



Preserving Historic Cemeteries Workshop
September 9, 2026

Mapping Charleston's Black Burial Grounds: PHASE II

PRESERVATION
ESTD SOCIETY 1920
of CHARLESTON

PRESENTED BY LAUREL FAY & MADISON LEE

PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF CHARLESTON

America's oldest grassroots preservation organization.



Preservation & Advocacy

For Charleston's distinct character, quality of life, resilience, and diversity of neighborhoods.



Events & Programs

Signature events include The Fall Tours, Carolopolis Awards, and Preservation Month.



The PSC Shop

Featuring only local makers.
PSC Members get a 10% discount!

PSC'S PRESERVATION & ADVOCACY INITIATIVES



Mapping Charleston's Black Burial Grounds Project

200+ burial grounds documented.



Historic Markers Program

Interpreting Charleston's diverse history.



Carolopolis Awards

1,500+ awards given since 1958.



Resilience Guidance for Charleston

Solutions for a more sustainable, resilient future.



Black Businesses of Charleston Oral History Project

Elevating under-told stories that shaped modern-day Charleston.



Charleston Justice Journey

Digital mapping project recognizing sites of significance to African American history and the Civil Rights Movement.



Cemetery Mapping

Digitally mapping burial markers in historic cemeteries using ArcGIS Survey123.



Easement Program

80+ historic properties protected in perpetuity.

Project Introduction

- Collaborative effort to **identify** and **document** Black burial sites in the Charleston area
- Create a **comprehensive map** of burial grounds
- **Protect** these sites from development

Nelliefield Creek Cemetery

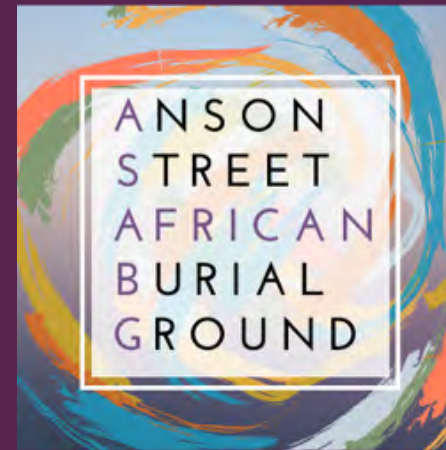


Heriot Street Cemetery

Project Team

MAPPING CHARLESTON'S BLACK BURIAL GROUNDS

PRESERVATION
ESTD SOCIETY 1920
of CHARLESTON



FUNDING

National Park Service African
American Civil Rights Grant

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

- City of Charleston Mayor's Office
- City of Charleston Department of Planning, Preservation and Sustainability
- International African American Museum (IAAM)
- Charleston Gaillard Center

Project Goals: Phase I

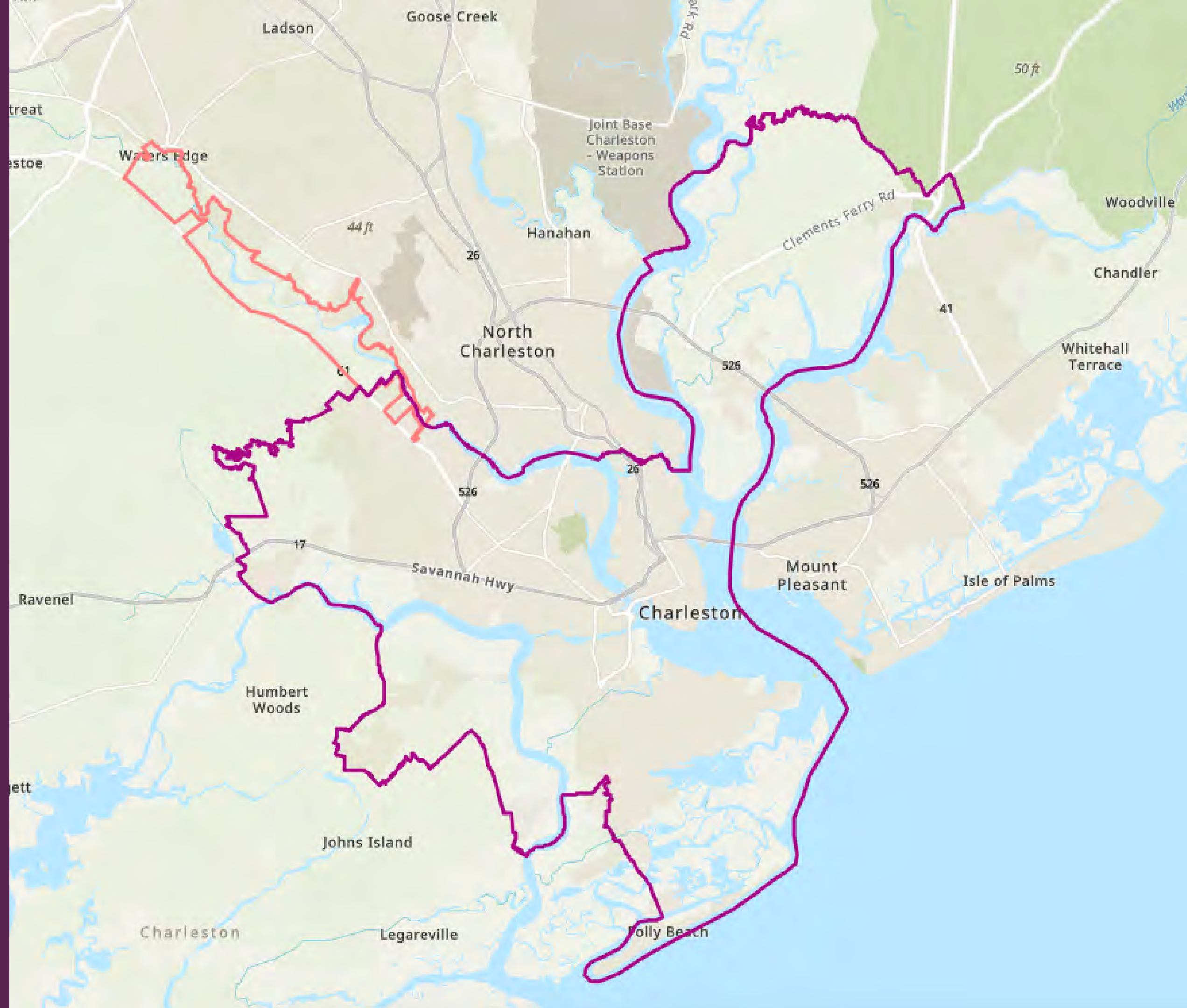
- Identify and document burial grounds of those of African descent
- Create a **city-wide map** of burial sites
- Improve implementation of City's **gravesite protection ordinance**
- Strengthen **collaboration and trust** between descendant communities, residents, preservationists, and City officials

Project Scope: Phase I

An Inclusive Project Boundary Line

**ASHLEY RIVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

**CITY OF CHARLESTON
URBAN GROWTH
BOUNDARY**



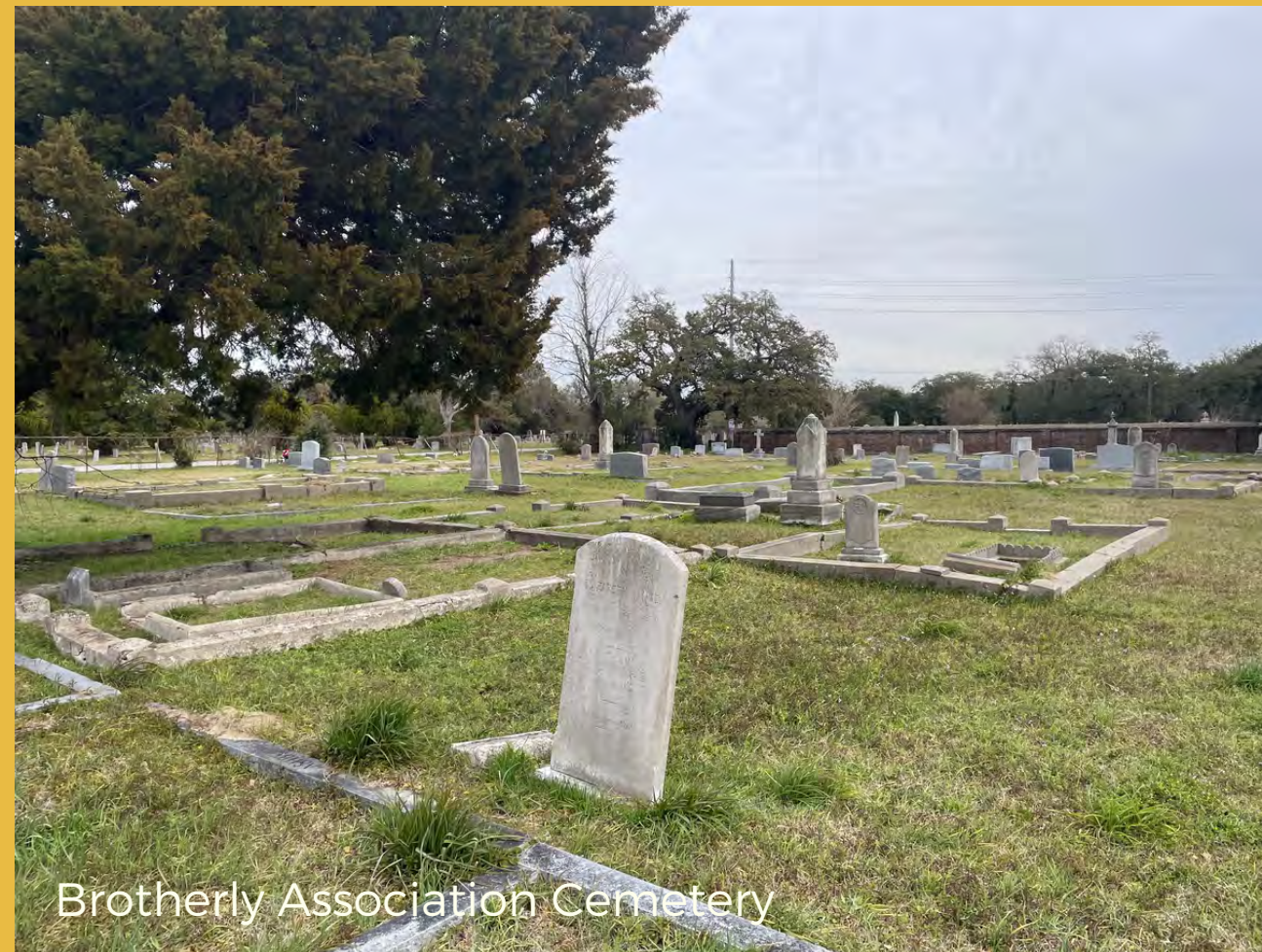
Burial Grounds Studied

ALL burial grounds, regardless of race
Sites on both **PUBLIC** and **PRIVATE** property



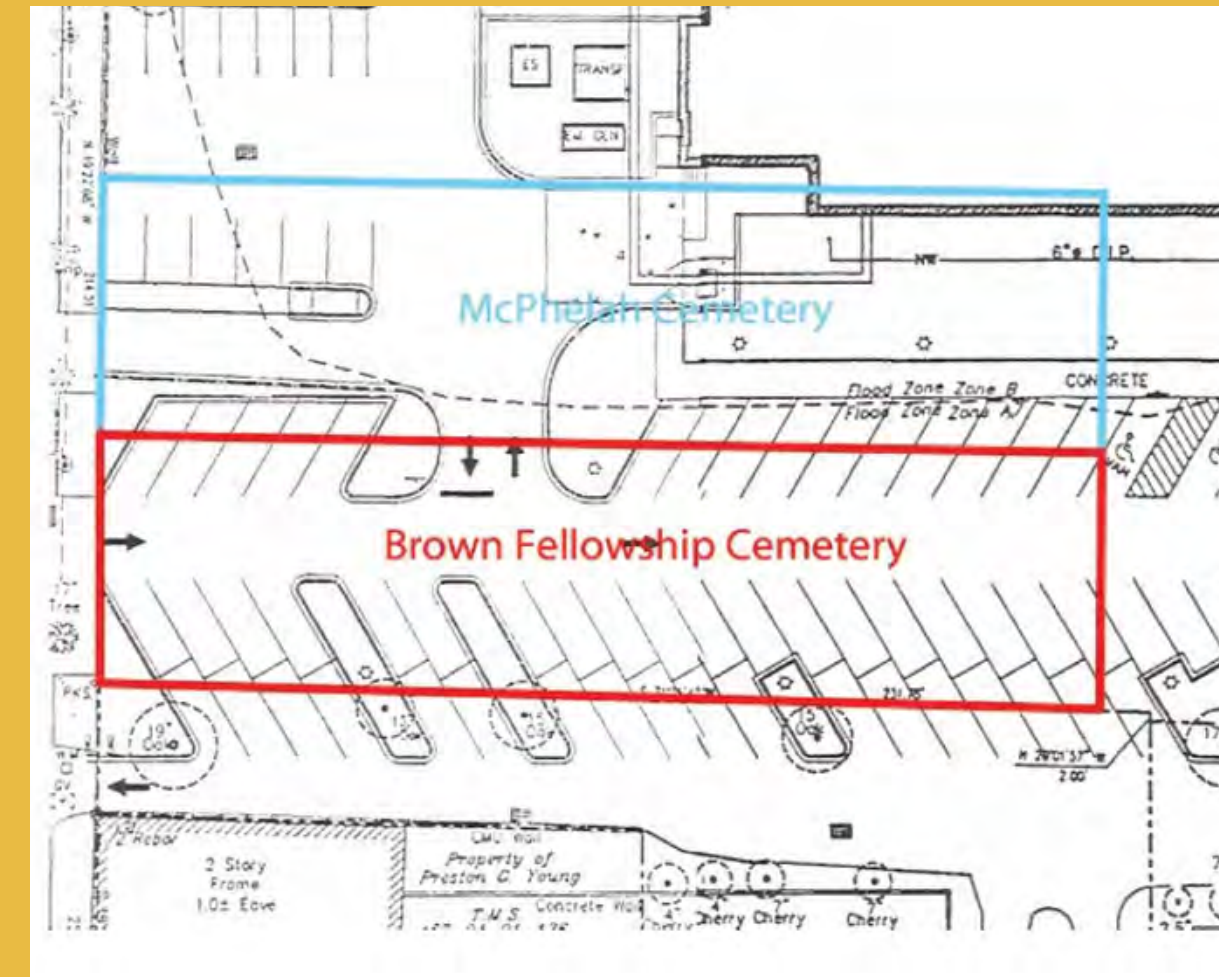
St. Thomas Church Cemetery

GRAVEYARDS



Brotherly Association Cemetery

CEMETERIES

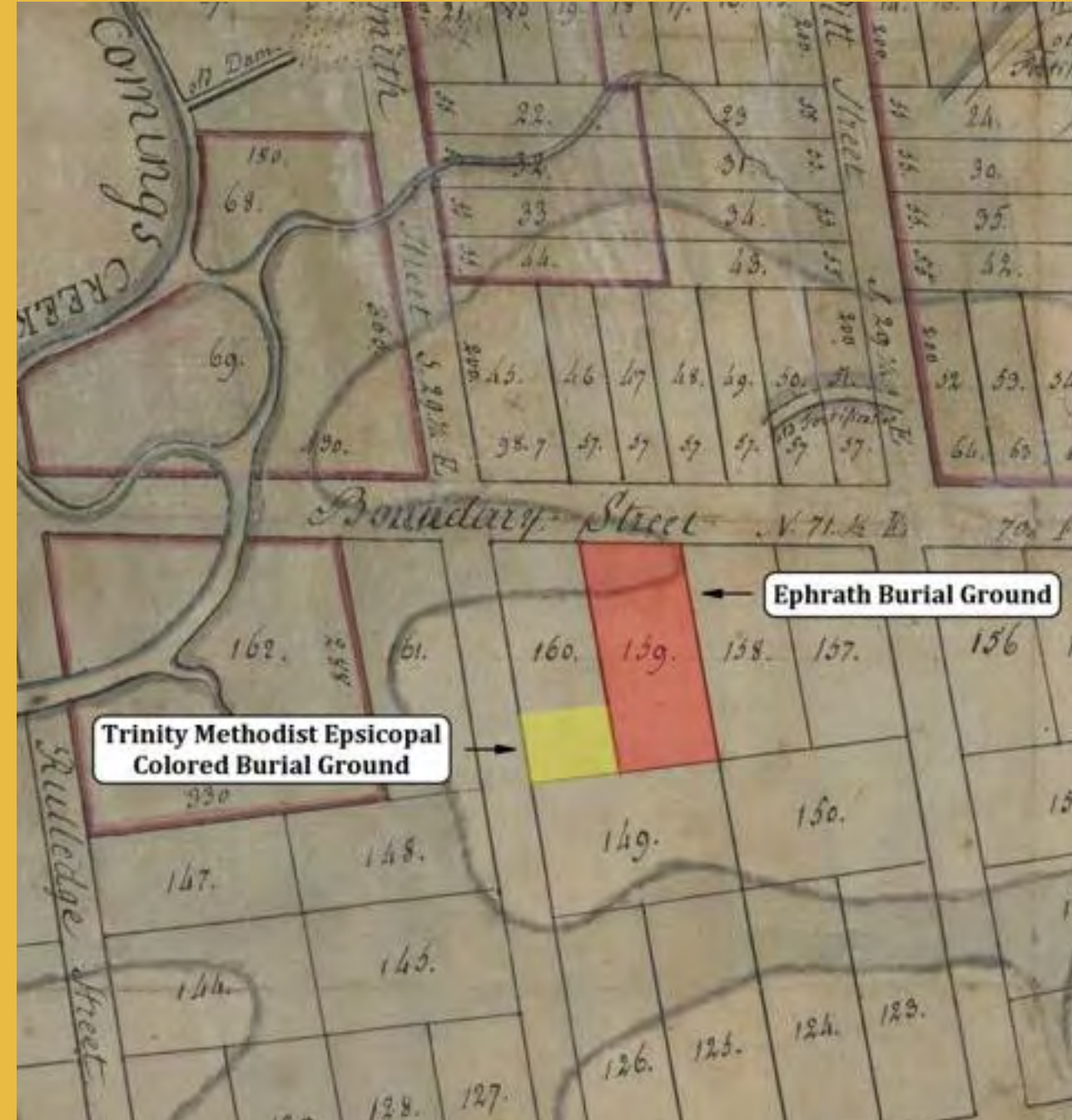


“LOST” BURIAL GROUNDS

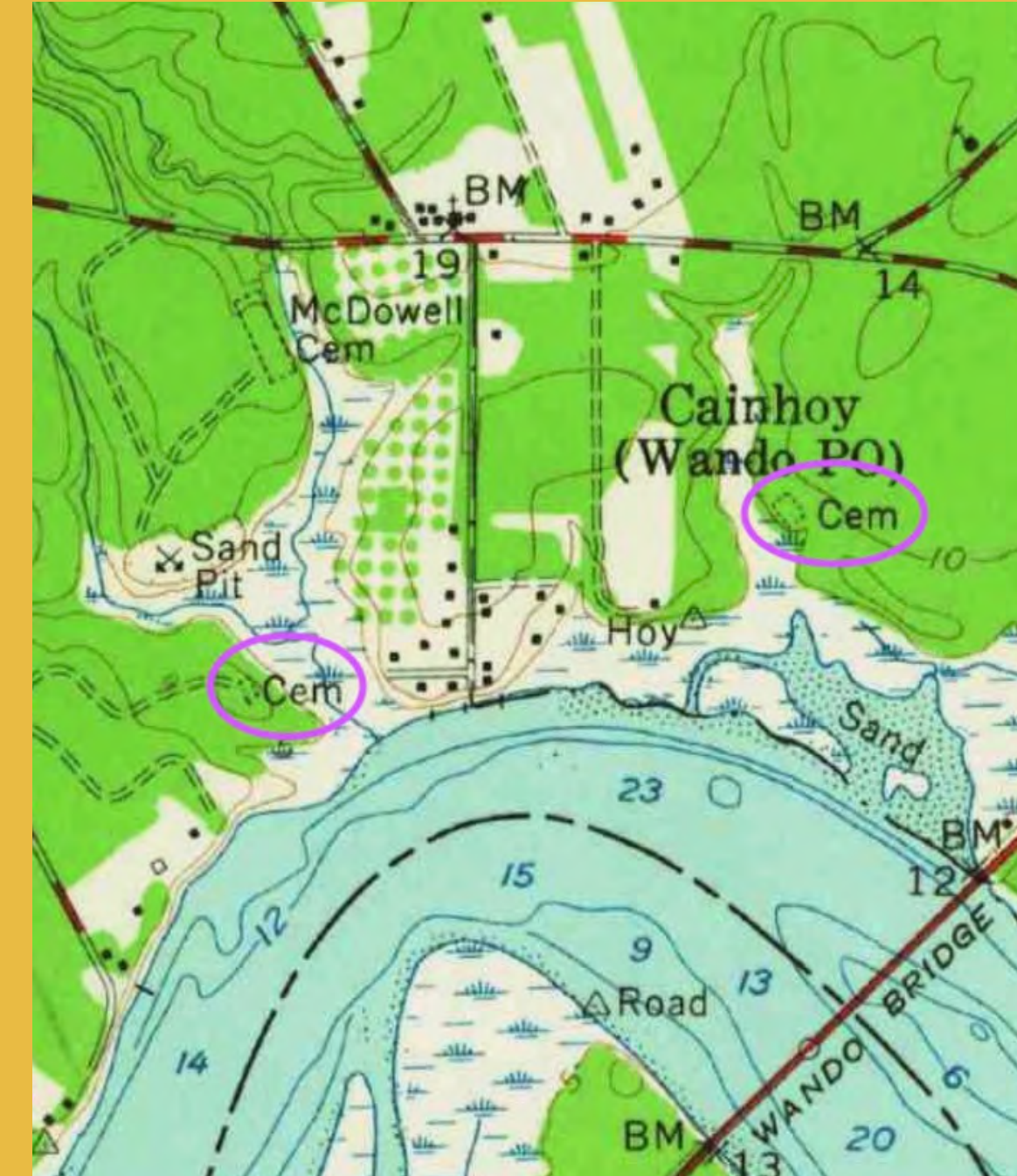
Research & Data Gathering



Rose's Farm Cemetery, labeled as "Negro Cemetery,"
1844 Map

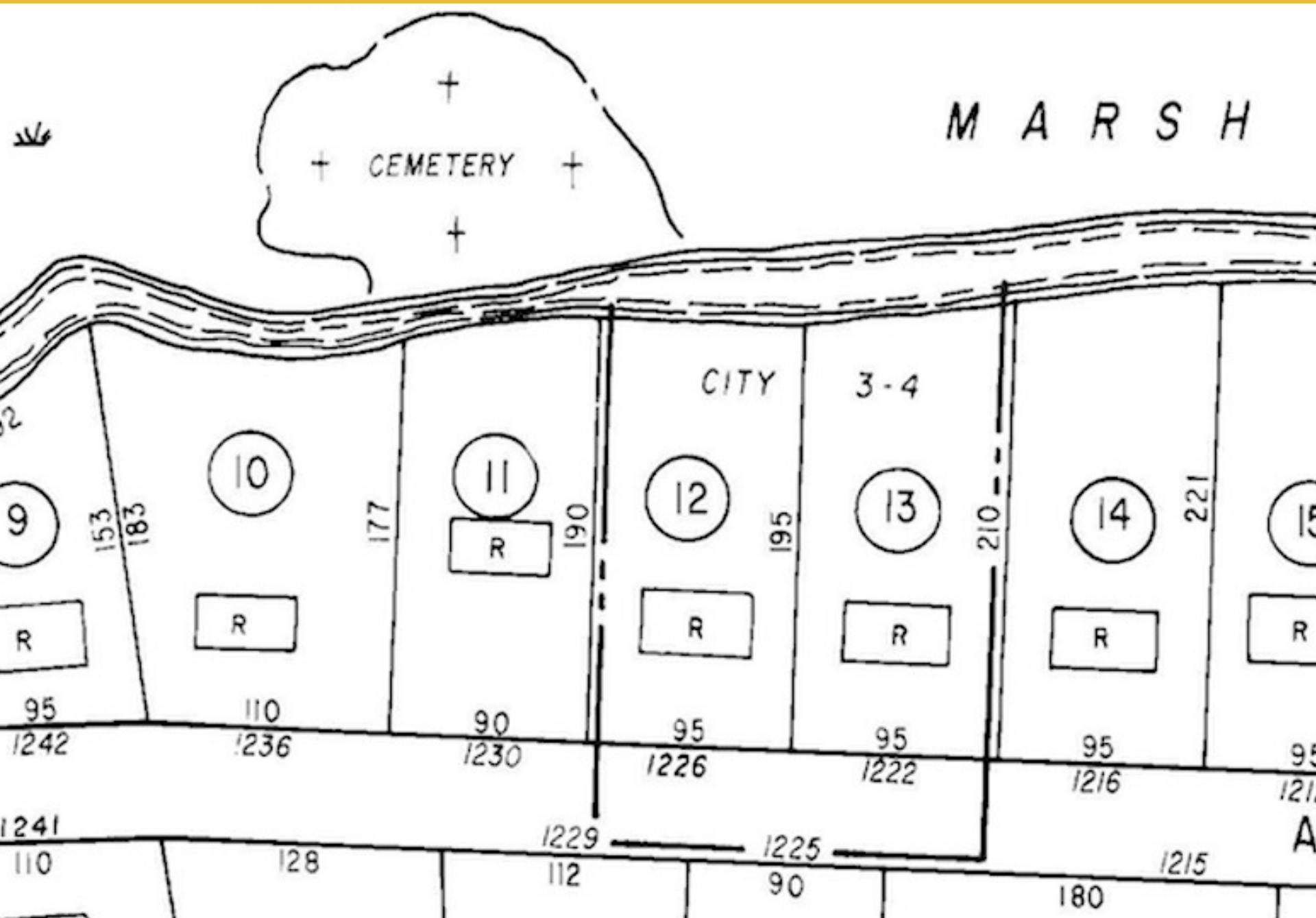


Trinity Methodist Episcopal Colored Burial Ground &
Ephrath Burial Ground, 1798 Plat

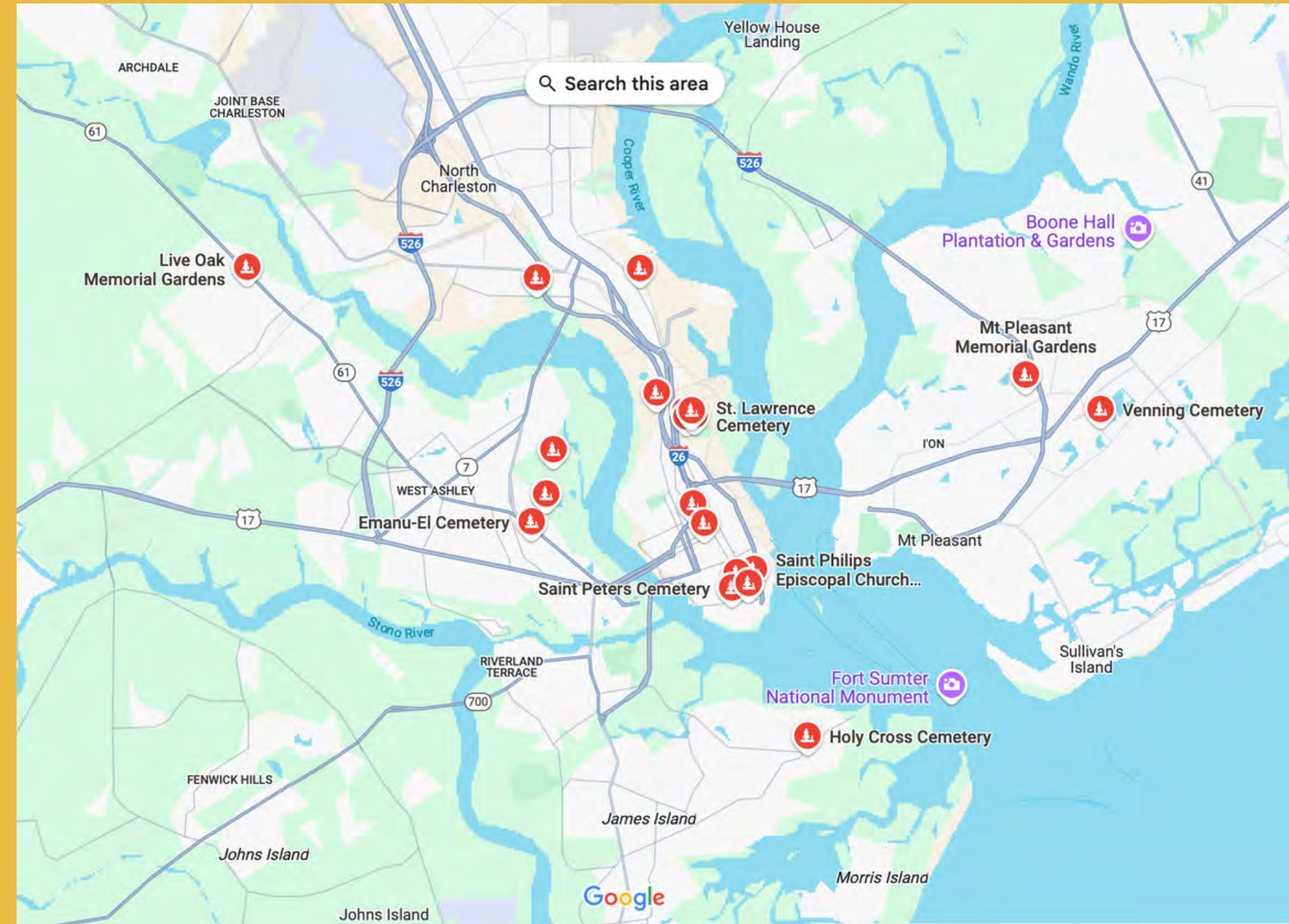


Two unidentified cemeteries in Cainhoy,
1958 USGS Topographical Map

Research & Data Gathering



Clark Cemetery, shown behind residential properties on a 1970s tax map



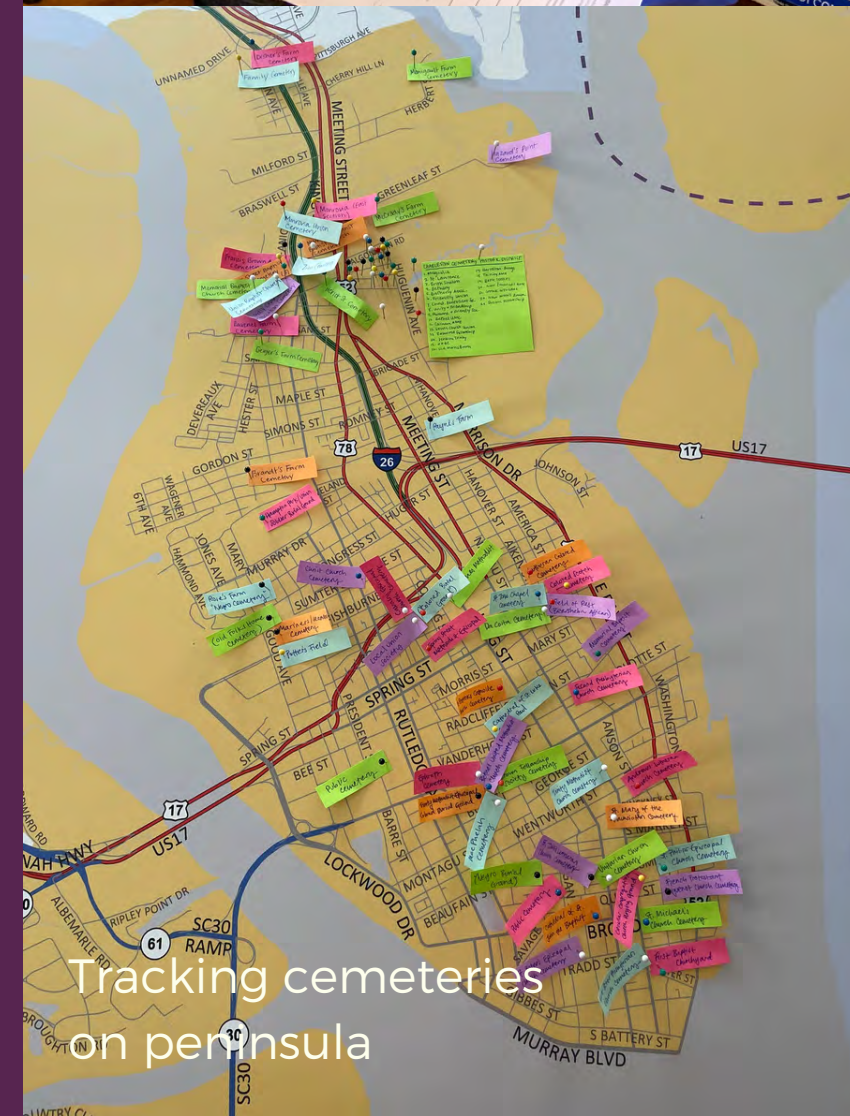
Google Maps search showing far fewer cemeteries than there actually are

Community Outreach

KEY GOAL: Strengthen collaboration and trust

- Hosting Listening Sessions across City of Charleston
- Scanning and digitizing historic maps, plats, surveys, and photographs from family collections
- Conducting site visits with descendants
- Documenting community elders' recollections
- Keeping the community informed on project progress

Daniel Island and Cainhoy
Listening Session



Tracking cemeteries
on peninsula



Translating information onto
draft digital map

Community Outreach



Descendant identifies cemetery on tax map



Descendants at Brotherly Association Cemetery



Participants after the Johns Island Listening Session



MCBBG Project Preview Session, June 2024

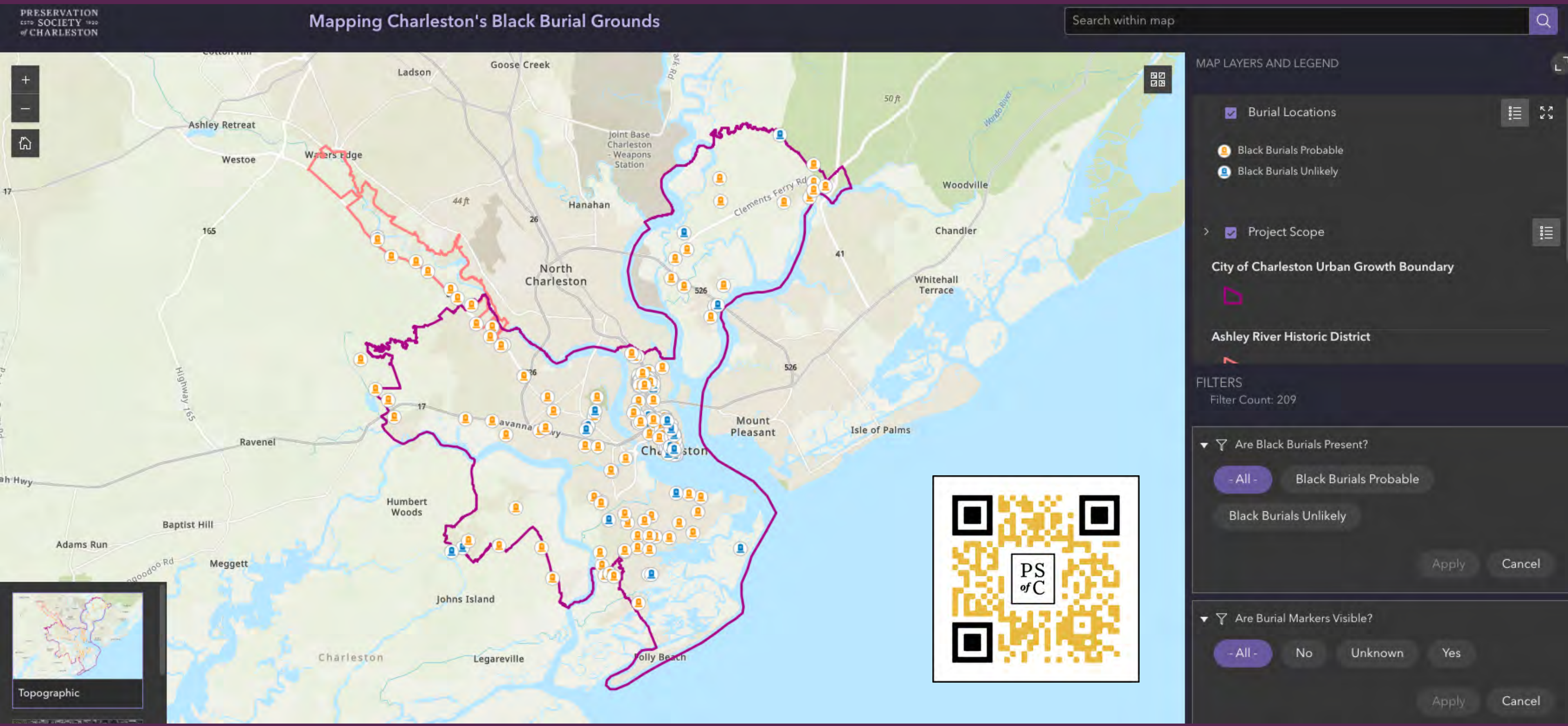


MCBBG Project Preview Session, June 2024



Community Empowerment Workshop, September 2024

Launching the Map



Launching the Map



TOTAL

Burial Grounds Mapped
in Phase I



Black Burials
PROBABLE



Black Burials
UNLIKELY



UNMARKED
Black Burial Grounds



Images, Maps, Plats,
etc. added to Map

Opportunities for Expansion

MCBBG PHASE II

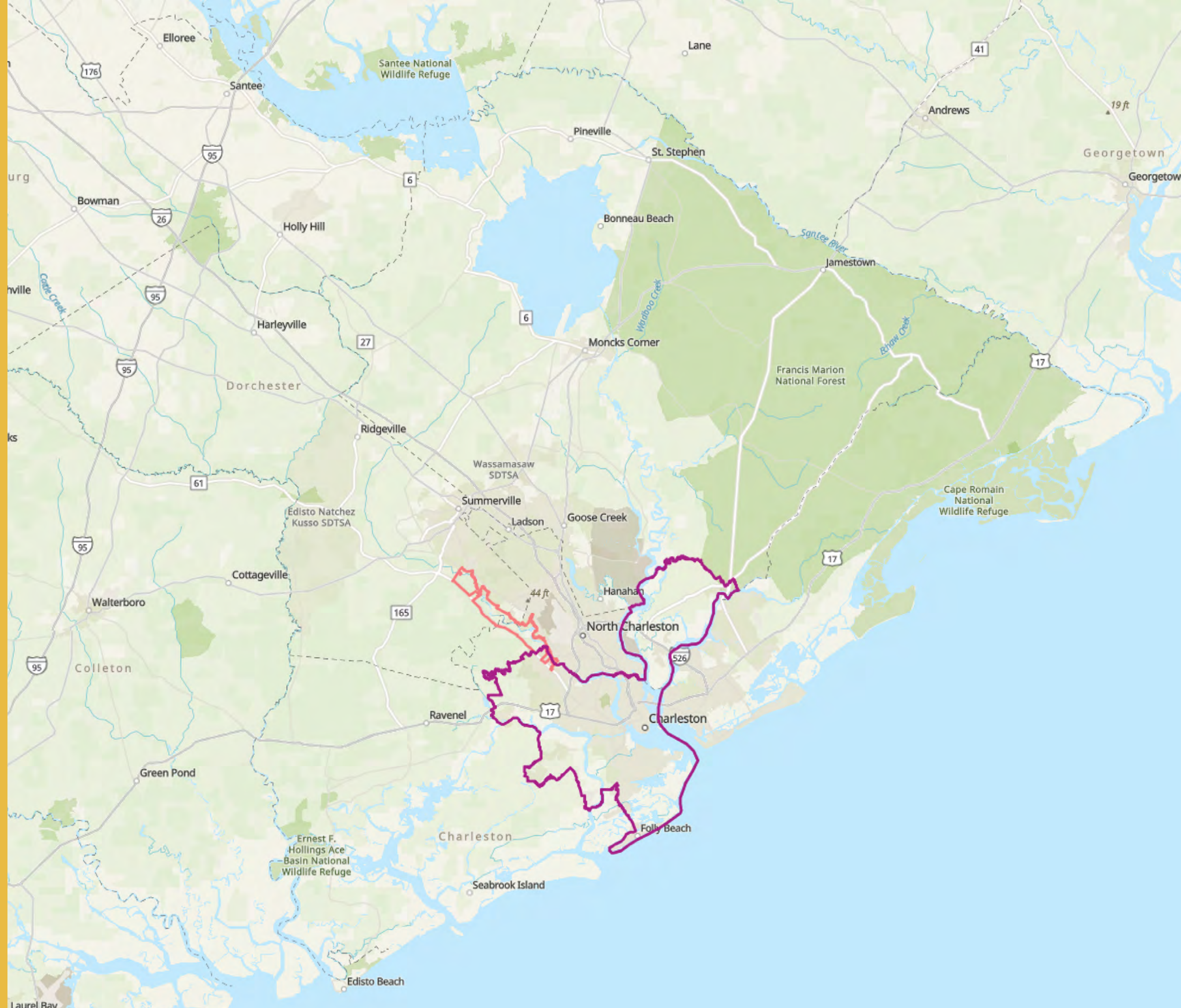
- Expand scope to **Tri-County Area** (Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties)
- Add new data categories to increase searchability
- Share data with state-wide organizations (DNR, SHPO) to assist in creating a **state-wide cemetery map**

Project Scope: Phase I

An Inclusive Project Boundary Line

 **ASHLEY RIVER
HISTORIC DISTRICT**

 **CITY OF CHARLESTON
URBAN GROWTH
BOUNDARY**



Project Scope: Phase II

Tri-County Expansion



CHARLESTON COUNTY



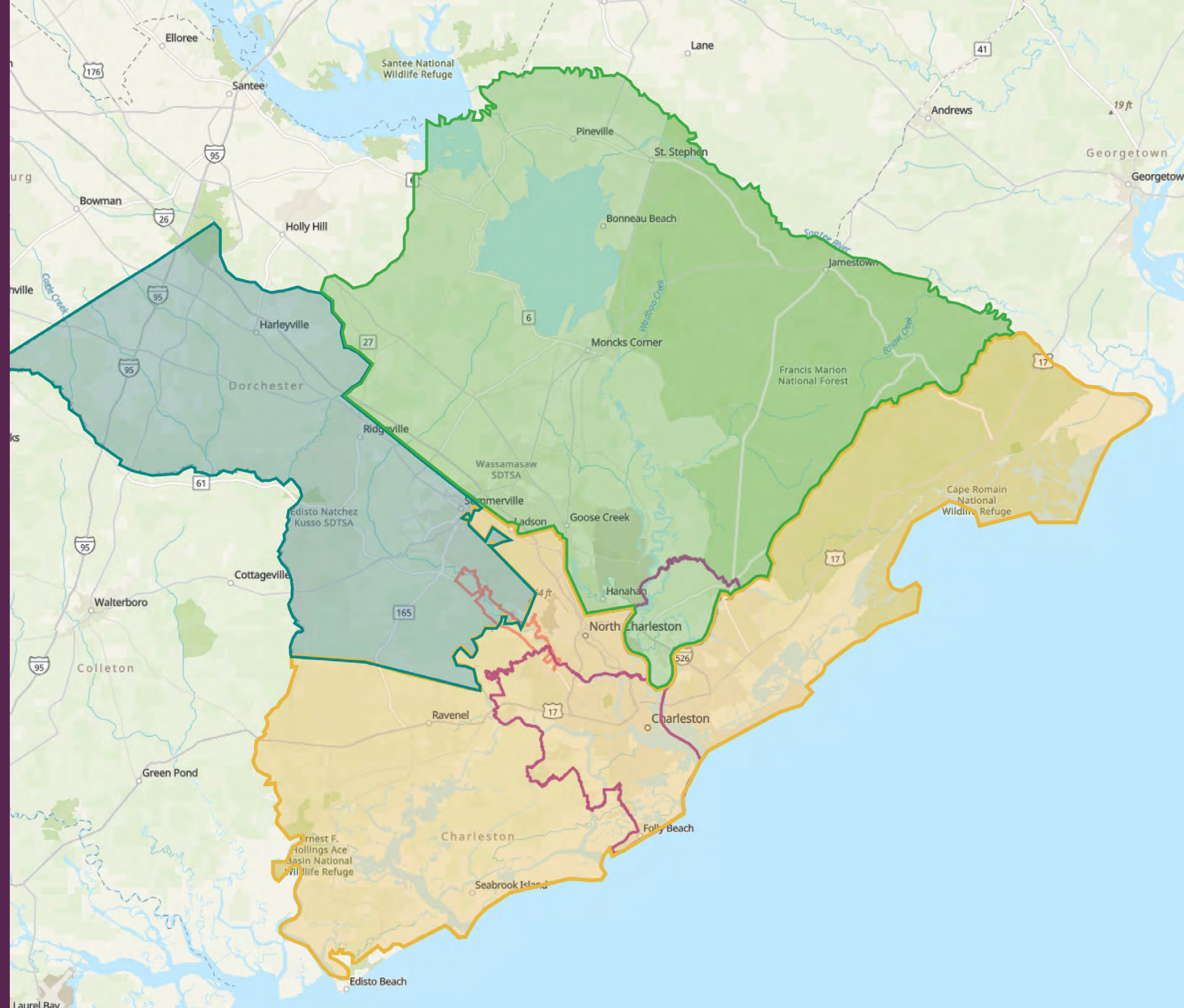
BERKELEY COUNTY



DORCHESTER COUNTY



PHASE I



Project Timeline

MAPPING CHARLESTON'S BLACK BURIAL GROUNDS

PHASE I

PHASE II

Initial Research & Data Gathering
2022-2023



Additional Research & Data Gathering
2025-2026

City of Charleston Community Outreach
2022-2023



Tri-County Community Outreach
2027

Building the Map & Launching Phase I
2024



Updating the Map & Launching Phase II
2027

Research Resources: Phase II

HISTORICAL MAPS

- USGS Topographical Maps
- County Soil Maps
- County Transportation Maps
- Sanborn Maps
- Historical Plats and Property Surveys

PROPERTY RESEARCH

- City of Charleston Records Management Division
- County RMC Offices
- County GIS Parcel Map Viewers
- Historic Newspaper Archive

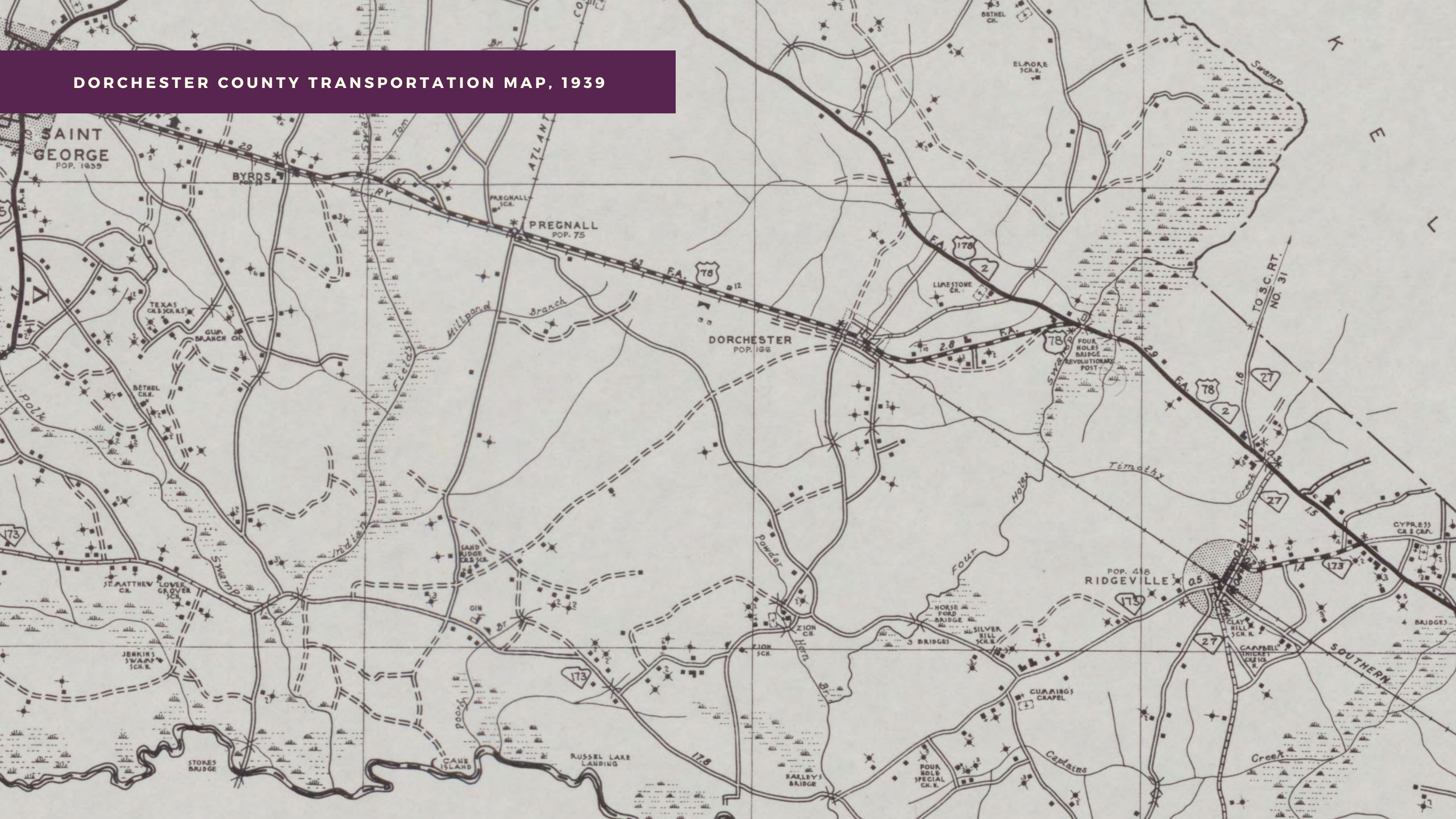
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

- Ancestry.com
- FindAGrave.com

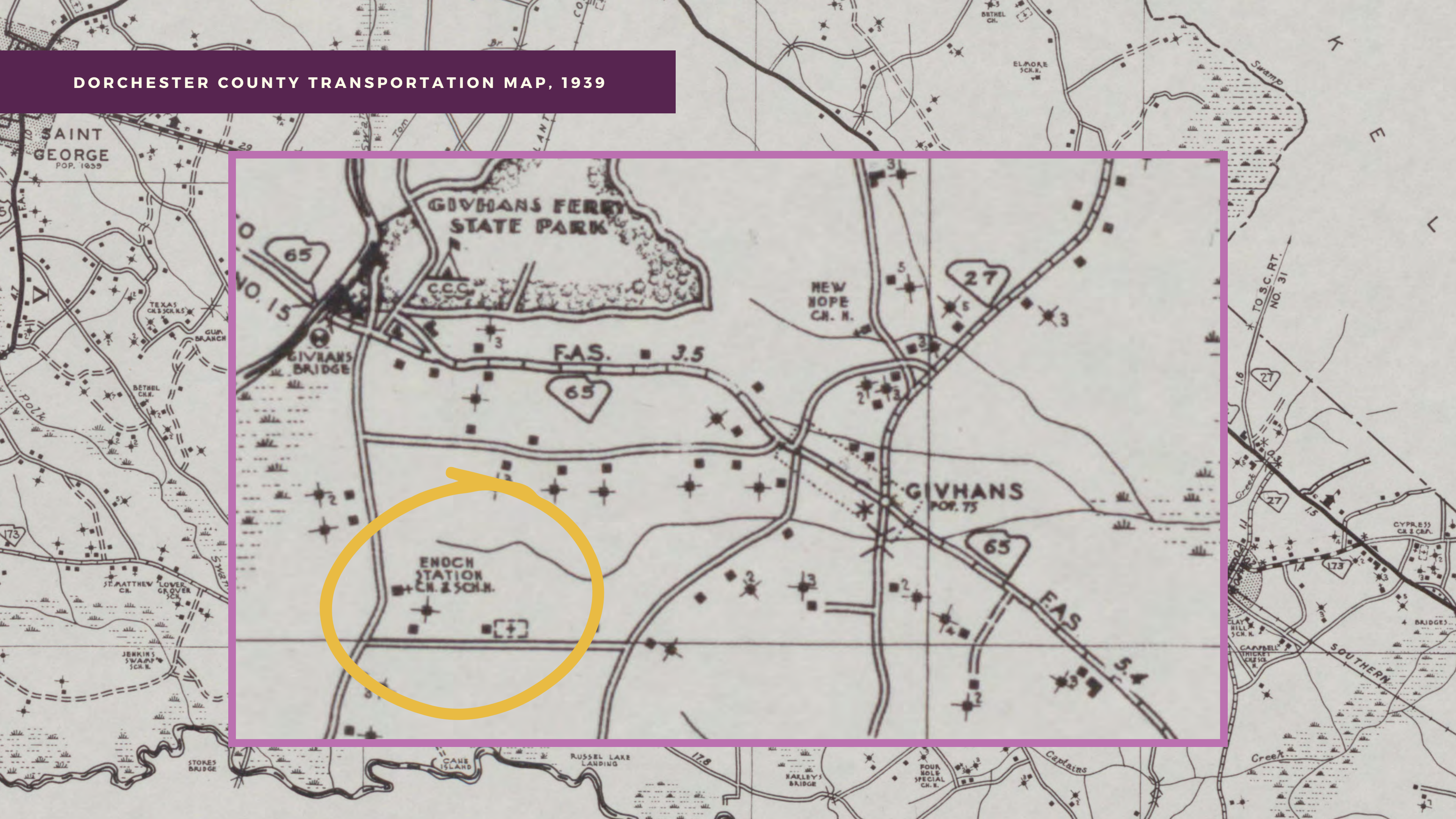
ARCHIVAL INSTITUTIONS

- South Carolina Historical Society
- The Charleston Museum
- Lowcountry Digital Library
- South Caroliniana Library
- Historical Societies
- County Libraries

DORCHESTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MAP, 1939



DORCHESTER COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MAP, 1939



New Data Categories

COMMUNITY NAME

ACCESS TO CEMETERY

- Need Permission from Owner
- May Need Permission
- Publicly Accessible
- Right of Way/Roadside
- Inaccessible (i.e., Submerged or Developed Over)
- Unknown

OWNERSHIP

- Educational Institution
- Privately Owned
- Religious Institution
- Government/Municipal
- Unknown (doesn't have a parcel #)
- N/A (Submerged)

ERA OF ESTABLISHMENT

- Colonial (<1799)
- Antebellum (1800-1860)
- Civil War & Reconstruction (1861-1877)
- Jim Crow (1878-1965)
- Modern (1965-Present)

CEMETERY TYPE

- Burial Society Cemetery
- Religious – Christian
- Religious – Jewish
- Community
- Family
- Military
- Municipal
- Plantation
- Unknown
- Other

CONDITION OF CEMETERY

- Tended
- Untended
- Unknown

IS BURIAL GROUND EXTANT?

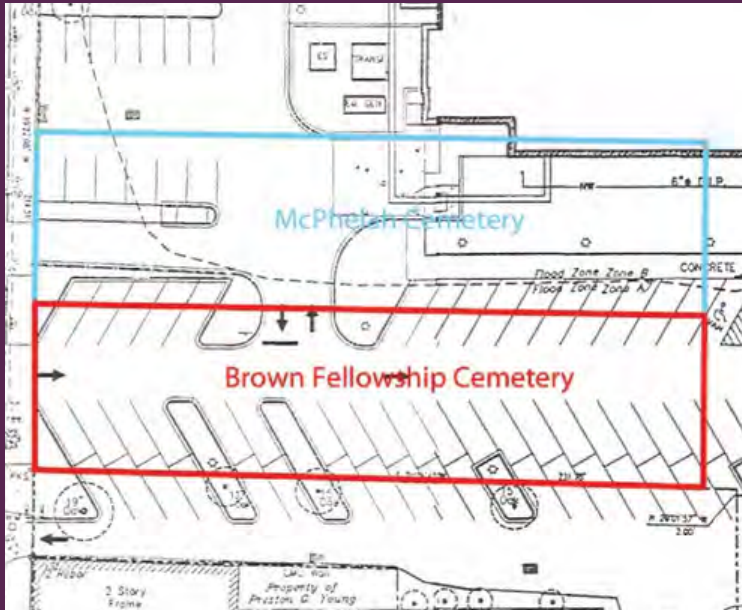
- Yes
- Partially
- No – Developed Over
- No – Reinterred and Developed Over
- Submerged
- Unknown

HOW ARE BURIALS MARKED?



New Data Categories

HOW ARE BURIALS MARKED?



No visible evidence of burials



Unmarked burials/Depressions



Headstones or stones



Tombs/Monuments



Funeral home markers



PVC Pipe markers



Offerings/Objects



Trees/Plants



Flag markers



Wooden markers

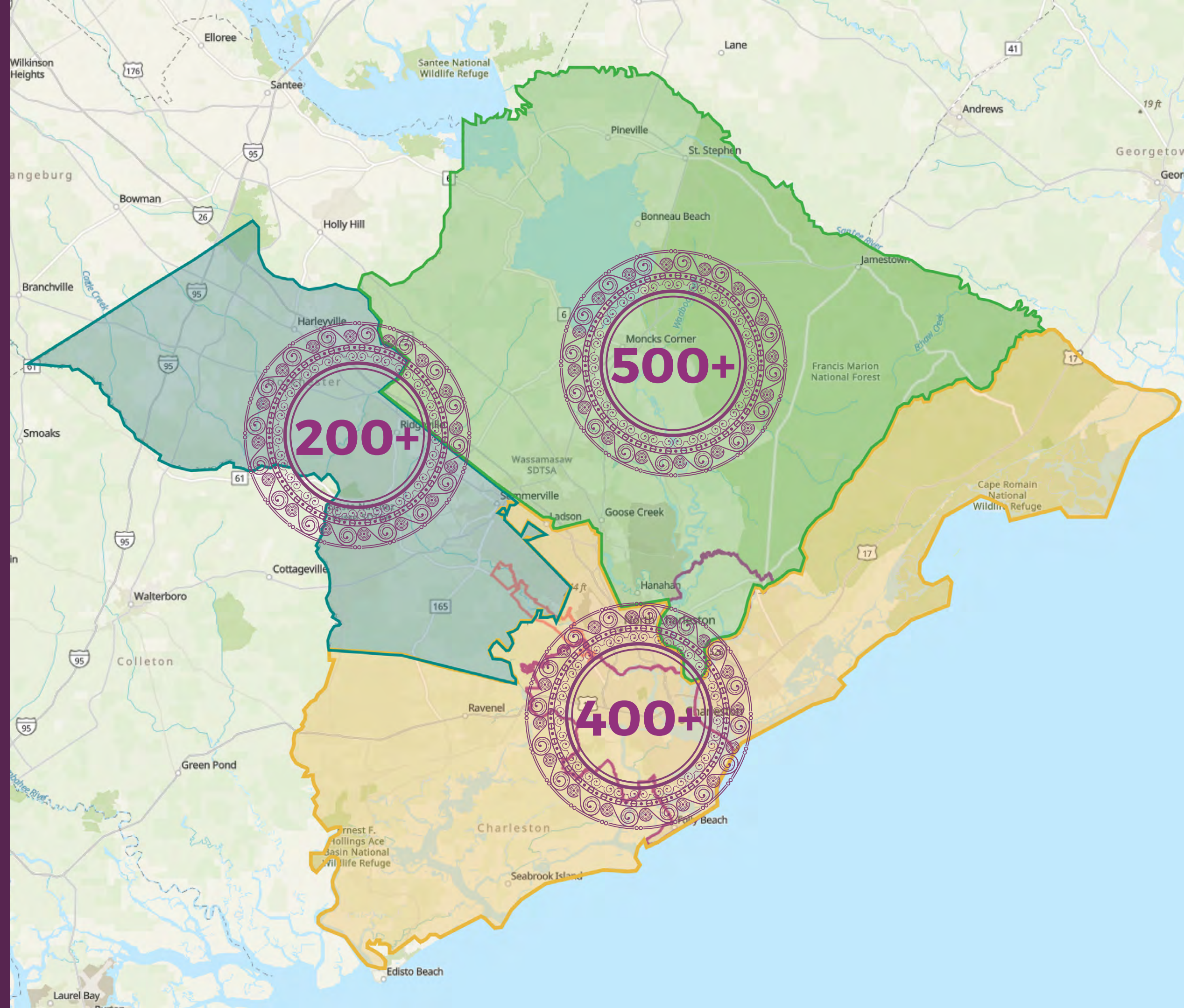


Historic marker

Burial Grounds Identified

1000+
TOTAL (so far)

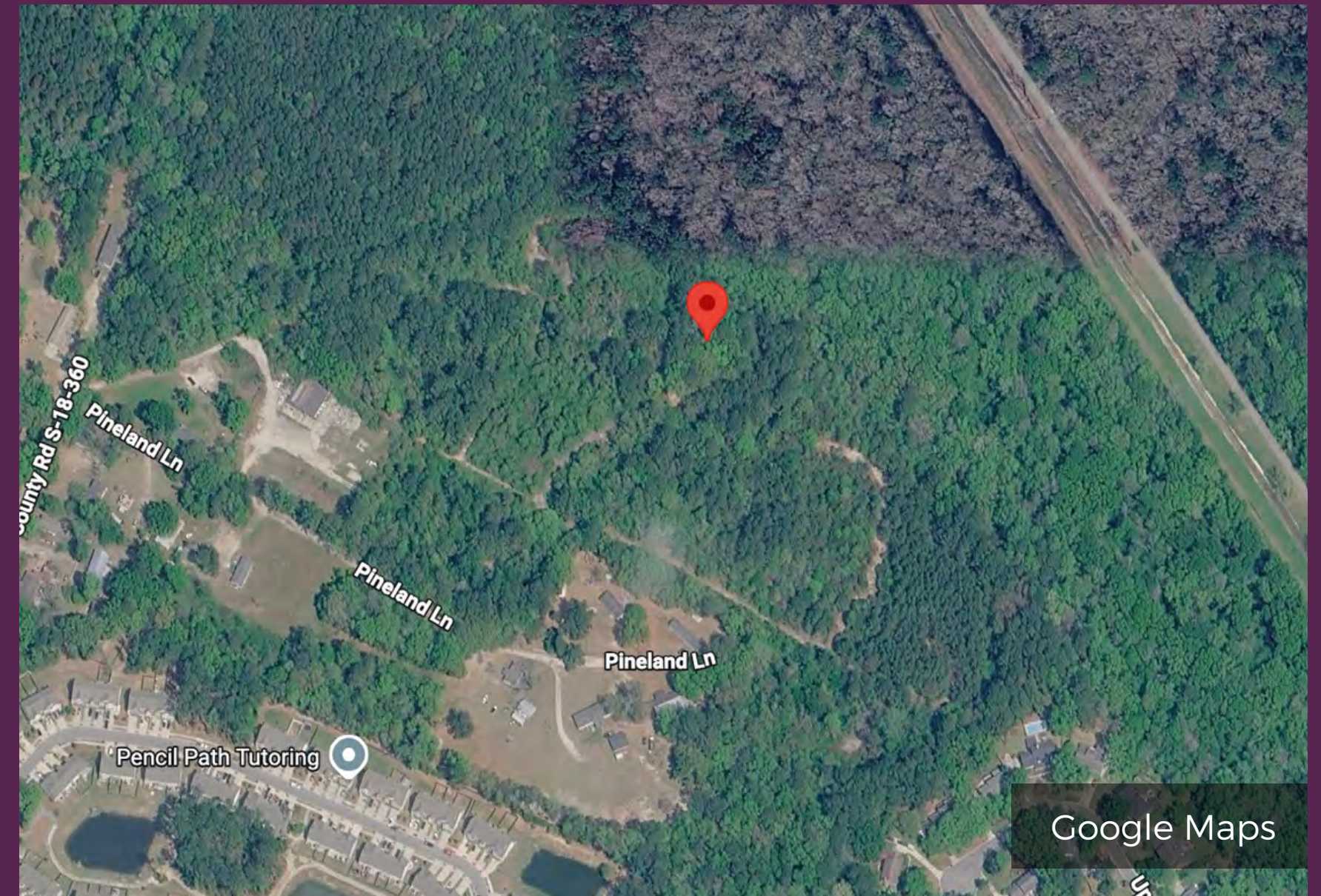
PHASE II



Threatened Burial Ground

Rose Creek Burial Ground

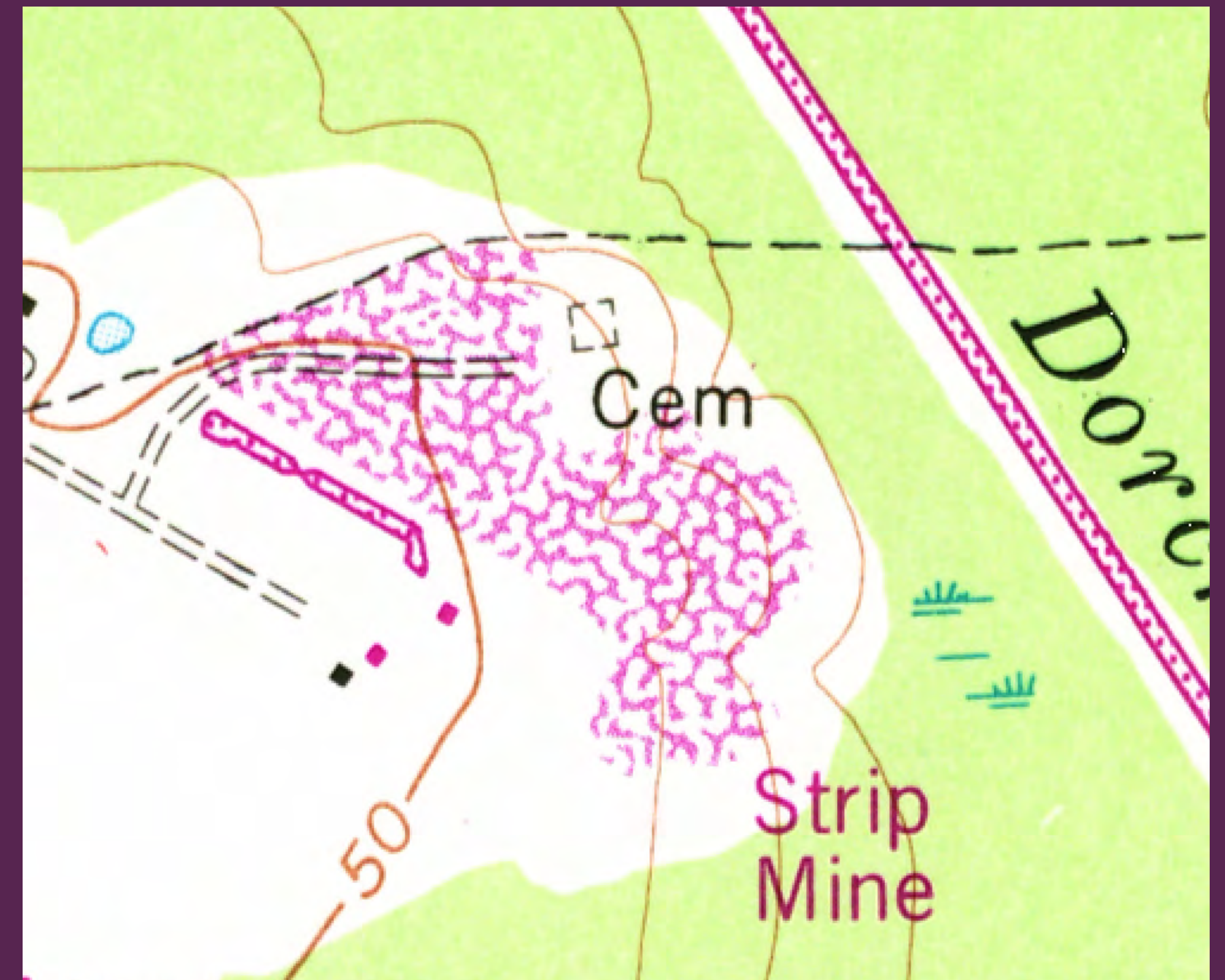
Summerville, Dorchester County, SC



Threatened Burial Ground

Rose Creek Burial Ground

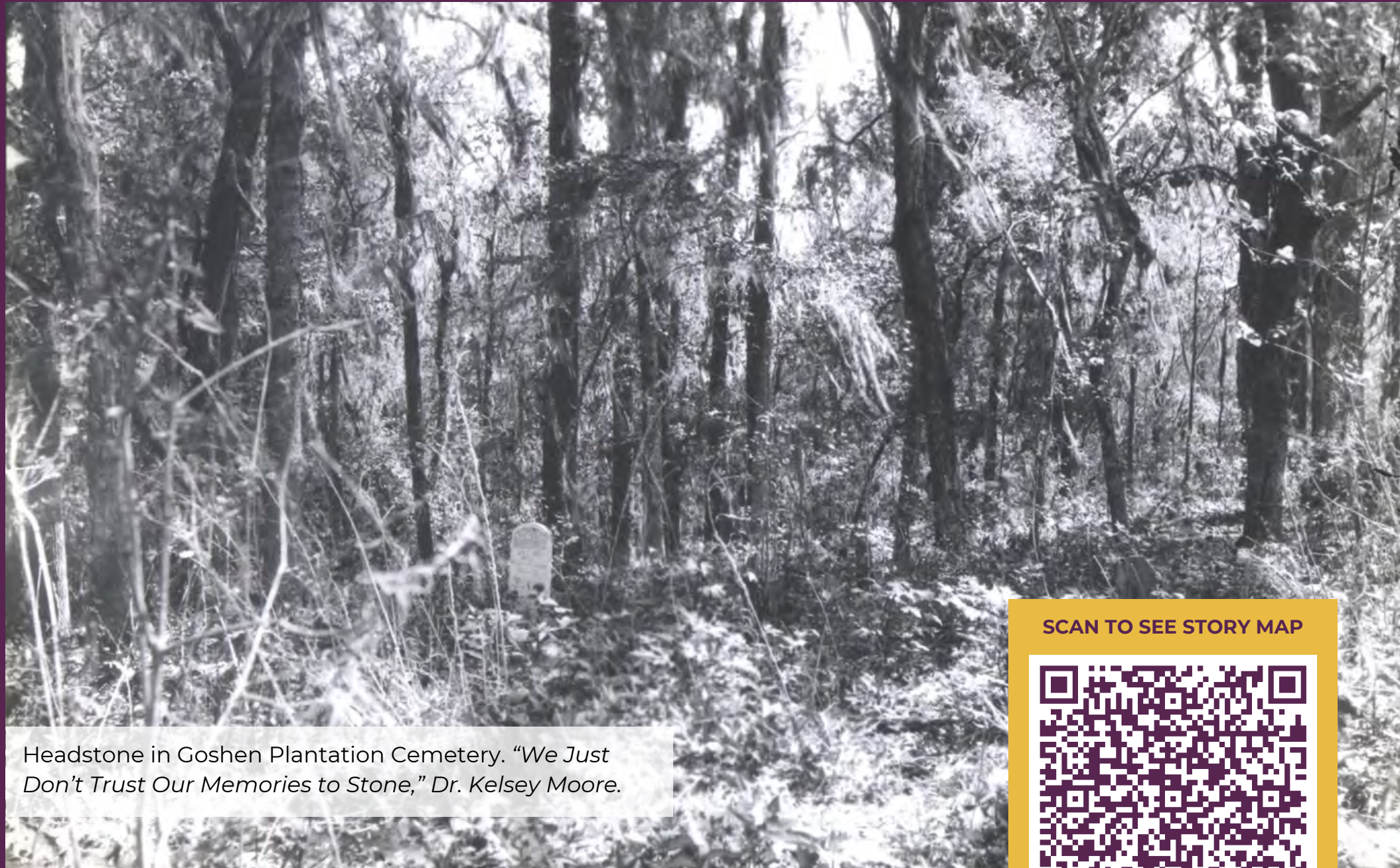
Summerville, Dorchester County, SC



Lost Burial Ground (Submerged)

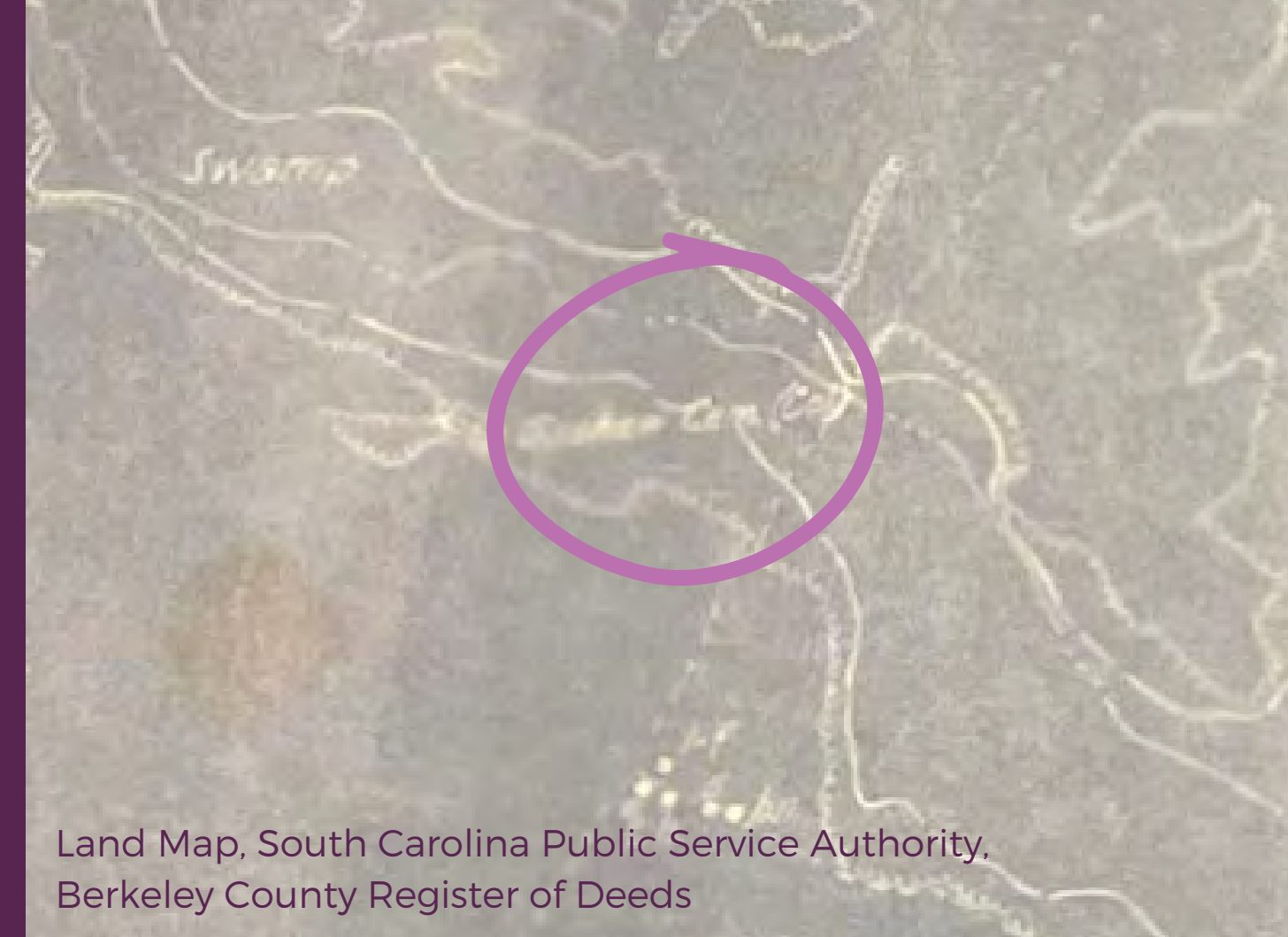
Goshen Plantation Cemetery

Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County, SC

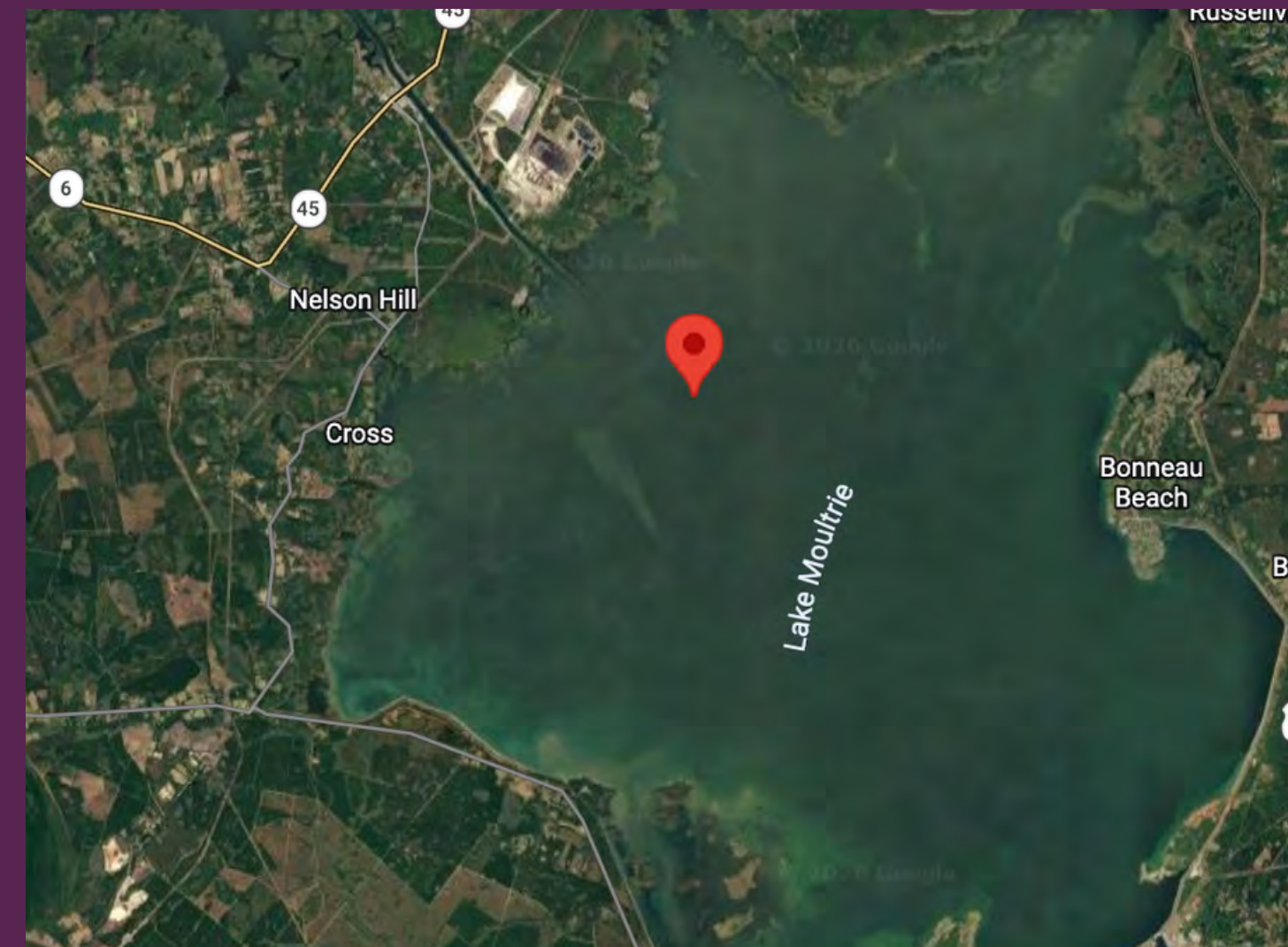


Headstone in Goshen Plantation Cemetery. "We Just Don't Trust Our Memories to Stone," Dr. Kelsey Moore.

SCAN TO SEE STORY MAP



Land Map, South Carolina Public Service Authority,
Berkeley County Register of Deeds



Lost Burial Ground
(Submerged)

Goshen Plantation Cemetery

Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County, SC



South Carolina Department of Transportation, Berkeley County.

CEMETERIES SOON WILL BE FLOODED

Santee Authority Seeks to Ascertain Wishes of Surviving Kinsmen

The South Carolina Public Service authority is serving notice on relatives of persons buried in the Pinopolis area of the Santee-Cooper project to state in writing "their wishes as to the disposition of the bodies of persons so buried."

The authority plans to meet the wishes of the relatives, within reason. Bodies will be moved, if desired. In the case of whole cemeteries, if all the relatives agree, some suitable memorial will be erected elsewhere, marked with a history of the cemetery that has been flooded and with a list of the persons buried therein.

The following white cemeteries in the area are listed by the authority in a recent advertisement:

Jackson cemetery, three miles northwest of Moncks Corner and three miles northeast of Pinopolis, on the Broughton Hall road, containing twenty-six or more graves.

Thorniey cemetery on Broughton Hall plantation, six miles southeast of Bonneau and three miles northeast of Pinopolis, on the Broughton Hall road, containing thirty-eight or more graves.

The public works administration yesterday approved the documents in the General Electric company's \$1,222,545 contract to supply generators for the Pinopolis power house and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock company's \$745,525 contract for turbines and governors.

Robert M. Cooper, general manager for the South Carolina public service authority, yesterday went on a routine inspection of the site of the Santee-Cooper project. He said last night he conferred with officials on the site of the dam and looked into other details connected with the project.

Charleston News and Courier, February 18, 1939.

Lost Burial Ground
(Submerged)

Goshen Plantation Cemetery

Lake Moultrie, Berkeley County, SC



South Carolina Department of Transportation, Berkeley County.

CEMETERIES SOON WILL BE FLOODED

Santee Authority Seeks to Ascertain Wishes of Surviving Kinsmen

The South Carolina Public Service authority is serving notice on relatives of persons buried in the Pinopolis area of the Santee-Cooper project to state in writing "their wishes as to the disposition of the bodies of persons so buried."

The authority plans to meet the wishes of the relatives, within reason. Bodies will be moved, if desired. In the case of whole cemeteries, if all the relatives agree, some suitable memorial will be erected elsewhere, marked with a history of the cemetery that has been flooded and with a list of the persons buried therein.

The following white cemeteries in the area are listed by the authority in a recent advertisement:

Jackson cemetery, three miles northwest of Moncks Corner and three miles northeast of Pinopolis, on the Broughton Hall road, containing twenty-six or more graves.

Thorniey cemetery on Broughton Hall plantation, six miles southeast of Bonneau and three miles northeast of Pinopolis, on the Broughton Hall road, containing thirty-eight or more graves.

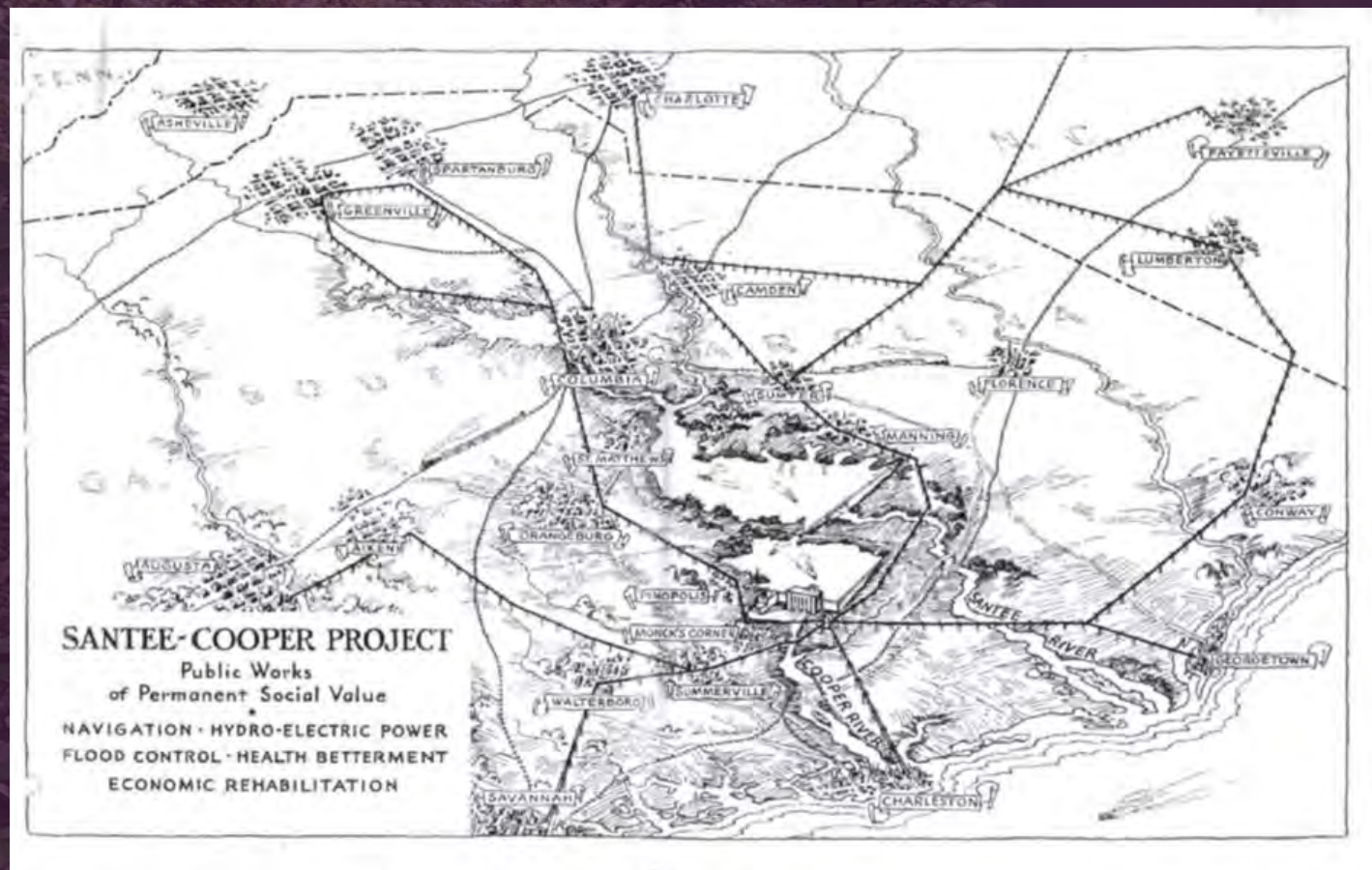
The public works administration yesterday approved the documents in the General Electric company's \$1,222,545 contract to supply generators for the Pinopolis power house and the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock company's \$745,525 contract for turbines and governors.

Robert M. Cooper, general manager for the South Carolina public service authority, yesterday went on a routine inspection of the site of the Santee-Cooper project. He said last night he conferred with officials on the site of the dam and looked into other details connected with the project.

Cemeteries Flooded by the Santee-Cooper Project

**Impacted over 150 cemeteries
across Berkeley, Orangeburg,
and Clarendon counties
OVER 9,000 GRAVES**

- Pooshee Plantation Cemetery
- Chelsea Plantation Cemetery
- Chapel Hill Cemetery
- Broughton Cemetery
- Harbin Slave Cemetery
- Wantoot Plantation Cemetery
- Hardput Cemetery
- Indianfield Cemetery
- Goshen Plantation Cemetery
- Woodboo Plantation Cemetery
- Fair Springs Plantation Cemetery
- Somerton Plantation Cemetery
- Oakfield Plantation
- Simpson Harvey Tract
- Wampee Plantation Cemetery
- Good Shepherd Reformed Episcopal Church
- Isaac Muddy Creek Graveyard
- Oakland
- Bunker Hill Plantation Cemetery
- Hog Swamp Cemetery
- Hanover Plantation Burial Grounds
- Brunswick Cemetery
- Cedar Springs Cemetery
- Ophir Plantation Cemetery
- Saracens Plantation Cemetery
- Moorefield Plantation Cemetery
- Black Branch Graveyard
- Chicora Cemetery
- Stewarton Plantation Cemetery
- Woodlawn Plantation Cemetery
- Old Kate Cemetery
- DuBois Cemetery
- Bearfield
- Joseph Hayes Burial Ground
- Mt. Hope Plantation Cemetery and Clemons Cemetery



Santee-Cooper Project: Public Works of Permanent Social Value, image, Harry T. Poe Scrapbook Collection, Clemson University, undated)

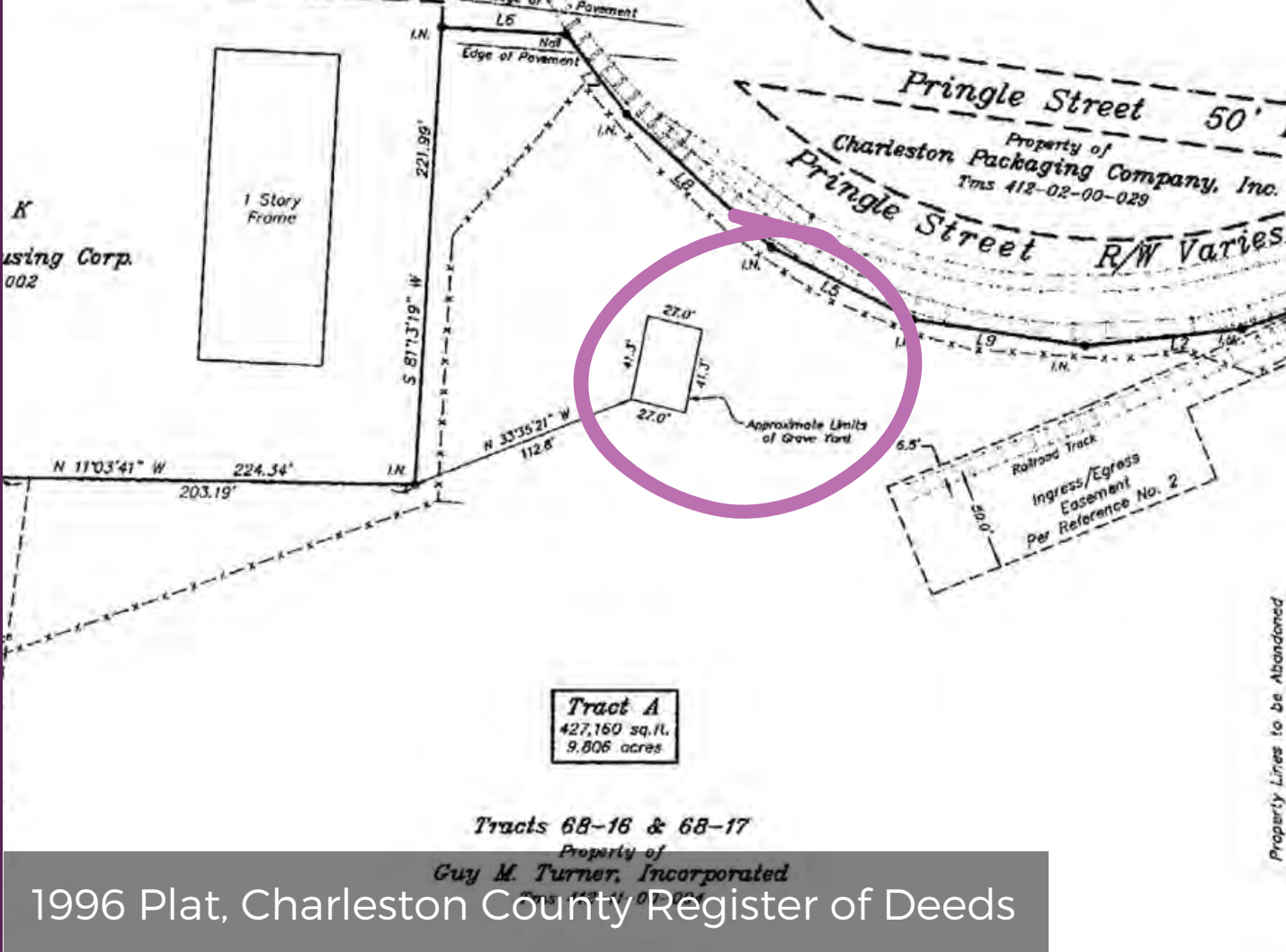
Identified Through Descendent Engagement

Accabee Plantation Cemetery

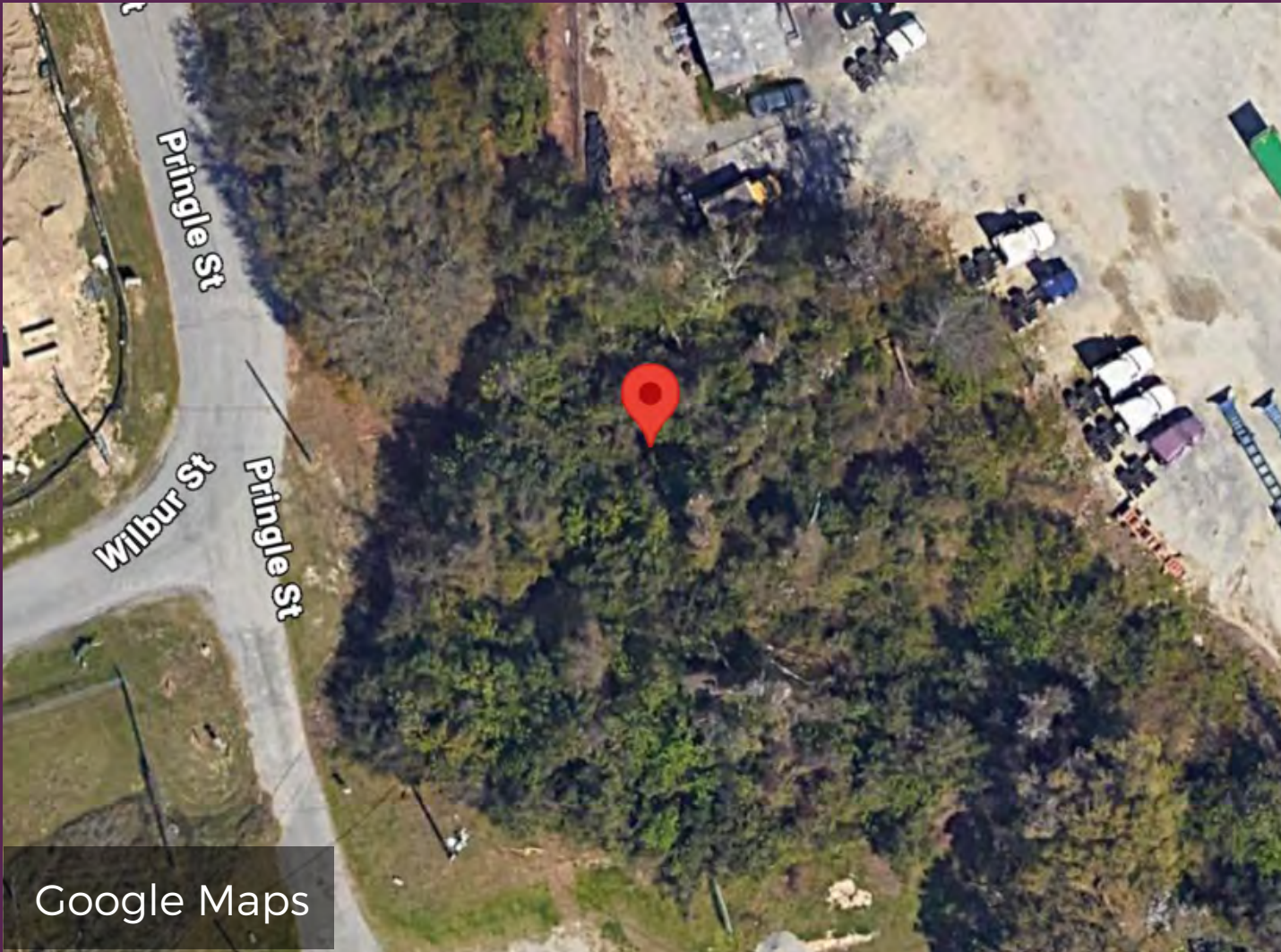
North Charleston, Charleston County, SC



2026



1996 Plat, Charleston County Register of Deeds



Google Maps

Identified Through Descendent Engagement

Accabee Plantation Cemetery

North Charleston, Charleston County, SC



Next Step: Community Outreach

COMING SOON!

April - May 2027

North Charleston

Wando

Johns Island

Replicating This Project in Your Community

STEP 1: Identify Project Topic, Scope, Team & Partners

STEP 2: Apply for Funding

STEP 3: Gather Relevant Research and Information

STEP 4: Conduct Community Engagement

STEP 5: Design, Build & Launch an Interactive Digital Map

STEP 6: Share Project with Community & Local Government



Identify Project Topic, Scope, Team & Partners



Apply for Funding

National Park Service African American Civil Rights Grant
National Trust for Historic Preservation African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund



Gather Relevant Research and Information



Conduct Community Engagement



Design, Build & Launch an Interactive Digital Map



Share Project with Community & Local Government

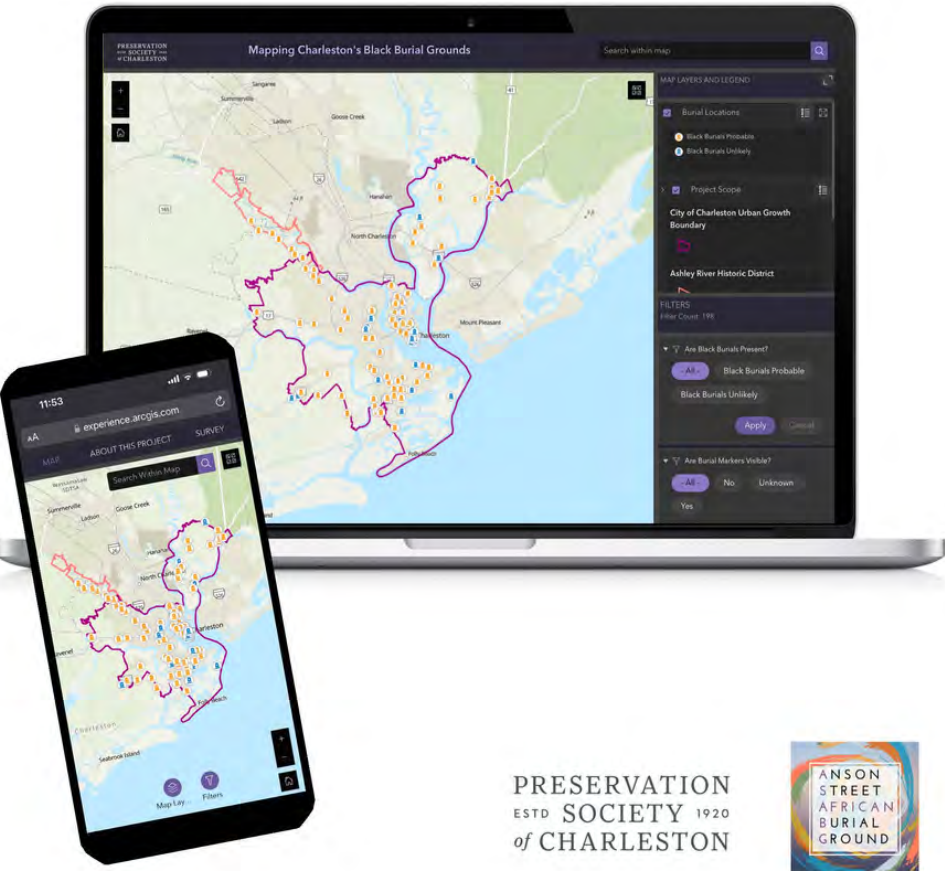


Resources

MAPPING CHARLESTON'S BLACK BURIAL GROUNDS

MAPPING CHARLESTON'S BLACK BURIAL GROUNDS PROJECT

GUIDE HOW TO USE THE MAP



PRESERVATION
SOCIETY
of CHARLESTON



What Can I Do If a Cemetery is Not Being Maintained?

Contact the Cemetery Owner or Management

Reach out to the owner or management of the cemetery to address the maintenance issues. They may be unaware of the problem and willing to take action.

Contact Your Elected Official

City, County, or State Representative

Per SC Code of Laws, Section 27-43-310, the jurisdiction for cemeteries is a local government's responsibility.

Coordinate Community or Volunteer Efforts

Organize a group of volunteers to maintain the cemetery.

Take Legal Action

If the cemetery is not being maintained, you may want to consider taking legal action.

Descendants' Rights to Access Burial Grounds on Private Property

The most important reference for understanding descendants' rights to access cemeteries on private property is SC Code of Laws, Section 27-43-310. Access to Cemeteries on Private Property.

This 2002 opinion from the State Attorney General in support of descendants' rights is also helpful in understanding the application of the law:

ACCESS: This law clearly states that "An owner of private property on which a cemetery, burial ground, or grave is located must allow ingress and egress to the cemetery, burial ground, or grave to the members and descendants of deceased persons buried on the private property or an agent of the written permission of family members or descendants."

ANCESTRY: Nowhere in the law does it state that descendants must prove their ancestry to burial ground in question.

PROCESS: The descendant must provide written notice to the property owner of their intent to the cemetery and request "a written proceeding designating reasonable conditions for the ingress and egress."

RESPONSE: Property owners are required within 30 days. If there is no response with a descendant "may institute a proceeding in the magistrate's court of the county in which the cemetery, burial ground, or grave is located to grant relief to either party, the magistrate to determine the frequency, hours, duration, or other conditions for the ingress and egress."

USING FIND-A-GRAVE

SCAN THE QR CODE TO GET TO FINDAGRAVE.COM



LOCATE A CEMETERY

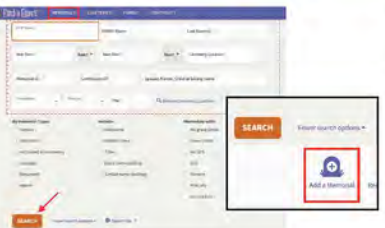
You can locate the cemetery by clicking the "Cemetery" tab at the top of the page, and then inputting the cemetery's name and location (City, County, State, or Country) in the search engine.

If you are unable to find the cemetery you are looking for, the cemetery may not be entered in the Find-A-Grave database yet.

You can add the cemetery by clicking the "Add a Cemetery" button.

WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH FIND-A-GRAVE?

- LOCATE THE BURIALS OF ANCESTORS OR OTHER PERSONS OF INTEREST
- ADD PHOTOS
- SUGGEST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO EXISTING MEMORIALS



SEARCH MEMORIALS

By clicking the "Memorial" tab, you can search for loved ones by entering their information (first name, last name, birth year, death year, etc.). Click "Search."

If you are unable to find the memorial you are looking for, the memorial may not be entered in the Find-A-Grave database yet.

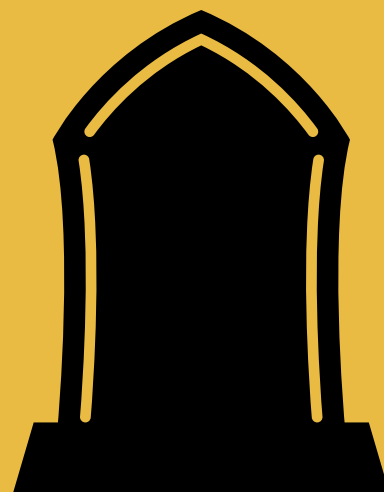
You can add the memorial by clicking the "Add a Memorial" button.

SCAN ME



Scan and scroll to the bottom of the page for resources or visit preservationsociety.org to learn more.

Questions?



MAPPING CHARLESTON'S BLACK BURIAL GROUNDS

Contact Us!

Laurel Fay

Manager of Preservation & Research

lfay@preservationsociety.org

Madison Lee

Community Outreach Coordinator

mlee@preservationsociety.org

PRESERVATION
ESTD SOCIETY 1920
of CHARLESTON