

There are several articles on the preservation of African-American Cemeteries. Here are a few to start.

African American Cemeteries and the Restoration Movement

Africa is a heterogeneous continent with various religions, racial identities, and cultural practices. When slaves arrived in America, they came from different tribes. Once in America, slaves were deliberately separated from family members. Then implicitly and explicitly discouraged by their owners from expressing their cultural beliefs. One form of resistance to cultural assimilation was creating their own burial customs.

On plantations, funeral ceremonies usually occurred at night. Since slaves had to work all day, night was the only time for them to participate in the ceremony. But it also allowed neighboring slaves to commune across legalistic borders. This tradition continued into the 20th century. Pre-Civil War, slave owners, not wanting to use their arable land for slave burials, would bury slaves in hidden in remote spots among trees and underbrush.

<http://digilab.libs.uga.edu/cemetery/exhibits/show/brooklyn/african-american-cemeteries-an>

For the Forgotten African-American Dead

Richmond, Va. — To get to East End Cemetery in Henrico County, Va., an abandoned African-American graveyard, my wife, Erin, and I drive through a predominantly black Richmond neighborhood — our neighborhood. Decades of neglect have turned this once beautiful burial ground into woodland. We're part of a volunteer effort that has reclaimed about two and a half of East End's 16 acres since it began in 2013.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/07/opinion/sunday/for-the-forgotten-african-american-dead.html?mcubz=1>

Perpetual Neglect: The Preservation Crisis of African-American Cemeteries

In late February, Raphael Morris pulled his car onto the gravel path just off St. Louis Avenue in northern St. Louis County, and saw something he'd hoped was a thing of the past: a large pile of garbage dumped in Greenwood Cemetery, near where he grew up and where several family members are buried. Morris is president of the Greenwood Cemetery Preservation Association and has been working to restore the African-American cemetery that dates back to the Reconstruction era. A day later, the worn mattresses and rusted exercise bike were just another trouble spot across Greenwood's 32 acres. The dozen or so acres visible from the road are well maintained, even manicured; but further down the hilly sloping site, the landscape loses focus, growing ragged, almost feral, the headstones crumbling into the earth as nature reasserts itself. Here the cemetery is so overgrown that it's largely inaccessible.

<http://zachmortice.com/2017/05/31/perpetual-neglect-preservation-crisis-african-american-cemeteries/>

These Abandoned Black Cemeteries Were Long Forgotten — Until Now

John Holmes is buried in a wildly overgrown section of an abandoned African-American cemetery in Virginia. Born around 1880, he worked as a barber and married a tobacco factory worker, Martha, before his death from heart disease in 1938.

He now lies in a forgotten section of ground corrugated with sinking graves. Someone, perhaps another volunteer working to clear the cemetery, ...

<http://economichardship.org/archive//these-abandoned-black-cemeteries-were-long-forgotten-until-now>