

Reclaiming Rephram Cemetery: Life and Afterlife Connected





Bluffton

Palmetto Bluff

Hilton Head Island

Savannah

Google Earth

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Image Landsat / Copernicus
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO



...but I can do so without any risk hereafter. The name
of the place is scriptural "Rephaim" or corn producing,
given by old John David Mongin who had very little
scripture in him. If I purchase the plantation I shall
show taste enough to give it a more appropriate name.

*The name of the place is scriptural "Rephaim" or
corn producing given by old John David Mongin
who had very little of the scripture in him. If I
purchase the plantation, I shall show taste
enough to give it a more appropriate name.*

As usual, Mrs. Pope opposes this move...

Nov 20 1847

- Rephaim Plantation prior to the Civil War
- Name modified after the war to Rephaim
- 1850 census - 66 enslaved men, women, and children

Letter from Thomas Fenwick Drayton

Reclaiming Rephram

- 2022 - A Call to Action (from Campbell Chapel AME Church) and the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy met to discuss engaging the local churches to work together with the Conservancy staff to clean and maintain Rephram Cemetery.
- 2023 - Partnership began between 7 local churches and the Palmetto Bluff Conservancy with Proctor Hill Baptist Church as the lead





Meetings

- History of land and people
- Main concerns
- Collective vision for the future of the cemetery

Main Goals

- Return to safe and aesthetically pleasing place
- Create clear visibility for drivers
- Set maintenance schedule

Top Priorities

- Remove dead and decaying trees
- Remove small pines and foliage that was taking over the cemetery
- Remove fallen trees, limbs, and cut trees
- Cut grass and weeds
- Pick up trash





The landowners and Palmetto Bluff Conservancy split the cost to remove dead and decaying trees, fallen trees, logs, and small pine taking over the back area.





Work was monitored by Palmetto Bluff
Conservancy archaeologists









Restoration Workshop

American Building Restoration Company

Frank Genello



Goals

- Reset headstones and footstones
- Proper cleaning methods of stones
- Hands-on participation in gluing broken stones



Workshop highlights

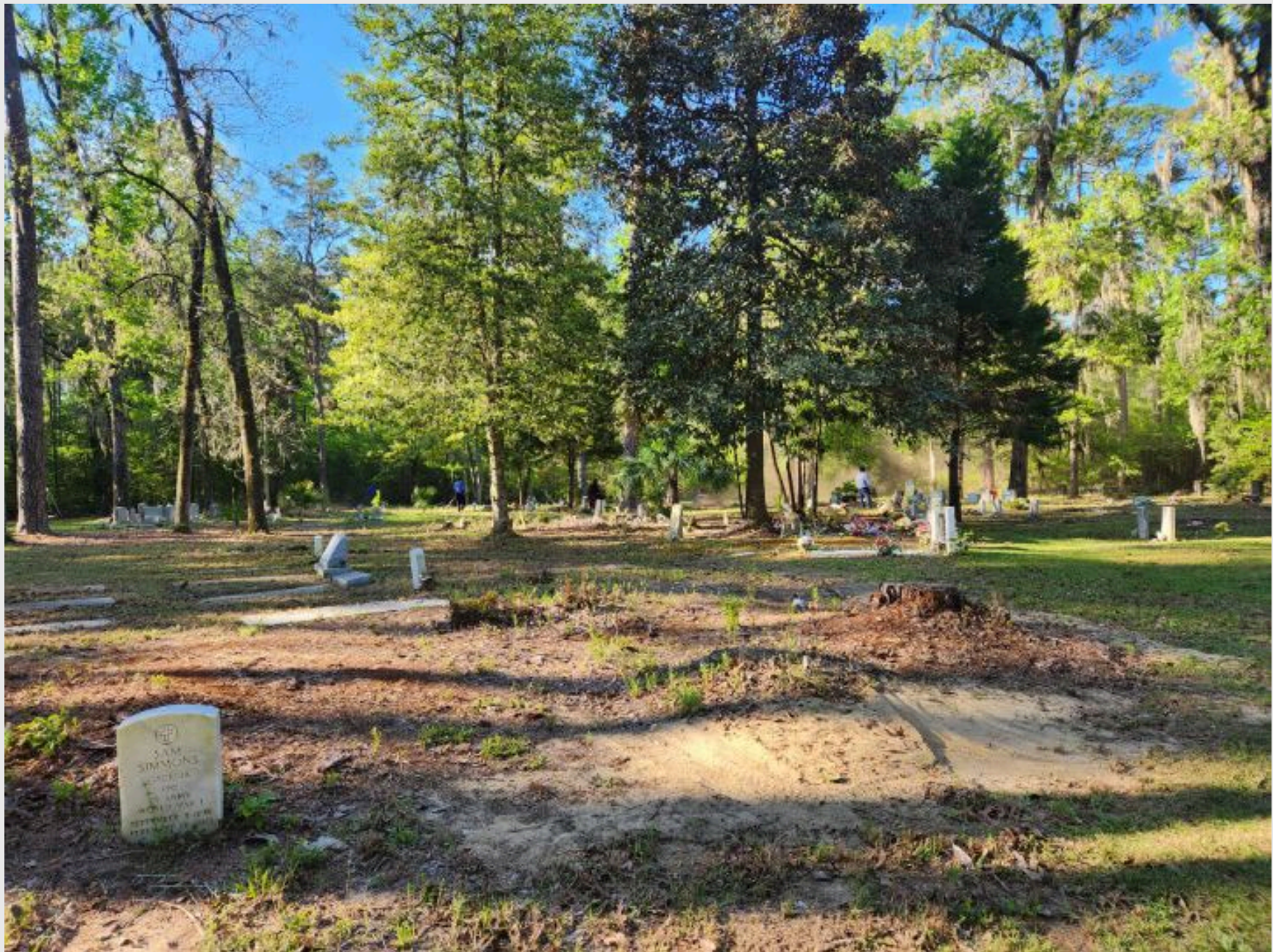
- Glued stone during the workshop and reset it the following week
- Reset four more stones during the workshop
- The repaired stone was for the grandmother of a volunteer at the cleanup
- Volunteers are also involved with other cemeteries

Rallying the Community



- Regular maintenance: Mowing and trimming
- Community cleanup days
- Conservation work: repairing damaged graves
- Mapping and documenting the cemetery



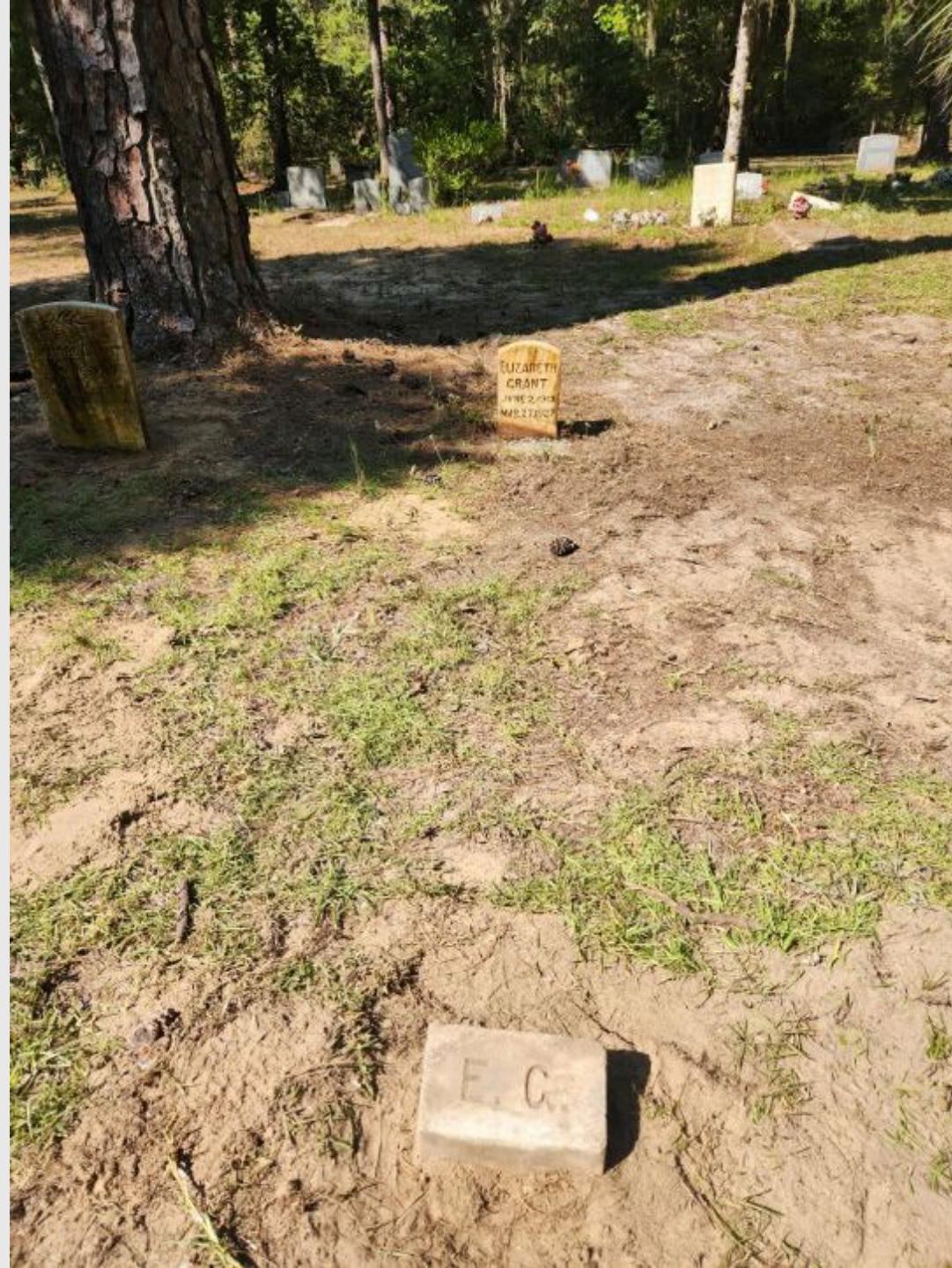




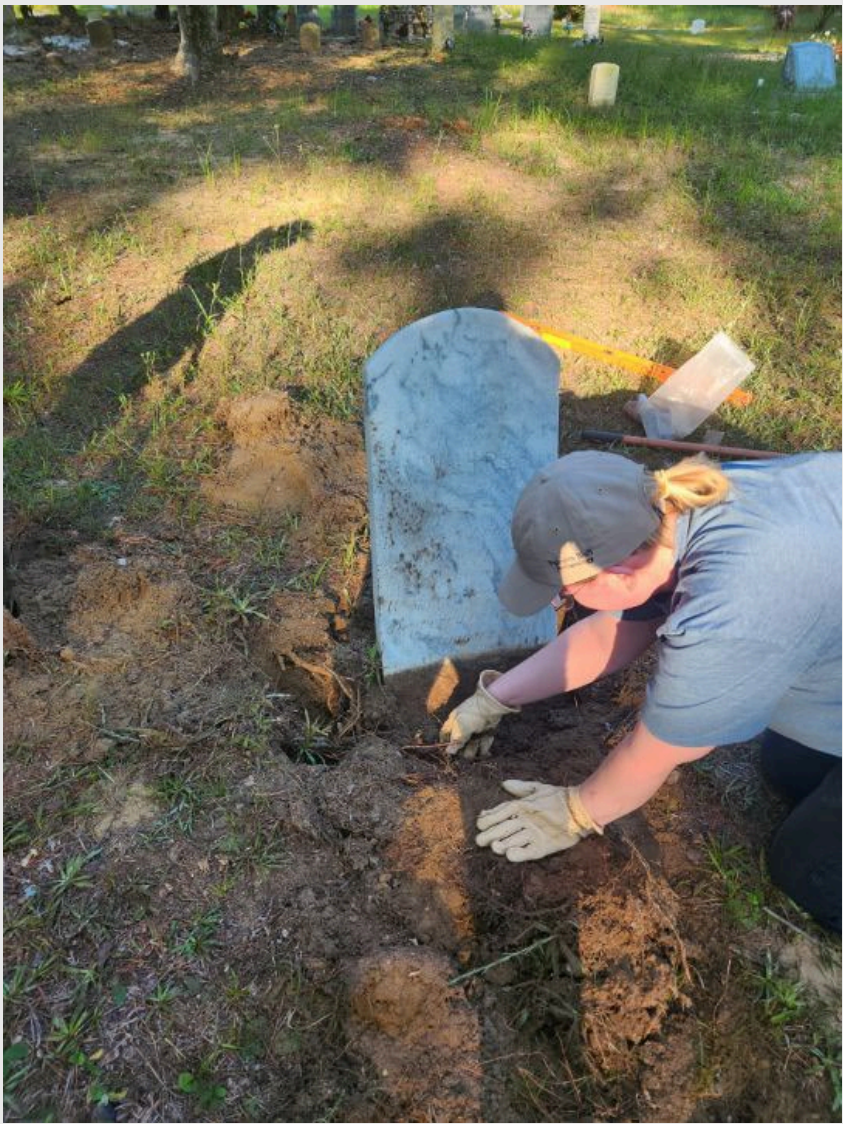














Challenges

- Quantity of volunteers
- Churches participating
- Youth involvement
- Funding for maintenance and restoration
- Outgrowing the fenced-in space
- Well delineated empty plots
- Fake flowers and continuous trash



Future Plans

- Fundraising
 - Additional tree work
 - Routine landscaping
 - Install trash cans
 - Install additional sitting areas
 - Repair the fence
- Increase youth involvement
- Increase active participation of churches





Thank you!

Donna Foster and the Selection Committee

SC Archives and History

Campbell Family

Mary Socci

Frank Genello

Proctor Hill Baptist Church

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church

Campbell Chapel AME

Bible Missionary Baptist Church

St. Johns Baptist Church

St. Luke Baptist Church

St. Matthew Baptist Church

