5/07); and
- ❖ Toward the end of the research stage, the team attended a meeting of the Mountain View Cemetery Committee where they asked Committee members specific questions and received direct input on ideas under development by the team (3/6/07).



Consultant Report Presented To Mountain View Cemetery Committee

Radford University Applied Anthropology Research Team, standing, left to right: Dr. Mary LaLone, Ashley Herwald, Louis Campbell, Laura Hale, Morgan Hawkins, Iris Dickerson, Phelan Kelly, and Lydia Rathbun. Community committee members, seated left to right: Lulabelle Lewis, Sarah Carter, and Queen Alexander. Standing on right: Teresa Dickens, Assistant Director of Service Learning, Radford University

As the project shifted into the **Analysis and Write-up Stages**, numerous brainstorming sessions were held in which team members shared their research ideas and jointly contributed to the development of a set of revitalization recommendations. In the style of anthro-planning, we intentionally merged the Radford community-based information with information gained on African-American cemetery preservation procedures in an effort to tailor a revitalization plan that might be workable for the Mountain View Cemetery Committee. The team's final assignment was to prepare the written recommendations in the form of a 116-page consulting report, **Mountain View Cemetery: Ideas and Recommendations**, presented to the committee on May 2, 2007. The report includes 10 sections:

1. Background and Methodology
2. Recommendations and Phasing, followed by specific recommendations for:
3. Historical Preservation
4. Historic Recognition
5. Signs and an Entry Area
6. Landscaping
7. Maintenance and Caretaking
8. Security and Trash Removal
9. Funding
10. Community Organization and Sustainability

African-American Cemetery Patterns

Research on African-American cemetery restoration quickly taught us that these cemeteries display landscape patterns distinct from Anglo-American cemeteries. It also made us aware that cemetery restoration efforts need to recognize and preserve the distinctive features that reflect the African-American heritage rather than wipe them away. There is abundant literature that emphasizes the differences between African-American and Anglo-American cemetery patterns. Some of the best resources are the Internet publications made available through extensive work on African-American cemetery restoration by the Chicora Foundation in South Carolina (2008a-c) and Dr. Lynn Rainville (2007) in the Piedmont region of Virginia.

The public tends to have a stereotypical image that cemeteries should have a highly “manicured” appearance with perfectly-green mowed grass and uniformly matching gravestones lined up in rows. But this image is based on a late 20th-century Anglo-American model and doesn’t take cultural diversity into account. In reality, cemeteries serve as *spatial reflections* of the history and customs of the people who use them. The African-American cultural history includes slavery, segregation, and social-economic experiences and ideological customs that differ from Anglo-Americans. As a result, African-American cemeteries are unique and very distinct from the orderly, manicured “Rose Hills” appearance found in many Anglo-American cemeteries.

The work on African-American cemetery restoration points to very different heritage patterns in the landscape of these cemeteries. Traditional African-American cemeteries tend to reflect a history of long use and strong family connections. Although the placement of gravestones might appear random to an unknowing viewer, the markers are typically placed in family plots or in related groupings. The graves are often marked differently with natural and “living” memorials, and they are maintained differently, not meant to have a perfectly manicured appearance. According to the Rainville and Chicora Foundation’s experiences, some of the most characteristic differences include:

- ❖ The use of lower-cost, “natural” items such as **field stones and plants** to mark graves, rather than the higher proportion of expensive permanent markers more typically found in Anglo-American cemeteries;
- ❖ The use of **temporary, moveable markers**, which allows families to make room for graves to be added into their kinship area over time, rather than permanent, formal markers that don’t allow this flexibility;
- ❖ The presence of **grave depressions and mounded graves** without attempts to sow grass on the graves or create special manicured vegetation as in Anglo-American cemeteries; and
- ❖ Less of an ideology of a cemetery as a landscape perfectly controlled and park-like, a type of “heaven on earth,” as typically seen in Anglo-American cemeteries.

All these features are found at Mountain View Cemetery – graves marked by small stone and metal markers, yucca plants, and field stones, as well as a landscape filled with depressions and mounds. As is common in African-American cemeteries, some gravestones in the cemetery are chipped and broken. The Mountain View Cemetery also has many forms of grave markers typical of traditional African-American cemeteries – graves marked by wooden and metal stakes or natural fieldstones (rather than crafted stones), even in some cases marked by living yucca plants. Gravestone features in traditional African-American cemeteries can sometimes appear indistinguishable from the natural landscape. For this reason, often they are accidentally removed or destroyed by property owners unknowingly. Many African-American gravestones do not have writing or inscriptions on the stones because, according to Dr. Lynn Rainville, “during the early 19th Century, laws made it illegal to teach an enslaved individual to read and write, which suggests an emphasis on group mortuary practices rather than marking the death of an individual” (Rainville 2008b).

These features make cemetery restoration challenging. All of these burial items can easily be disturbed through clean-up operations done by



The Mountain View Cemetery displays characteristics common to African-American cemeteries: a variety of grave markers, including yucca plants and stone markers of various sizes in a landscape of depressions, mounds, and tree stumps.

people not properly trained to recognize plants, fieldstones, or small markers as significant burial features. Tree and brush clearing has already made the cemetery much more visible and accessible. This initial clearing and cleanup was important for Mountain View Cemetery because the cemetery had become overgrown over the years, making maintenance difficult. But future revitalization efforts: 1) need to take care about the way that cleanup operations are carried out and 2) need to take care not to wipe away the traditional burial features and layout through overly-uniform landscaping. Instead, these features need to be treated carefully, and even could be used as educational devices to further public understanding of cultural diversity (through heritage signs and educational techniques that address questions like, "Why don't things appear uniform?").

As the Mountain View Cemetery Committee undertakes revitalization of the cemetery, it will want to ***consider ways to maintain the special, traditional character of the African-American cemetery heritage while at the same time addressing its landscaping and maintenance needs.*** While ease of maintenance is a high priority, it would be a shame to lose the special heritage of African-American cemetery landscaping to an overly stereotypical, manicured look. A nice balance would be to find ways to make maintenance relatively easy while retaining the best features of a traditional African-American cemetery.

A turning point in our investigation occurred when Dr. Lynn Rainville spent a day consulting with our research team and members of the Mountain View Cemetery Committee (3/5/07). As the team and Radford community members listened to her presentation on the distinctiveness of African-American cemetery patterns and ways to preserve those patterns, it became clear that there are feasible, low-maintenance ways to revitalize the Mountain View Cemetery while maintaining its distinct historic character. For example, a common problem in cemetery maintenance is that mowing and weed-eating equipment can further damage the burial markers (breaking stones and tearing plants and moveable markers out of the ground). While grass might be used for the paths, Dr. Rainville suggested using alternative forms of groundcover for the burial areas to minimize the potential for more damage. Additional benefits are that low-maintenance ground covers might prove less costly and less-labor intensive to maintain than using grass for the full five-acre site.

The team's research uncovered excellent resources providing detailed guidance on cemetery restoration and maintenance procedures. Some of the best resources include materials by the Chicora Foundation, Dr. Lynn Rainville, Rootsweb, Saving Graves, Strangstad, and the Texas Historical Commission. Many of these ideas were considered as we developed a plan tailored to meet the needs of the Mountain View Cemetery; the team also recommended that the Committee use these references to learn the "best practices" for conservation and maintenance ranging from gravestone cleaning techniques to cemetery caretaking. For a complete list of topics, see the Bibliography at the end of this chapter.

The main objective of the revitalization plan is to strike a good **balance** between heritage preservation and the need for relatively easy and low-cost site

maintenance. The team's recommendations attempt to offer suggestions for easily "doable" landscaping and maintenance activities that are "phased in" a step at a time, while also recommending ways that the history and heritage aspects of this African-American cemetery may be preserved and celebrated.

Recommendations and Phasing Suggestions

The next sections present a summary of the Applied Anthropology team's recommendations for the Mountain View Cemetery revitalization, and demonstrate how the efforts can be "phased in" during a four-step process.

"REVITALIZATION" is a most appropriate word to describe the efforts that are underway – since the term "revitalization" conveys the sense of a renewal or revival of a cemetery that reflects the social contributions of African-American families in Radford, Virginia. We envision Mountain View Cemetery as being revitalized to become a nicely maintained cemetery that is the focus of African-American community pride and heritage – a place to remember the past, preserve family and community history, become a focus of church and community solidarity, forge ties between the community and Radford University in collaborative service, and serve as a remembrance of the African-American contributions to Radford and the region.

The team attempted to find ways to address the community's desire and need to revitalize and care for the landscape while carefully handling heritage preservation at this historic African-American cemetery. This requires careful actions – actions that beautify the location without harming the historic record contained in the graves and grave markers so distinctive of the African-American heritage. Two themes especially flow through the recommendations: 1) the careful balance of both heritage preservation and landscaping needs and 2) the desire to propose feasible, sustainable step-by-step phasing possibilities.

Overview of the Revitalization Phases

Cemetery revitalization will need to be developed in a series of stages. Some steps can be taken fairly easily to launch the cemetery revitalization; other features may follow as joint community-university-city efforts, and yet other suggestions will require more extensive fund raising. To make the plan realistic, suggestions are organized into four phases. The premise behind the phasing is to identify activities that could be done early with limited resources to preserve the cemetery's historical and archaeological record and establish a community base of support, then to follow with successive stages requiring greater commitments of funds and labor from the community and other sources. The phasing starts with early activities that preserve the archaeology/history, begin cemetery landscaping/maintenance, and also work to heighten the "presence" of the cemetery's heritage in the Radford community (which, in turn, hopefully leads to contributions of community-based funds and labor). The second, third, and fourth phases propose activities that could "build" on earlier phases as additional funds are acquired for the revitalization.

Phase One—Immediate Steps using Community and Radford University Resources:

- 1. Preserve the cemetery’s historical record** at this point in time through archaeology and photo documentation before any additional damage might occur: the historical documentation of the gravestones needs to be completed to preserve the cemetery’s historical record, before additional clearing, landscaping, or other steps take place that might destroy the archaeological/historical integrity of the site;
- 2. Heighten the “presence” of the cemetery and its history** through some simple activities: a preliminary sign can be placed so everyone knows about the Mountain View Cemetery to promote public awareness, and preliminary signage could identify the cemetery’s history and its security/contact information. Also the Committee can begin procedures to seek historic recognition and can investigate possibilities for starting a Mountain View Cemetery website to promote awareness and create an on-line archive for the historical/archaeological information retrieved from the site;
- 3. Begin initial landscaping/maintenance activities:** debris can be carefully raked off of the ground, rotten stumps can be knocked over, and the existing path through the cemetery could be more clearly designated with markers so that visitors stay on the path and graves are not disturbed; the gravestones can be gently cleaned and the site de-weeded;



Example of an entry area with a kiosk-style sign. This sign was constructed by the Coal Mining Heritage Association of Montgomery County, Va., with community-donated labor and materials for the Coal Mining Heritage Park, located in McCoy. A donated bench provides a resting spot nearby.

This view of the cemetery shows the location next to the fence (upper right corner) recommended for the Sign and Entry Area.



4. Apply for small grants and initiate fund raising campaign. The Mountain View Cemetery Committee can organize these activities while **beginning to apply for small grants**, contacting people for **donations** of funds and materials, and organizing a **neighborhood watch** to discourage vandalism.

In **Phase Two** the Mountain View Cemetery Committee might undertake a number of short-range steps to revitalize the cemetery with the availability of slightly more funds and labor. These activities could be accomplished by applying for larger grants and generating help from a list of local organizations, clubs, and businesses. At this point, we recommend that the community begin **constructing a more permanent Sign and Entry Area** for the cemetery: a place where signage could identify the cemetery and educate the visitor about the cemetery's historical significance, where family members could gather, and even perhaps where the elderly could have a place to sit. An ideal location for an entry area is in the northwest corner of the site, next to the wooden fence (see the site map for location). Located next to the road, this point is the first place that a visitor would logically enter the site. Dr. Cliff Boyd conducted an archaeological survey of this location and notes in his report that the area appears to be free of burials (Boyd 2007), so graves would not be disturbed. While different styles of signage could be used, we tend to favor a community-built information kiosk for Phase Two. Such a structure could be built using community labor and donated materials and would offer a fair amount of space for posting heritage information. Phase Two also might generate awareness-building by developing resources, such as a website or informational pamphlets to educate the community. In addition, the community can begin stump removal and filling in the larger depressions, repairing and resetting gravestones, and providing trashcans during this time.

A **Third, middle-range development Phase** might be carried out if the Mountain View Cemetery Committee is successful in obtaining more funds and labor. To increase recognition, historic celebrations at the cemetery could continue to take place to attract community members, and a "Preliminary Information Form" could be submitted to obtain official historic designation for the site. Further development of the website may help generate funds and volunteer services, and the Committee can continue to apply for larger grants. For the entry area, the Committee can consider ways to enhance the signs. Creating a schedule for Community Cleanup Days is essential in the organization of revitalizing the Mountain View Cemetery. Topsoil can be purchased to fill in holes and depressions, more expensive path markers might be purchased, and a few trees might be planted. Decisions would need to be made on how much of the site could be planted to grass (perhaps just the paths), and how much could be planted to a low-maintenance ground cover that doesn't require mowing. The Committee could deal with site maintenance by acquiring mowing and grounds equipment and an appropriate-looking storage shed for housing the equipment.

The **Fourth Phase** could follow if a large grant or community donation is received to cover the labor and equipment costs needed for larger-scale revitalization. With significant funding, professionally-built signs could be placed in the entry area, and the Committee might hire a professional firm to repair gravestones. More topsoil could be purchased, and gravel or crushed stone could be placed in the paths and entry area if desired. The Committee might begin to contact landscapers and hire a lawn/grounds maintenance company to handle cemetery upkeep. The Committee also would want to continue collaborating with community members to help with long-term maintenance, continue to search for grants, and develop ways to create an on-going church fund for the cemetery.

Sustainability—A Look at More Detailed Ideas and Recommendations

This section provides greater detail on the team's recommendations for historical preservation and recognition, signs and an entry area, landscaping, maintenance and caretaking, security and trash removal, funding, and community organization activities for sustainability. Due to space limitations, the ideas are listed in bulleted form. Longer descriptions and explanations for these recommendations are provided in Chapters 3-10 of the full consulting report, which can be accessed on the Internet (see LaLone et al. 2007).

Phase One: Recommendations for activities that could take place early in the cemetery revitalization: 1) Complete the archaeological survey and historical documentation of graves/gravestones at the cemetery so that the information will be preserved for future generations; and 2) Undertake steps to launch the revitalization effort and increase the community's awareness of the cemetery's presence and history including:

❖ **Heritage Preservation**

- ❖ Continue the archaeological survey.
- ❖ Start historical preservation activities.
- ❖ Undertake photographic documentation of the cemetery burials to preserve a lasting record of the burials.
- ❖ Create a website for heritage preservation and support.

❖ **Historic Recognition**

- ❖ Get community involvement in the heritage preservation activities to increase public recognition of the cemetery's historical value.
- ❖ Brainstorm and organize historical facts pertaining to the Mountain View Cemetery and its place in the context of the region's heritage.
- ❖ Hold a community celebration commemorating Mountain View Cemetery's history.
- ❖ Work towards settling deed arrangements.

❖ **Signs and Entry Area**

- ❖ Create an entry area in the northwest corner near the fence (see the

cemetery map) and place a preliminary sign(s) as a quick, initial measure to promote public awareness. Such sign(s) would:

- ❖ Identify the “Mountain View Cemetery” to the public and contain a “No Trespassing” security statement.
- ❖ Provide contact information (for volunteering, future burials, etc.).
- ❖ Provide a brief statement indicating the site’s heritage significance as an historic African-American cemetery.
- ❖ State that a vehicular turn-around spot is located near the water tower since visitors may not be aware of its existence. Using this turn-around would help prevent unnecessary damage to the cemetery.
- ❖ Sign construction would be undertaken by the community and most likely would be of wood.

❖ **Landscaping**

- ❖ Use a chainsaw or regular saw to cut down some of the stumps.
- ❖ Knock over some of the rotten stumps with a shovel or other tool.
- ❖ Rake the debris off the ground (sticks, brush, trash, etc.) carefully so the cemetery will look nicer and will make the landscaping process easier.
- ❖ Designate the path through the cemetery with markers such as stones (paint the stones white to differentiate them from other grave markers) or utilize logs so people will know where to walk without disturbing graves.

❖ **Maintenance and Caretaking**

- ❖ Clean gravestones gently with soft brushes and water.
- ❖ Reposition broken gravestones to minimize water damage to inscriptions.
- ❖ De-weed the site.

❖ **Security and Trash Removal**

- ❖ Create a Neighborhood Watch program including the Mountain View Cemetery Committee, church groups, and neighbors who are located near the cemetery.
- ❖ Promote individual clean up as an initial measure—promoting the idea that visitors be respectful, responsible, and clean up if they see trash on the ground.

❖ **Funding**

- ❖ Contact community groups, such as church members, Radford University organizations, faculty, friends, and family, to help with initial funding and manual labor.
- ❖ Contact people who might be interested in making donations to the Mountain View Committee (for example, to acquire signs, maintenance equipment, and other needs).
- ❖ Apply for small grants to generate funds for the Committee.

❖ **Community Organization and Sustainability**

- ❖ Meet to discuss who the Mountain View Cemetery Committee would like to see maintain the cemetery and how it might be carried out.
- ❖ Begin looking to groups and organizations for help with the maintenance, such as clubs and organizations at Radford University or volunteer groups in the surrounding area.
- ❖ Begin brainstorming on how the churches could organize clean-up days and other support-raising events.
- ❖ Begin building relationships with local businesses that might donate needed materials for the cemetery (for signs, maintenance, etc.).

Phase Two: Recommendations for what the Mountain View Cemetery Committee might do as next, short-range steps to revitalize the cemetery, with availability of slightly more funds and labor.

❖ **Historic Recognition**

- ❖ Hold a community awareness-building event to celebrate the placement of permanent, more elaborate signs in the cemetery entry area. The team's recommendation is to build kiosk-type signage.
- ❖ Format historical information pertaining to Mountain View for possible use in a website, handouts, or bulletin boards to educate the community.
- ❖ Continue community celebrations commemorating Mountain View's history.
- ❖ Prepare to fill out the "Preliminary Information Form" for the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places. (Internet sites provide information.)

❖ **Signs and Entry Area**

- ❖ Construct and place more permanent signage for the entry area; it is recommended that a kiosk-style sign might be an appropriate choice since it could be built with community-donated labor and materials. On the side facing Rock Road, the sign could display the name of the cemetery in large lettering and provide vehicular turn-around information; on the side facing the cemetery, the sign could include information on security, contacts, the historical significance of the site, and other information.
- ❖ Possibly construct the kiosk using a bus-stop style, and/or add a bench, which could provide some seating/shade for visitors.

❖ **Landscaping**

- ❖ Rent a stump grinder to remove stumps if necessary.
- ❖ Fill in some of the biggest depressions with the dirt from the mound that is already on site so the ground will be level.
- ❖ Plant a few trees or shrubs (if the community desires) around the entry area for shade or decoration.

❖ **Maintenance and Caretaking**

- ❖ Refer to “best practices” procedures to carry out repairs to gravestones:
 - ❖ Clean gravestones with suggested soaps.
 - ❖ Repair gravestones using suggested glues and epoxies.
 - ❖ Reset fallen gravestones in their bases with a cement mixture.

❖ **Security and Trash Removal**

- ❖ Provide a trashcan(s) at the cemetery.
- ❖ Arrange for periodic visits by a designated Committee member(s) to empty trashcan(s).

❖ **Funding**

- ❖ Continue working on creating a website to generate publicity and funding as well as help with the historical preservation.
- ❖ Apply for larger grants to garner more funds for the Mountain View Cemetery Committee.

❖ **Community Organization and Sustainability**

- ❖ Search for clubs and organizations in the surrounding area that meet throughout the year as well as summer programs/camps that might help with cemetery activities.
- ❖ Compile a list of clubs and organizations that could help with the maintenance and begin to contact them.

Phase Three: Recommendations for what the Mountain View Cemetery Committee might do as a *middle-range step* to revitalize the cemetery if it were successful in obtaining more funds and labor.

❖ **Historic Recognition**

- ❖ Submit the “Preliminary Information Form” with necessary materials.
- ❖ Continue historic celebrations but enlarge these events to attract community members.
- ❖ Use historic information gathered in earlier phases for the website.

❖ **Signs and Entry Area**

- ❖ Consider ways to enhance the entry area – such as placing additional historical information on the signs, adding additional benches (perhaps family donated), perhaps some landscaping.
- ❖ Place a small, appropriate-looking storage shed to the right of the entry area, along the fence to the right of signs. The side of the shed may provide additional space for heritage signage.

❖ **Landscaping**

- ❖ Buy some topsoil and fill in holes and depressions (purchase could be for a section at a time, not for the whole cemetery).
- ❖ Look into slightly more expensive markers to delineate the borders of the path if desired (such as landscaping timbers, railroad ties, brick pathway markers).

❖ **Maintenance and Caretaking**

- ❖ Plant grass or other groundcover on the site.
- ❖ Plant trees and other vegetation.
- ❖ Purchase a small shed for on-site storage of lawn equipment (shed could also be hand-built, but would cost more; donations by local businesses are possible).
- ❖ Buy a mower and trimmer for cemetery maintenance (used items might be more affordable).
- ❖ Begin mowing and trimming every other week.

❖ **Security and Trash Removal**

- ❖ Hold Community Cleanup Days for trash removal and maintenance at the site once a month or whenever they can be conveniently scheduled.
- ❖ Provide privacy and security to the cemetery with additional fencing.

❖ **Funding**

- ❖ Further develop the Mountain View Cemetery website to generate funding and public awareness; perhaps set up a Pay Pal account for donations.
- ❖ Continue to apply for grants on a larger scale by focusing on large government grant sources or grants through large corporations.

❖ **Community Organization and Sustainability**

- ❖ Create a schedule of days and times in which Committee members and/or designated groups could handle regular cemetery mowing and trimming.
- ❖ Create a schedule of days and times for larger Community Cleanup Days.
- ❖ Contact major businesses, such as Wal-Mart, Lowe's, Home Depot, or others, to request donations of the shed and mowing/trimming equipment for cemetery maintenance.

Phase Four: Recommendations for what the Mountain View Cemetery Committee might do as *longer-range activities* if it successfully obtains grants for the labor and costs of significant cemetery revitalization work.

❖ **Signs and Entry Area**

- ❖ With significant funding, professionally-produced signs might replace some or all of the signs in the entry area.

❖ **Landscaping**

- ❖ Buy more topsoil to fill in holes and depressions if necessary.
- ❖ Put down gravel or some other crushed stone ground cover if desired.
- ❖ Contact landscapers to do paved/stone/brick pathway through the cemetery and in the entry area around the kiosk/signs, plus other landscaping work to make the cemetery landscape more beautiful.

❖ **Maintenance and Caretaking**

- ❖ Hire a professional firm to repair the gravestones.
- ❖ Buy additional/better mowing and trimming equipment or hire a lawn maintenance company to mow, trim, and remove trash on a regular schedule.

❖ **Funding**

- ❖ Continue to collaborate with community members to help with the long-term maintenance of the cemetery and continue to ask for support through donations of money or physical labor to revitalize the cemetery.
- ❖ Continue to search for new grants to apply for annually to help maintain the cemetery.

❖ **Community Organization and Sustainability**

- ❖ Discuss ways the Committee might develop an on-going community and/or church fund to hire a lawn maintenance company on a regular basis (see the recommendation for maintenance).



Examples of more expensive sign and paving options for the entry area from East Hill Cemetery North in Salem, Virginia.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has described the need for restoration and renewal at Mountain View Cemetery. Discussion also laid out some recommendations and phasing suggestions for a cemetery revitalization plan that endeavors to strike a good balance between heritage preservation and site caretaking. The research team especially worked to develop a “phased-in” plan with wide coverage, including activities for historical preservation and recognition, signs and an entry area, landscaping, maintenance and caretaking, security and trash removal, funding, and community organizational activities geared toward establishing a sustainable community base of support.

As the community-university effort continues into the future, we hope this set of recommendations will provide structure and guidelines for revitalization, including heritage preservation and site upkeep, at Mountain View Cemetery.



Dr. Mary LaLone has been a Professor of Anthropology at Radford University since 1989. The award-winning faculty member specializes in historical and economic anthropology. In 1995, she and her RU students completed an oral history study of coal mining life in the New River Valley, which resulted in the book, “Appalachian Coal Mining Memories, and developed plans for a Coal Mining Heritage Park at Merrimac, Virginia. In 2003, they published “Appalachian Farming Life,” an oral history study of family farming in the New River Valley.”

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