

RICHLAND COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE

PRESERVING HISTORIC CEMETERIES WORKSHOP

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WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CORONER'S OFFICE IN CEMETERY PRESERVATION?

- Intersects only when remains are:
 - Unidentified
 - Unclaimed
 - Exposed
 - Disturbed
 - Moved
- Otherwise intersect with medicolegal death investigation



WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CORONER'S OFFICE IN CEMETERY PRESERVATION?

- The county is responsible for cemetery preservation on public land
- Private parties are responsible for private land
- Richland County has a cemetery for unclaimed remains
 - county official responsible for **the practical disposition and documentation of people who have no one else to arrange their burial.**

CEMETERY CONSULTATIONS

- A cemetery can become a coroner matter when someone discovers:
 - exposed human remains
 - a disturbed grave
 - human bones during construction or landscaping
 - an unrecorded burial
 - remains that may have been moved from their original location
 - a body whose identity or circumstances are uncertain





HISTORIC VS. MODERN

- When human remains are found → County Coroner is called
- Historic remains or forensic significance?
 - Material remains
 - Coffin hardware
 - Iron staining on bone
 - Taphonomy of the bone
 - NAGPRA
 - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
 - Consult with NAGPRA coordinator



COASTAL EROSION

- Georgetown and Beaufort County Assistance

ISSUE

- Unidentified/unclaimed deceased person
- Arranging burial of unclaimed remains
- Exposed human remains
- Suspicious death involving a burial
- Cemetery vandalism/desecration
- Abandoned cemetery maintenance
- Historic cemetery preservation
- Moving an abandoned cemetery
- Cemetery licensing/perpetual-care regulation

RESPONSIBILITY

- **Coroner/medical examiner**
- **Coroner + funeral/cemetery providers**
- **Coroner**, with law enforcement as appropriate
- **Coroner + law enforcement**
- **Sheriff/local police**
- **County/municipality**
- **County/municipality + preservation organizations/agencies**
- **Statutory cemetery-relocation process/local governing body**
- **S.C. Cemetery Board/LLR**

2015 FLOOD

- Response to displaced caskets/vaults
- Assistance to county coroners
- Proximity to known cemetery
- Identification questions- reinterment vs. retention vs. evolving genetic investigations
 - Forensic Genetic Genealogy





DISTURBED HISTORICAL REMAINS

Battle of Camden- Revolutionary War Soldiers

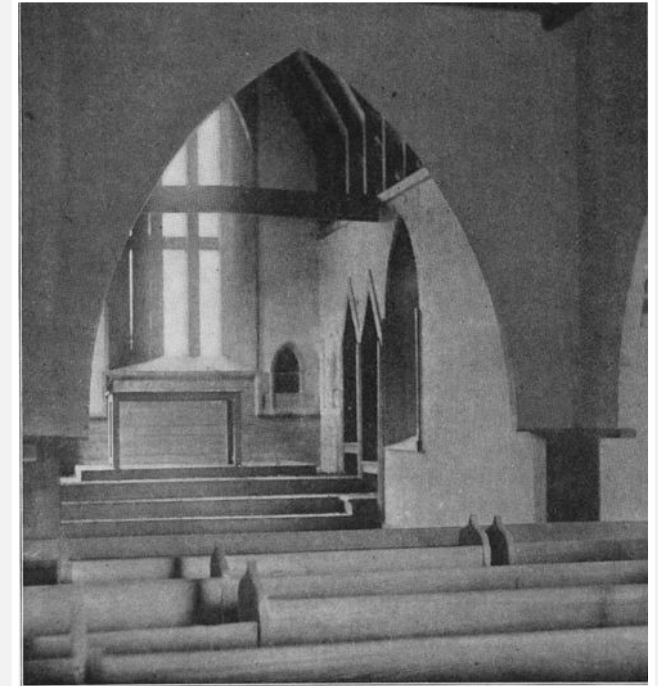
REBURIAL AND REPATRIATION

- Historic Randolph Cemetery example
- Anatomical specimens
 - 19th through 20th century



DESCENDANT COMMUNITY PARTNERING

- Hagley Plantation, Georgetown County
- Waccamaw Neck
- Genetic study
- Community reburial



QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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