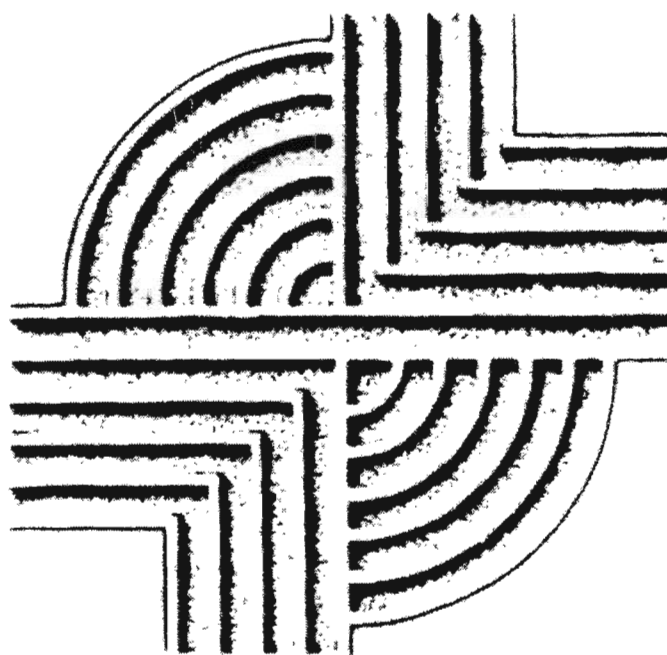# DEALING WITH DEATH: THE USE AND LOSS OF CEMETERIES BY THE S.C. STATE HOSPITAL IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

CHICORA RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 316

DEALING WITH DEATH: THE USE AND LOSS OF CEMETERIES BY THE S.C. STATE HOSPITAL IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA

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ABSTRACT

A January 11 article in the Columbia, South Carolina *State Newspaper* revealed that the City of Columbia was "concerned" by an "unknown number of grave of indigent mental health patients" reported to be on the property that they were in the process of converting to a golf course. At that time at least one member of City Council felt the appropriate response was to allow construction to continue, but to put up a marker, assuming the money could be found. A City employee remarked that the "plush lawn" created by the golf course would be far better than the woods that had been on the cemetery. The article went on to reveal that at least some members of city government knew of the cemetery for some time — but had not felt it important to acquaint the public, or City Council, with the issue.

Chicora Foundation became concerned with what appeared to be a clear case of cemetery desecration and damage — in violation of South Carolina Code 16-17-600, *Destruction or desecration of human remains or repositories thereof*. Even more disheartening, this destruction was being caused by a municipal government. Those who should be protecting cemeteries appeared to be actively engaged in their destruction.

This brief — and very preliminary — study reveals what we have been able to ascertain concerning the cemeteries used by the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum (latter the South Carolina State Hospital for the Insane and today the South Carolina State Mental Hospital). The research has quickly examined a variety of primary and secondary materials available at the Richland County Public Library, the South Caroliniana Library, and the S.C. Department of Archives and History. We do not wish any reader to interpret this as exhaustive. There remain a number of inconsistencies. Some may perhaps be resolved through more detailed research, although some parts of the history may never be better understood.

At least 12 different cemeteries have been used by the South Carolina State Hospital since its inception in 1828. Five are those of the major religious denominations in Columbia (Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Baptist, and Catholic) and are the primary downtown cemeteries still extant (or partially extant) today. It appears that these were used by a fair number of those dying at the Lunatic Asylum through the first half of the nineteenth century. Those not buried in one of these church graveyards were relegated to Columbia's "public burying ground." This graveyard, situated in the block bounded by Senate, Wayne, Pendleton, and Pulaski, was sold by the City of Columbia to a railroad and ultimately was partially excavated for placement of railroad tracks; currently the remainder is being used by a HUD housing project.

After the Civil War it appears that patients not sent "home" for burial were placed in Elmwood Cemetery if they were white and the pauper's cemetery at the edge of the Columbia Canal if they were African American. When the Elmwood lot was filled, at least by the turn of the century, new graves were simply dug through old graves. Only when the horrors of this lot became public did the State Hospital for the Insane begin burying white patients in a cemetery north of the Confederate Veterans Home — in a hog lot. African Americans were buried at the edge of the asylum's farm to the east — in the same location which is today being converted into a golf course.

By about 1930 it appears that another cemetery was opened by the S.C. State Hospital — this one on the State Park property north of what is today the Crafts-Farrow Hospital.

Our investigation of the African American farm cemetery reveals that in 1967 a local resident complained to the Governor about its disgraceful care. The State Commissioner of Mental Health, Dr. William S. Hall, responded that the cemetery would be cleaned off and "kept in satisfactory condition from here on out." In retrospect, this seems to have been a hollow promise. The cemetery was used by the City of

Columbia in 1983 for the reburial of a small number of individuals removed from the pauper's graveyard on the edge of the Columbia Canal by the city's "railroad relocation project," although it is unclear if there was actually any room available for the reburial.

The City of Columbia, using funds provided by the Tiger Woods Foundation, have already cleared and grubbed the cemetery, conducted some grading, and have installed a deep water irrigation system. All of these activities have damaged both the integrity of the cemetery and may have caused damage to burials. Only two markers are still visible — one being a marker erected by the City of Columbia in 1983. Both markers have been knocked down and remain down on the ground.

In addition to documenting the history and current condition of this cemetery, this study also recommends steps which should take place in order to fulfill the spirit — and letter — of South Carolina Code of Laws 16-17-600.

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INTRODUCTION

Project Background

On September 20, 2000 a brief article buried on page B3 of *The State* newspaper provided a follow-up concerning the demise of the Saxon Homes — a nearly 50-year old public housing project off north Harden Street on the north edge of Columbia, South Carolina (Figure 1 shows the location of Saxon Homes, as well as the nearby cemetery — the primary concern of this research). The article reminded readers that the funding came from a $25.8 million Hope VI grant, as well as a $100 million federal empowerment zone — both credited to U.S. Representative Jim Clyburn. What some would characterize as pork barrel was seen by others as helping to "revitalize the area along Harden Street, from Five Points to Colonial Drive." One City of Columbia representative, Gilbert Walker, interim director of the Columbia Housing Authority, remarked — prophetically as it would turn out — "I don't think a lot of people understand yet the magnitude of what's going on here." ("Hopes Rising as Saxon Homes Fall," *The State*, September 10, 2000, B3).

The article also provided a brief one sentence that would ultimately be of equal importance: "Nearby, ground had been broken on a driving range that's part of a nine-hole, par-3 golf course being built by the Tiger Woods Foundation and sponsored by the city of Columbia."

A search of *The State* newspaper's archives failed to reveal any additional news reported until an article on January 11, 2001 — about 3½ months later — which also appeared on an inside page. That article began with the startling public revelation, "A new public golf course is being built over an unknown number of graves of indigent metal health patients, City Council members learned Wednesday" ("Graves on Golf Course Site Concern Officials," *The State*, January 11, 2001, B3).

The article went on to report the City Manager's insistence that Council members were told of the cemetery when the City accepted the property, although no Council member was reported as remembering this embarrassing detail. While one Council member seemed to be concerned, others quoted in the article appeared far less worried. The Honorable E.W. Cromartie was quoted as observing that the city would do what "we can" to be "sensitive," justifying the destruction of the cemetery by noting that local residents were glad the woods were gone. The Honorable Anne Sinclair is reported as observing that while no marker to remember the dead was planned, it might be an option. One City employee, park planner Jim Lawracy, commented that the "plush lawn" of a golf course was a "better condition" than the previous woods.

In subsequent media coverage various individuals associated with the City of Columbia report that they complied with all requirements of the Coroner and that nothing wrong had been done, as well as assuring the public that a simple solution could be found.

The coverage, of course, raises several troubling questions. First, and most fundamentally, it appears that the City of Columbia ignored that a cemetery was present. There has never been any claim, at least on the part of the City Manager, that the City failed to realize a cemetery was present. Apparently, they just didn't care. Of course, this is related to the statement that the City of Columbia did everything they were told to do by the Coroner's Office.

Did no one give any credence to State law (see Figure 2)? Did no one associated with this project wonder if building a golf course — with the cutting down of woods, grubbing out of stumps, excavation for utilities, and so on — might cause damage or destruction to the human remains? Just what was the Richland County Coroner advising the City to do — ignore the cemetery and hope no one brought the issue up? And why would any state agency think that a golf
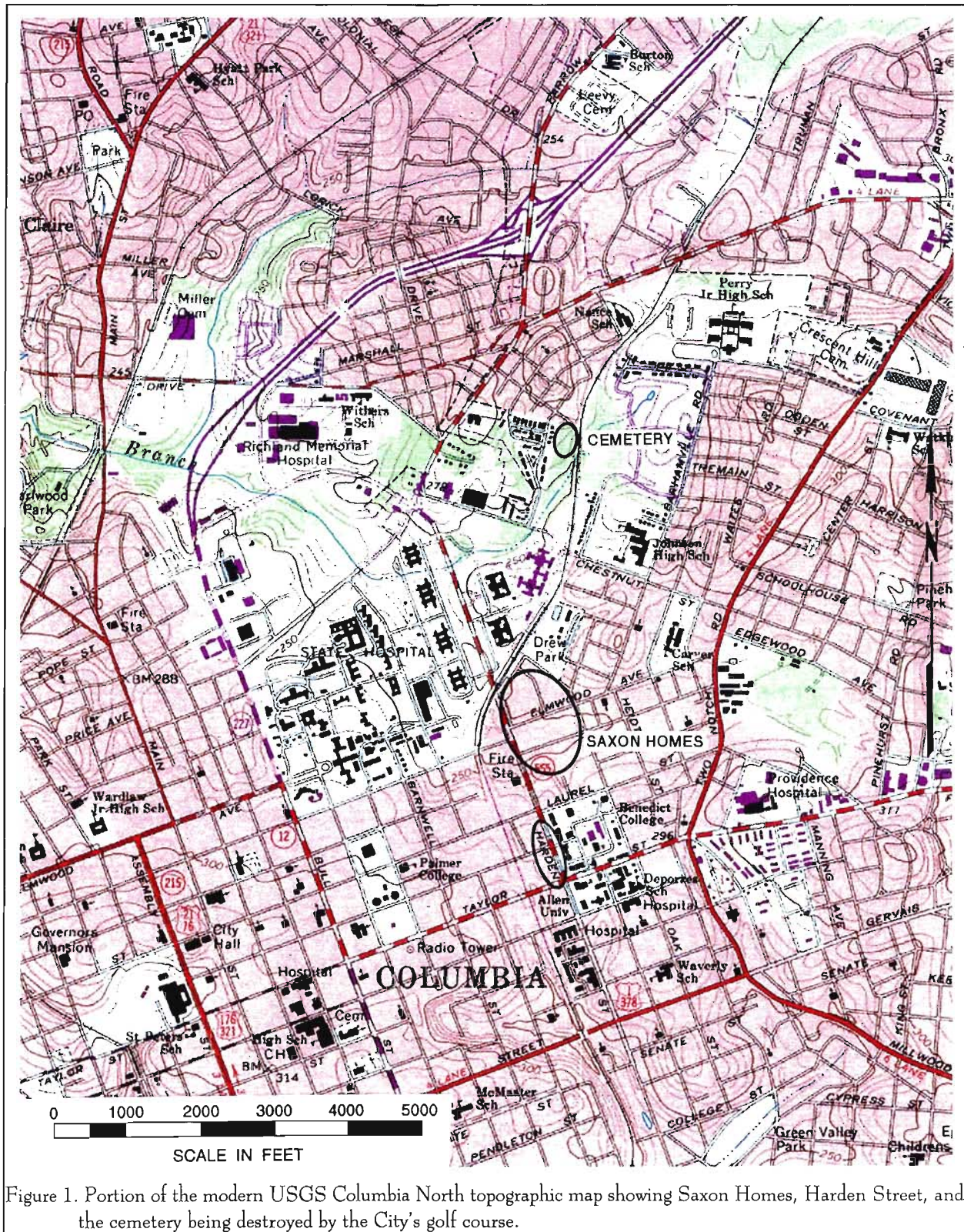
Figure 1. Portion of the modern USGS Columbia North topographic map showing Saxon Homes, Harden Street, and the cemetery being destroyed by the City's golf course.

SECTION 16-17-600. Destruction or desecration of human remains or repositories thereof; liability of crematory operators; penalties.

(A) It is unlawful for a person wilfully and knowingly, and without proper legal authority to:

(1) destroy or damage the remains of a deceased human being;

(2) remove a portion of the remains of a deceased human being from a burial ground where human skeletal remains are buried, a grave, crypt, vault, mausoleum, or other repository; or

(3) desecrate human remains.

A person violating the provisions of subsection (A) is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than five thousand dollars or imprisoned not less than one year nor more than ten years, or both.

A crematory operator is neither civilly nor criminally liable for cremating a body which (1) has been incorrectly identified by the funeral director, coroner, medical examiner, or person authorized by law to bring the deceased to the crematory; or (2) the funeral director has obtained invalid authorization to cremate. This immunity does not apply to a crematory operator who knew or should have known that the body was incorrectly identified.

(B) It is unlawful for a person wilfully and knowingly, and without proper legal authority to:

(1) obliterate, vandalize, or desecrate a burial ground where human skeletal remains are buried, a grave, graveyard, tomb, mausoleum, or other repository of human remains;

(2) deface, vandalize, injure, or remove a gravestone or other memorial monument or marker commemorating a deceased person or group of persons, whether located within or outside of a recognized cemetery, memorial park, or battlefield; or

(3) obliterate, vandalize, or desecrate a park or other area clearly designated to preserve and perpetuate the memory of a deceased person or group of persons.

A person violating the provisions of subsection (B) is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be imprisoned not more than ten years or fined not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

(C) It is unlawful for a person wilfully, knowingly, and without proper legal authority to destroy, tear down, or injure any fencing, plants, trees, shrubs, or flowers located upon or around a repository for human remains, or within a human graveyard or memorial park.

A person violating the provisions of subsection (C) is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction, must be fined not more than five thousand dollars or imprisoned not more than five years, or both. Injury or loss of property less than two hundred dollars is a misdemeanor triable in magistrate's court. Upon conviction, the person must be fined, imprisoned, or both, not more than is permitted by law, without presentment or indictment by the grand jury, and further must be required to perform up to five hundred hours of community service in an amount to be determined by the court.

Figure 2. State law protecting cemeteries and graveyards from damage.

course was an appropriate use of a cemetery?

Second, the various public reactions are all phrased in the context of "either-or." For example, the statement by The Honorable E.W. Cromartie that the destruction of the cemetery is better than allowing the woods to remains as a hiding place for criminals implies that there was no alternative. It fails to recognize that the same beneficial outcome — eliminating a hiding place for criminals — could have been achieved by the City of Columbia or the S.C. Mental Health Department cleaning up the cemetery.

And third, throughout this entire process, there seems to have been no effort to evaluate the cemetery as a potentially significant historic or archaeological resource. While there are (as will be discussed in a following sections) historic markers for the Confederate Home and its cemetery, the African American dead from the S.C. State Insane Asylum don't appear to have been important enough to be remembered — which seems to be yet another example of South Carolina's racially charged history of indifference. The failure to conduct any degree of historic research is all the more troubling considering that Federal funds played such a significant part in the overall scheme of the project.[1]

Chicora Foundation, because of its long involvement in historic preservation, including the preservation of cemeteries, was immediately concerned — not only about the potential loss of yet another cemetery, but also about the seeming disregard expressed by all of the involved parties for the state law intended to offer protection. Chicora immediately wrote the Mayor of Columbia, all of the City Council Members, the President of the Tiger Woods Foundation, and the Tiger Woods Foundation's Executive Director asking that state law be obeyed, with the cemetery being either preserved or removed. Sadly,

none of either the public officials or the representatives of The Tiger Woods Foundation have chosen to respond.

We were informed that the Richland County Coroner's Office was investigating the situation, which seems odd if, as claimed, the City has complied with all of the Coroner's instructions. Nevertheless, when the Corner's investigator, Mr. Vernon Kirkpatrick, contacted us for information, we decided that this was a situation which warranted additional attention.[2] This report provides a brief overview of our findings and recommendations on what steps can be taken at this point.

A Quick Overview of the State Hospital

There are a variety of secondary historical accounts concerning the S.C. State Hospital. The most readily accessible is Peter McCandless' (1996) *Moonlight, Magnolias, & Madness: Insanity in South Carolina from the Colonial Period to the Progressive Era,* although of equal interest might be Wilton Hellams' (1985) *A History of South Carolina State Hospital (1821 to 1900)* or even Leila G. Johnson's (1930) *A History of the South Carolina State Hospital.* While each is slightly different in terms of orientation and details covered, none provide a great deal of information concerning the death or burial of the patients at the institution. They are all, however, in general agreement concerning the broad historical themes.

The Lunatic Asylum, as it was originally known, opened its doors in December 1828 — the culmination of years focused both on generating sufficient legislative enthusiasm and also on actually constructing a building (Hellams 1985:17; McCandless 1996:50). The original site, a city block encompassing 4 acres, was acquired in 1822 and was bounded by

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[1] While no federal funds may be involved in the golf course, there seems to be a great deal of evidence that the project would not have been conducted in isolation from other federal grants and undertakings. In other words, were it not for the other federal funding and activities, the cemetery might still be intact.

[2] Chicora Foundation is a non-endowed non-profit. As a result, most of our research and other activities focuses on projects which have been sponsored — providing funds to pay salaries and associated costs. We do, however, attempt to take on projects which are of special interest and which are unlikely to attract the interests of a funding agency. The effort to understand the historic use of cemeteries by the S.C. State Hospital falls into this category.

Elmwood Avenue to the north, Pickens Street to the east, Lumber (today Calhoun) Street to the south, and Bull Street to the west. Death doesn't seem to really have been an issue. Far more important was finding patients.

While it was promoted on the basis of the philosophy of "build it and they will come," it was discovered that a variety of factors worked against the institution's acceptance. By 1831, an act of the Legislature allowed the institution to fill its rooms by accepting paupers, who were largely subsidized by paying patients (McCandless 1996:74). It wasn't until 1848 that African American patients were allowed admittance and fewer than 40 were admitted by the time of the Civil War. In fact, the efforts to care for African Americans were a failure. As McCandless comments:

> the physicians protested that the provisions for them [African Americans] were unacceptable, from both a medical and racial standpoint. It was impossible to give the black patients the exercise their condition demanded, because their building was located in the white patients' exercise court. The proximity of the blacks, the physicians insisted, distressed the white patients and inhibited their recovery (McCandless 1996:77).

By 1858 the black patients were released, with the decision to admit no more until the state funded proper buildings and grounds for them.

The Asylum soon discovered that not only was Mills' design not well suited to its need, but the influx of paupers created terrible overcrowding. McCandless (1996:79) notes that more than half of the patients admitted in 1832 and 1833 died and that between 1835 and 1842 the mortality rate averaged 26%. The conditions by the eve of the Civil War were described as "fetid," with death rates more than tripling during wet years (Hellams 1985:30). In an effort to find room to expand the hospital grounds gradually grew, so that just prior to the Civil War the hospital owned about 40 acres (McCandless 1996:114). The bulk of this land was used for farming, in an effort to make the always cash-strapped institution more self-sufficient.

After the Civil War the institution reopened with new goals and visions. Many of the problems, however, were the same. The institution remained understaffed and underfunded. There was an influx of African American patients — McCandless (1996:252) reported that the number increased from five in 1865 to more than four hundred at the end of 1901. Virtually all were charity cases and the institution gradually became little more than a holding cell. As Hellams observes, the State Hospital became a "facility populated by a majority of individuals who benefited little beyond the food and shelter offered" (Hellams 1985:73). While most patients were still white,[3] they were different from those who entered before the Civil War. As Hellams comments:

> The Civil War and post-war depression also created a new class of pauper other than that typified by the 1848-1860 period, a class of riches-to-rags Southerner who had known better position and more affordable status within the asylum, but who had been "utterly ruined" by the military conflict in the South (Hellams 1985:71).

The state provided about a third of the operating costs. In theory the remainder was to be made-up by paying patients, but these were few and far between, so the institution began running extraordinary debts. Beyond the near economic collapse of the State Hospital, the conditions provided an unprecedented breeding ground for disease, especially tuberculosis (Hellams 1985:119).

When a new asylum was finally completed in 1885, white patients were moved to that building and the black female patients were moved into the old asylum building (Figure 3 shows the asylum grounds in

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[3] In 1899, for example, the institution had 946 patients, of which 584 (61.7%) were white and 382 (38.3%)were African American.

EXPLANATION.

A   Old Asylum.
B }
C }   One-story wooden Pavilion.
D   South wing of new Asylum.
E   Chapel and Amusement Hall.
F   Wooden Lodge for Colored Females.
G   Finished Section of North Wing.
H   Unfinished Section.
I   Proposed Brick Lodge.
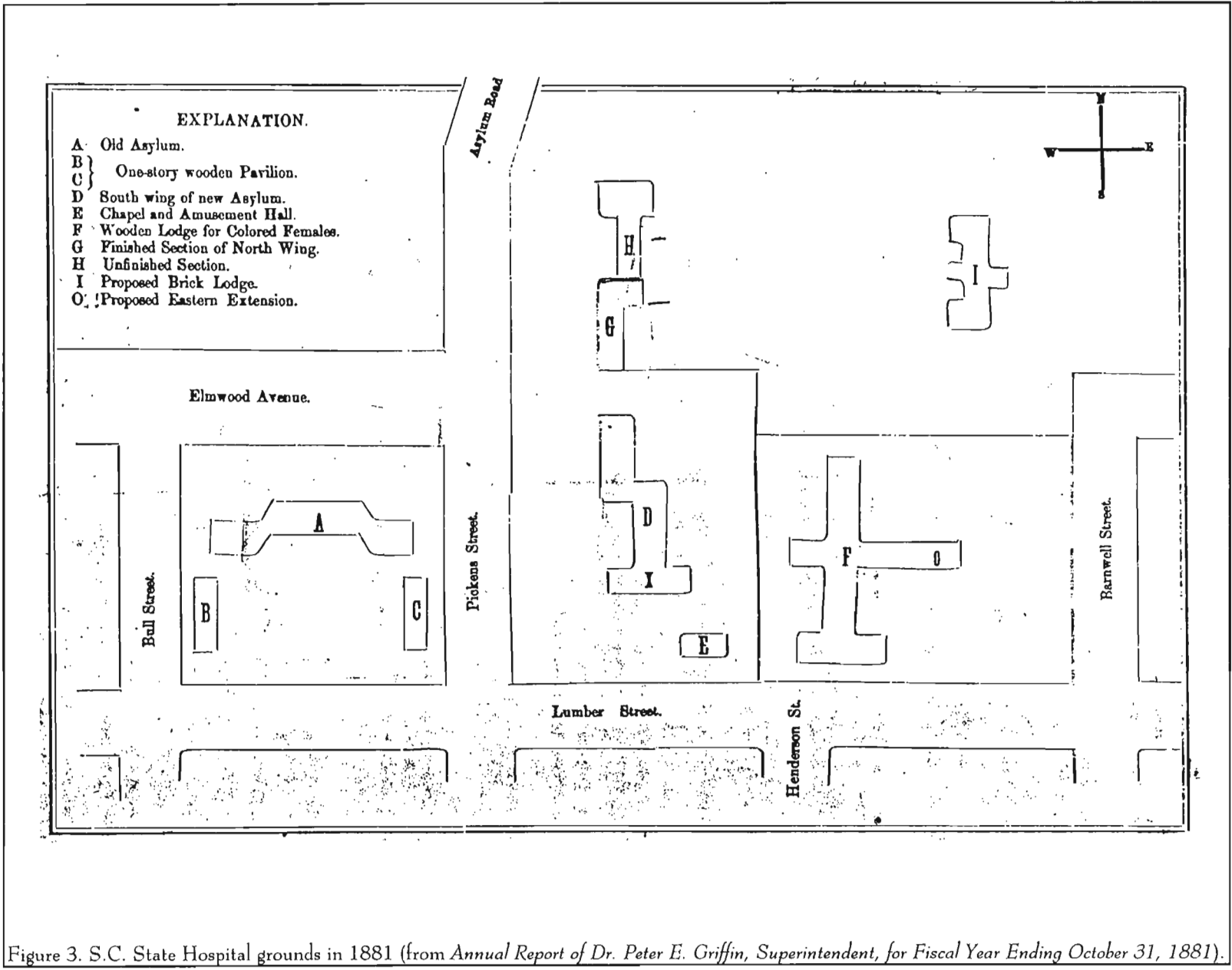O   Proposed Eastern Extension.

Figure 3. S.C. State Hospital grounds in 1881 (from *Annual Report of Dr. Peter E. Griffin, Superintendent, for Fiscal Year Ending October 31, 1881*).

1881, prior to the completion of the new building and transfer of African American females). This left the black men still occupying "temporary" wooden structures first built on the grounds in the 1860s (McCandless 1996:259). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries conditions at the institution worsened. There was a great deal of concern over cost, with the Superintendent of Asylums happily proclaiming that not only did South Carolina spend less on patients in its asylum than any other state, but South Carolina was even spending less than was legally required to support a prisoner in the state penitentiary. Even Joseph I. Waring commented:

> The per capita cost for maintaining patients fell to the lowest point of any administration [under Dr. J.W. Babcock, 1891-1900], before or after. This seems to have been somewhat at the expense of the well-being of the patients, since there was a noticeable increase int he morbidity and mortality in the institution (Waring 1967:188).

The State Hospital weathered two legislative investigations — one in 1909 and another in 1914 (Legislative Committee 1910a, 1910b, 1914). While the reports, most especially of the 1909 investigation, document a number of problems at the institution, they placed the blame for abhorrent conditions primarily on the lack of adequate funding.

In 1910 the legislature created the State Hospital Commission and authorized the new agency to purchase land about 6 miles outside the city in order to begin a new asylum. Initially it was expected to house all of the patients, although gradually a decision was made to transfer only the "colored" population — a process which began in 1914. Nevertheless, the process was slow and was not completed until the 1930s. The new facility, euphemistically named "State Park," was mired in controversy, largely created by Governor Coleman Blease, arguably one of South Carolina's most racist politicians (McCandless 1996:260). Today State Park houses S.C. Department of Mental Health facilities, including the Crafts-Farrow State Hospital, as well as the Manning Correctional Institute, University of South Carolina facilities, and the S.C. Department of Archives and History.

A Few Notes on the Historical Research

The historical research conducted for this project has used both primary and secondary resources available at the Richland County Public Library, the South Caroliniana Library, the Richland County Clerk of Court, and the S.C. Department of Archives and History. These include maps, plats, deeds, agency accounts and records, and a variety of other accessible public documents. In particular, the State Department of Mental Health records deposited with the S.C. Department of Archives and History reviewed by this study include:

- S 190005 Mental Health Commission. Superintendent's reports to the regents, 1832-1857 (2 bound volumes, 0.01 microfilm reel).

- S 190010 Mental Health Commission. Miscellaneous papers of the State Hospital, 1911-1914 (1.00 cubic foot).

- S 190085 Mental Health Commission. Property and land records, ca. 1891-1946 (0.16 cubic foot).

- S 190095 Mental Health Commission. Photographic file, ca. 1885-1970 (2 folders).

- S 190081 State Dept. Of Mental Health. Office of the State Commissioner, Agency histories and fact sheets, 1930-1978 (0.01 cubic foot and 1 volume).

- S 190093 State Dept. of Mental Health. Division of Education and Research Services. Historical research files, ca. 1900-1999 (7.00 cubic feet).

There are a number of resources which have not been used, either because they are unavailable or because there wasn't sufficient time. These include newspaper accounts (for example, *The State* newspaper dates to 1891), manuscript materials (such as the typescript James Lawrence Thompson memoir at the South Caroliniana Library), and a large body of state records held by the S.C. Department of Archives and History but which are restricted for 100 years after the date of the records' creation. In particular, the State Department of Mental Health records deposited with the S.C. Department of Archives and History include the following files which are likely to provide additional information:

■S 190076 Mental Health Commission. Record of Burials, 1928-1956 (0.01 cubic foot).

■S 190038 South Carolina State Hospital (Columbia, S.C.). Record of Deaths, 1893-1979 (4 volumes and 1.00 cubic foot). We are informed by the S.C. Department of Archives and History staff that this collection does provide information on the location of burials, after 1915.

■ S 190063 South Carolina State Hospital (Columbia, S.C.). Office of the Chaplin, Record of Funerals, 1930-1950 (0.33 cubic foot).

■ S 190077 Crafts-Farrow State Hospital (Columbia, S.C.). Office of the Chaplin, Record of burials at Crafts-Farrow State Hospital, 1922-1975 (0.16 cubic foot).

A full accounting of the decisions and actions involved in the damage and destruction of the State Hospital Cemetery would also likely require a Freedom of Information request to the City of Columbia and the State Budget and Control Board, as will become clear in the following discussions.

DEALING WITH DEATH AT THE STATE HOSPITAL

It is perhaps understandable that those in charge of the State Hospital have, through time, been more concerned with the living than with the dead. The living might be "cured," or at least made more productive citizens; the living, if able, were paying customers; and it was certainly the living who needed immediate shelter and food. Nevertheless, throughout the State Hospital's existence, death has been a relatively common occurrence.

This section of the study provides information on who these dead were — black, white, paying client or pauper charity — and how they were dealt with. As previously discussed, the observations made here must be considered preliminary since there are records we were not able to access, either because of time or governmental regulations.

Prior to the Civil War

During the very earliest years the asylum was sufficiently below capacity that the death rate was not particularly alarming. With the admission of pauper cases in 1831, the rate began rising in an alarming fashion. McCandless observes that:

> More than half of the patients admitted in 1832 and 1833 died (thirty-two of fifty-nine). Between 1835 and 1842, mortality averaged 26 percent of the patients under treatment (McCandless 1996:79).

Hellams (1985:30-35) recounts the deficiencies of the institution that contributed to the death rate, including overcrowding, inadequate food and clothing, even the poor design of the original building. Causes of death were attributed to chronic diarrhea, dysentery, general dropsy (edema), chest dropsy, consumption (tuberculosis), internal abscess, epilepsy, exhaustion, and "prevailing bowel complaint" (Hellams 1985:60).

In our own work we examined the Superintendent's Reports to the Regents for the period from 1832 through 1838 (S.C. Department of Archives and History, Microfilm ST-0833) for a better view of the situation and, most importantly, information on where the dead were buried.

During this period we identified 61 deaths. Of these all but 12 (19.7%) have a specific burying ground listed. The 12 without notes may have been sent home to family or friends, or the notation may simply have been overlooked. Typical of these accounts is the one for John Peter Davanne on June 23, 1832:

> John Peter Davanne departed this life on Monday the 18th Inst. at 11 o'clock A.M. He was interred on the same evening in the publick burying ground. Brought to Asylum as transient pauper 27th April 1831 (S.C. Department of Archives and History, microfilm ST-0833).

Table 1 provides an overview of these cases. We see, however, that six different cemeteries or burying ground were used by the Lunatic Asylum:

- the "Catholic Church Yard, " meaning the cemetery surrounding St. Peter's Church on what is today Assembly Street;

- the "Baptist Church," meaning the First Baptist Church, then on the southeast corner of Hampton (then Plain) and Sumter streets;

- the "Methodist Church," meaning what is today called the Washington Street Methodist Church on the southwest corner of Marion and Washington streets;

	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	1838	Total
Public Burying Grounds	3	7	2	6	10	5	2	35
Presbyterian	2		1	1	3			7
Episcopalian	2							2
Methodist		2			1			3
Baptist			1					1
Catholic				1				1
not specified	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	12
Totals	8	10	9	9	15	6	4	61

Table 1.
Location of Lunatic Asylum Burials Between 1832 and 1838

Unfortunately the reports stop providing this level of detail after about 1860.

In other words, the Lunatic Asylum relied on either the kindness of family and friends to deal with those who died, or else relied on locally available graveyards. If there was a clear religious association — or if family and friends requested a specific religious service — then one of the local church graveyards was used. Otherwise, the City's graveyard was used.

Columbia's first common burial ground was the square bounded by Bull, Marion, Lady, and Washington streets and was to be used by the four major Protestant denominations (Moore 1993:81). Eventually this cemetery was acquired by the Presbyterians and the State Legislature established a new "publick burying ground" for Columbia. This second site was the block bounded by Senate, Wayne, Pendleton, and Pulaski — directly west of a four block area which was eventually taken over by the South Carolina Railroad Company (Figure 4).

There is no formal history of this second public burying ground, although there are several anecdotal histories. For example, Julian Selby (1905) in his *Memorabilia*, recalled that the graveyard was "used for the burial of all classes of people — rich and poor, black and white" (Selby 1905:93) and goes on to recount the burial of a wealthy merchant in the cemetery. A similar view of the burying grounds' democratic character is provided by James Franklin Williams (1929), who noted, "all classes were buried there . . . negroes and all, as there were only a few church burying grounds" (Williams 1929:48). This, of course, was not unusual. Many cities had common, inner city burial grounds. While white and black may have been buried in the same ground, it is likely that one corner was allocated to African Americans — there

- the "Episcopal Church," or Trinity Church on Sumter Street between Gervais and Senate streets;

- the "Presbyterian Church Yard," meaning the cemetery associated with the First Presbyterian Church on the southwest corner of Lady and Marion streets; and

- the "publick burying ground."

Additional information is available in those Chaplin's Reports. For example, a report dated November 1, 1851 reported, "the remains of Mr. & Mrs. ____, pauper patients, were interred in the public cemetery, May 30. Those of Mr. ____, who died on the 13th of June, were sent to his friends." The report of November 5, 1859 explains:

Of these 19 [deaths], five were private patients, two of whom were sent home to their friends, two interred at Elmwood Cemetery, and one in that of the Presbyterian Church. Of the remaining 14, four were returned to their friends, five were interred in Elmwood Cemetery, two in that of the Methodist Church, and three in the Roman Catholic Church Cemetery (South Carolina Department of Archives and History, S 190093, Box 2).

was segregation even in death.

The accounts agree that eventually in the mid-nineteenth century the cemetery was full (likely it was more than full).[1] This also coincides with a growing national movement to remove cemeteries from the cities (Sloane 1991:34-35). After the City formally abandoned the cemetery in November 1857, closing it to future use, the property was sold by the City of Columbia to the Atlantic Coast Line in order to expand their freight yards. Williams observed, "Many corporations have no respect for the dead and very little for the living — only what they can grind out of them" (Williams 1929:49). Selby (1905:93) reports that the bodies were to be moved by Walter S. Monteith and
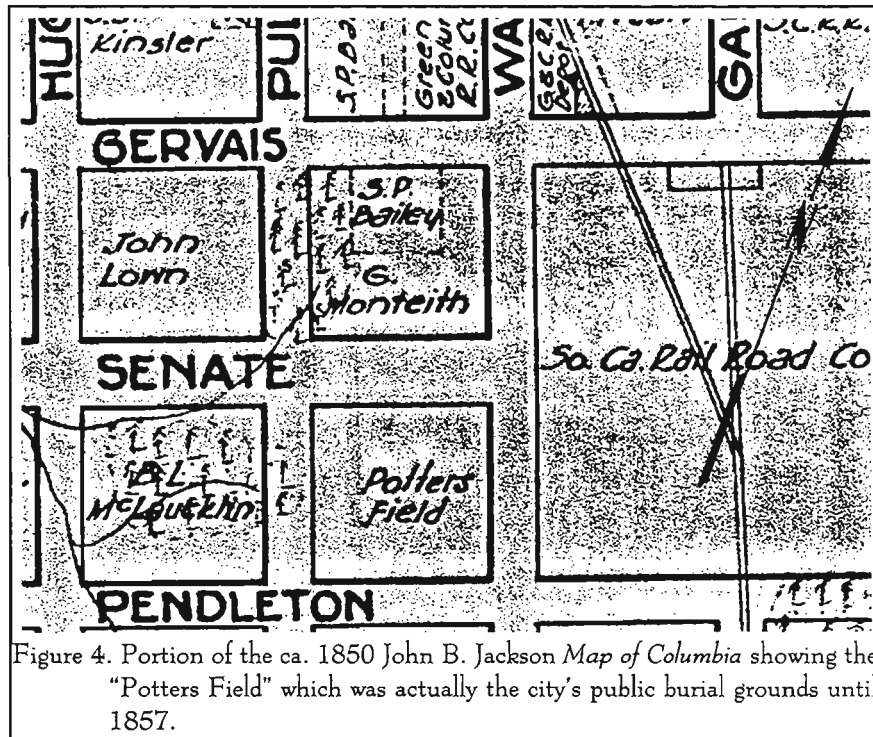

Figure 4. Portion of the ca. 1850 John B. Jackson *Map of Columbia* showing the "Potters Field" which was actually the city's public burial grounds until 1857.

W.S. Reamer, although he notes that he never heard of any actually being moved, although "the old head and foot-stones went somewhere" (Selby 1905:93).

The replacement for most Columbians was Elmwood Cemetery, established in 1854 (although the first burial doesn't seem to have taken place until 1856). It followed the then prevailing "rural cemetery" movement which sough to create a picturesque, natural garden for repose and contemplation (Sloan 1991). Elmwood struck off 27 acres west of the Greenville Railroad to the City of Columbia for the creation of a potter's cemetery.[2] It was into the potter's field that

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[1] Our investigations of the Colonial Cemetery in downtown Savannah on slightly less than a city block identified 560 existing monuments and 8,678 unmarked graves (Trinkley and Hacker 1999).

[2] Although the public or city burying grounds are sometimes called a pauper or potter's cemetery, this is not technically correct since it was used as a city cemetery by the majority of Columbia's residents. The cemetery west of the Greenville Railroad and east of the canal along the Broad is

most African Americans were buried prior to creation of Randolph Cemetery in 1872.

It appears that with the impending closing of the public buying grounds, the Lunatic Asylum began exploring its options. A synthesis of records reveals that as early as June 7, 1856 the Board of Regents considered purchasing a lot in Elmwood for use by pauper patients and a committee was appointed to explore the issue. It seems that little was done, since in August 1856 the committee was directed to determine the cost of a 200 capacity lot. That September, however, the committee reported that they:

> had visited Elmwood Cemetery with the cemetery president, with Colonel Wallace, and other Board members, accompanied by Surveyor McVeal. After careful examination, the recommendation was the purchase of

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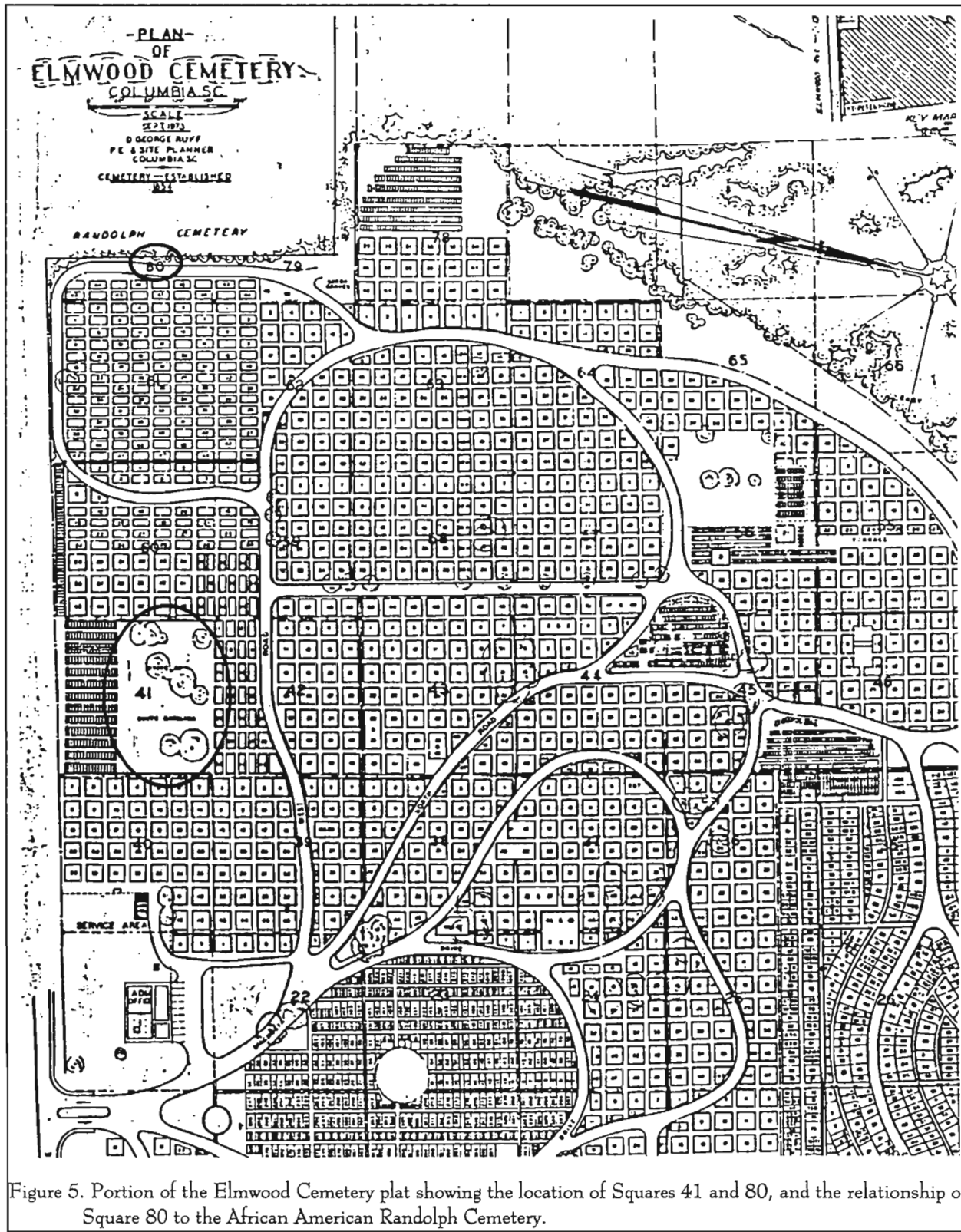correctly called a potter's field since it was reserved for the indigent.

11

Figure 5. Portion of the Elmwood Cemetery plat showing the location of Squares 41 and 80, and the relationship of Square 80 to the African American Randolph Cemetery.

a square known as No. 204, located near the Greenville Railroad on the Western boundary of Elmwood Cemetery — an open field susceptible of high improvement (S.C. Department of Archives and History, September 5, 1856 Minutes of the Board of Regents [Mental Health Commission]).

The Board realized that they would need at least an acre of land, but they also found that the price was prohibitive. As an alternative, it appears that they established an agreement with Elmwood which would allow use of the lot on a per-patient basis, with $10 paid for each paying patient buried there and $5 for each charity patient.[3]

	Table 2. Death Rates Between 1870 and 1897 (from *Report of the Superintendent*)				
	Total Deaths	Rate %	White	Black	Undertaker's Bill
1870	31	9.6			
1871	32	10.8			320.00
1874-75	44	10.2			
1875-76	52	11.6			
1876-77	45	10.2			
1878-79	61	12.4			
1879-80	55	13.1			
1880-81	79	16.1			
1881-82	78	14.2			
1882-83	82	13.6			
1883-84	143	22.2			
1884-85	75	12.4			
1885-86	87	10.2			
1893	158		74	84	703.90*
1897	142				615.00

* These figures may include other minor expenses.

The location of this lot was at first a mystery. Elmwood has no Square 204 — nor has there ever been one. Careful inspection of the minutes, however, reveals that elsewhere the lot is referenced as "80-204." There is a Square 80, situated at the western edge of Elmwood, in the position originally described by the Regents. Where "204" comes from we don't know, but most of Square 80, it turns out, was eventually sold to Randolph Cemetery in 1899. The importance of this will become clear.

By December 1856 there were objections to Square 80-204, it being described as "too far away." As a result, a similar agreement was made with Elmwood for the use of Square 41, closer to the main entrance. By all accounts, this Square was used throughout the remainder of the antebellum and into the postbellum.

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[3] It isn't clear if these prices were accepted. For example, Helen Kohn Hennig reports in a March 21, 1936 article in *The State* newspaper that between 1860 and 1866 Elmwood was billing the Asylum $50 per lot, as well as $12 for coffins and graves.

While we have been unable to find any clear statement, we believe that Square 41 was used only for white patients. We believe that African American patients continued to be buried in Square 80, as discussed below.

Postbellum

The numbers of patients in the late nineteenth century dramatically increased. In 1899, for example, the daily average was 946 patients, with 60.4% being white and 40.4% being black (Hellams 1985:119). Disease, especially tuberculosis, increased at an alarming rate. A 13-year review revealed that 290 deaths were directly attributable to tuberculosis and McCandless (1996:283) notes that between 1890 and 1900, over 14% of the patients died. Black mortality was higher than that of whites. While the death rate in 1890 was 14%, only 9% of the white patients died, while 21% of the African American patients died. In 1900 the combined death rate was 13%, while the African American rate was an astonishing 23%.

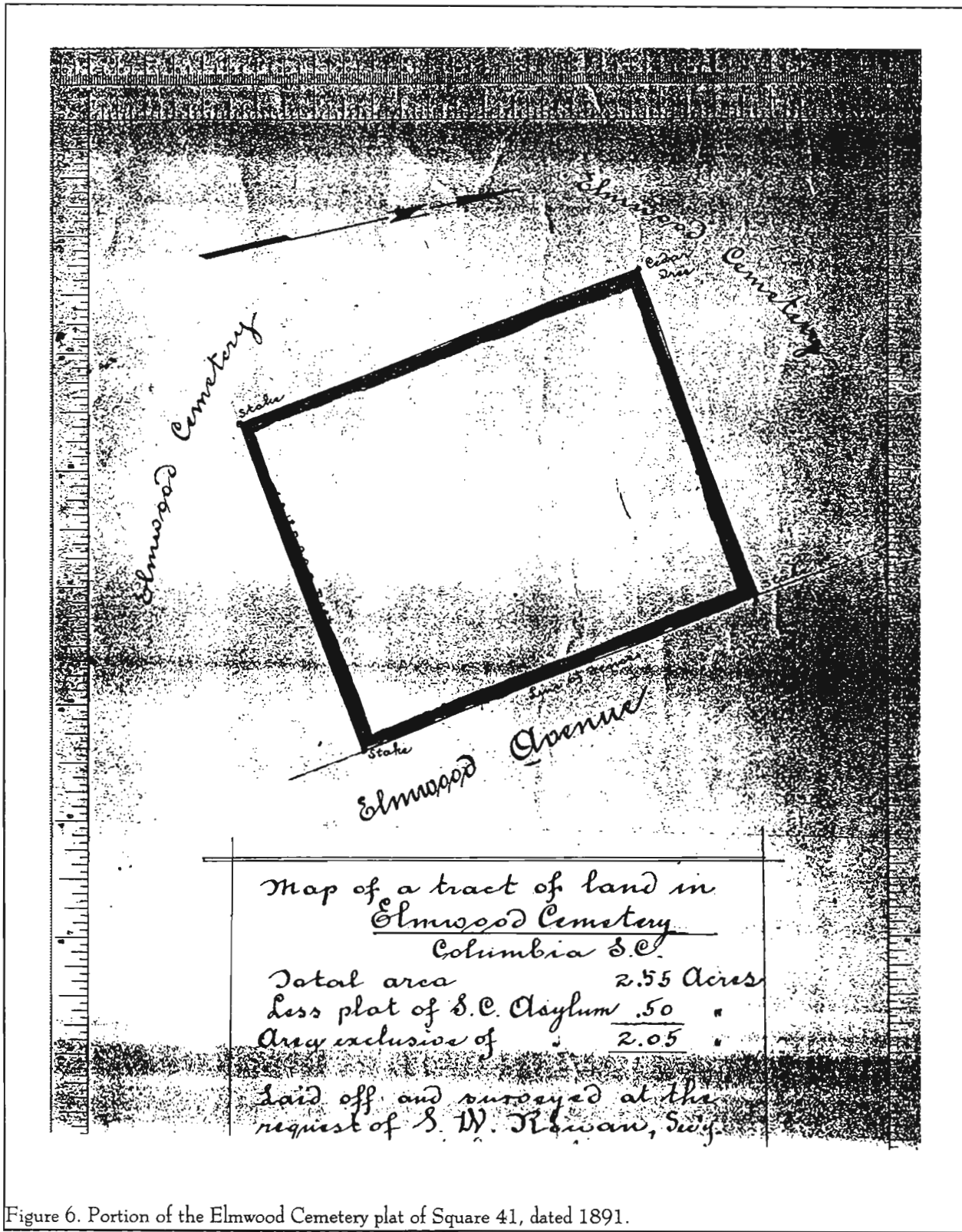Table 2 provides an overview of the years we briefly examined. The results reveal a steadily growing

Figure 6. Portion of the Elmwood Cemetery plat of Square 41, dated 1891.

death rate; coupled with other studies it seems clear that most of those dying were African Americans. The *Reports of the Superintendent* provide other information, such as the Chaplin's Reports. While never very detailed, they do try to put the best possible face on the harsh statistics. The 1876-1877 report notes that, "special religious services are given to this important duty [burial services] of my pastoral work for white and colored persons alike" (*Report of the Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum of South Carolina*, 1877, page 67).

The only mention of burial locations is Elmwood. The Chaplin in the 1879-1880 report specifies, for the first time, "it gives me great pleasure to report that we have at last been able to purchase a half acre lot in Elmwood Cemetery, where our dead may be buried in a manner more acceptable to their friends" (*Report of the Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum of South Carolina*, 1880, page 9). Three years later the Chaplin reported, "it should be comforting to those persons who had friends to die at the Asylum during the past year in knowing that the remains of their loved ones were reverently cared for and decently interred in Elmwood Cemetery" (*Report of the Superintendent of the Lunatic Asylum of South Carolina*, 1883, page 32).

Literal reading of these accounts would force us to ask where burials had been taking place prior to 1879. We believe that Elmwood was being used, as previously suggested, since about 1856. The accounts are also entirely unhelpful in discriminating the location of black versus white burials. Nevertheless, we believe that two separate locations were being used.

In October of 1891 the State Hospital received a letter from Samuel W. Rowan, the Secretary and "Measurer" (i.e., surveyor?) for Elmwood Cemetery. It stated:

> I herewith hand you plat of ground at Cemetery. I could not get it to you earlier. The amount of land after deducting graves will be about 2 acres — of course a less amount could be purchased but it seems to me wise to take the block as shown by plat.
>
> In regard to place for burial of

colored patients. Why there would be no trouble to measure it off as the ground lays all right and square (S.C. Department of Archives and History, S 190085).

The accompanying plat is of special interest since it reveals a parcel measuring 370 by 300 feet (or 2.55 acres). The plat, entitled, "Map of a tract of land in Elmwood Cemetery," notes that the total area is 2.55 acres, although apparently 0.5 acre of this already had been filled with graves attributed to the "S.C. Asylum," leaving 2.05 acres in the lot (Figure 6).

We believe that this documents the actual purchase (perhaps in 1879, as implied by the Chaplin's report) of a lot in Elmwood. The "used" 0.5 acre portion of this plot reflects the previous agreement with Elmwood to purchase individual burial spaces on an as needed basis.

We do not, however, believe that African Americans were buried in this 2.55 acre parcel. Instead, we believe that they continued to be buried in Square 80 — thought to be "too far away" for whites. Eventually the State Hospital made other arrangements (discussed below) for the black dead. This gradual decline in African American burials placed, we believe, Elmwood in a difficult situation. With blacks buried in Square 80, it was unlikely that they would be able to sell plots to others. Moreover, there is some reason to believe that the burials were not particularly well organized or orderly. This also would have caused Elmwood to view Square 80 as having lost considerable value — and it may help explain why, in 1899, all of Squares 79 and 80 west of an existing road, were sold to Randolph Cemetery. Selling the area used by the State Hospital for black burials to a black cemetery organization would have been a perfect solution, at least as far as Elmwood was considered.[4]

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[4] Some support for this theory is offered by an observation by Coroner Frank Barron that most of the disturbed graves in Randolph Cemetery are found at its eastern edge, adjacent to the Elmwood Cemetery ("Cemetery Desecration Accidental, Coroner Says," *The State*, February 12, 2000, page B1). This area also contains the fewest

Table 3.
Death and Burial in the Twentieth Century

| | Deaths | | Total | |
	White	Black	Deaths	Funeral Costs
1900	88	142	230	$ 985
1903	88	125	213	$ 974.32
1905	105	86	191	
1912	118	210	328	$ 891
1923	141	168	309	
1939	192	209	401	
1941	156	197	353	
1948	219	297	516	

Twentieth Century

The patient population continued to climb in the twentieth century, while support for the institution declined. The obvious result was an increase in deaths. McCandless reports that in 1904 the situation was clearly documented:

> the mortality rate at the South Carolina State Hospital for that year was more than double the national average and almost double the average for the South Atlantic states. The black death rate was double the regional average and more than double the national average for blacks in mental institutions (McCandless 1996:283).

He charitably comments that substandard conditions were the only cause, noting that the severe poverty of African Americans in South Carolina had to be a contributing factor. No matter how you look at it, being black, ill, and in South Carolina was a deadly combination.

Our own review of Annual Reports revealed the extent of the problem. One of the few constants in all of the reports were the sums being spent on coffins and

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markers, suggesting that it was known to already contain numerous graves when first used by patrons of Randolph Cemetery.

undertaking services. M.H. Berry, active in the nineteenth century, continued to be the supplier of coffins through mid-1903. At that time McCormick and Pletscher took over, submitting their invoices for "coffins and burial," or "funeral expenses." By at least 1912 "undertaking" was being billed by the successor firm of J.W. McCormick.

We get our first detailed glimpse of how burials were being handled during the first decade of the twentieth century as a result of the 1909 investigation of the State Hospital. The report of that investigation was detailed and worthy of quotation:

> The hospital has for years owned and used a lot at Elmwood Cemetery for interment of patients whose remains were not sent to their homes. When the space for burial in this lot was exhausted, the contractors were ordered by the Hospital authorities to bury between the graves, thus going over the lot a second time. The space thus indicated was found too small, the graves on either side being dug into. Finally, these grave diggers simply dug down into the old grave instead of digging between the two, the remains of the person previously buried were thrown out and another body buried in the same grave. In this way many graves were reopened and the bones and other remains of the dead were thrownup and left on top of the ground. This state of affairs continued for at least a year until finally, upon complaint of relations of the deceased and by the cemetery authorities, a new burial ground was selected (see Testimony, pages 17-210-211).
>
> The present condition of the lot at Elmwood is a disgrace to the State. It is overgrown with weeds and bushes to the height of a man's

Figure 7. State Hospital Elmwood Cemetery Square 41 for white patients in 1909 (Legislative Committee 1910a: Illustration 2).

town, and he did not want the bones exposed there. He knew what was going on as well as I did and he told me to go and take charge of the corpse and have those bones buried (Legislative Committee 1910b:211).

Mitchell also explained that it wasn't possible to do much since the bones were so thoroughly mixed in the soil. He also explained that as a result, the Hospital was currently burying in the "Old Soldiers' Home."

head, the graves are sunken and the wooded headpieces have rotted down and are gone. (See illustration 2).

The present burial ground for white people is in a pine thicket at the rear of the Soldier's Home. Inspected by members of your Committee, it was found to be in a neglected condition, no attempt being made to keep it properly. It is located on a steep hillside in a corner of one of the lots in which the Hospital's hogs are kept, with no fence separating it from rest of the lot (See illustration 3) (Legislative Committee 1910a:19-20).

While much of the referenced testimony fails to provide any additional details, that of Mr. J.M. Mitchell the "contractor" responsible for undertaking, is informative about practives at Elmwood Cemetery:

> He [Dr. Thompson] told me to go up there and see that the bones were buried. There was a party to be buried who had some relations in

No where in any of the report or testimony was there any discussion of the African Americans who were dying in such large numbers — the concern was entirely focused on the white patients. We learn that while Elmwood was being used until "recently" we guess about 1905-1908), that a new burial ground had been selected by 1909, although it was equally disgraceful, essentially being a wooded area of a hog lot. The photograph caption revealed that the area had been used for 18 months (suggesting that it began in early to mid-1908)

In Dr. Thompson's own memoirs there is a brief mention of these events:

> Our white dead were buried at Elmwood Cemetery, (when their remains were not taken home by the family) until the lot became filled and then they were buried for a few years by the canal, but since 1915 they have been buried on the State Hospital property beyond the Confederate Home.
>
> The Colored were buried in Potters Field. Later the colored patients were

17

Figure 8. State Hospital burial ground for white patients north of the Confederates' Home (Legislative Committee 1910a: Illustration 3).

Hospital were buried in Potter's Field is uncertain — Dr. Thompson's is the only account of this occurring. We are inclined to accept his word that blacks were being buried in this area, especially if assume that Square 80 might have been perceived of as far enough removed from white burials to be part of potter's field.

Dr. Thompson's remark concerning the African American cemetery "in a corner of the lot beyond the present dairy" isn't particularly specific, but the 1910 Annual Report provides some additional information, commenting that one of the "needs" at the Hospital

buried in a corner of the lot beyond the present dairy and still later they were buried at State Park (S.C. Department of Archives and History, S190093).

These remarks must be cautiously interpreted. While Dr. Thompson, being in charge of the institution, might be expected to know such details, it seems that at least his dates are questionable. For example, it seems far more likely that the undertaker (J.M. Mitchell) knew better than Dr. Thompson when the "Old Soldier's Home" began to be used, so we are inclined to accept that it came into use for the burial of white patients ca. 1908. Whether whites from the
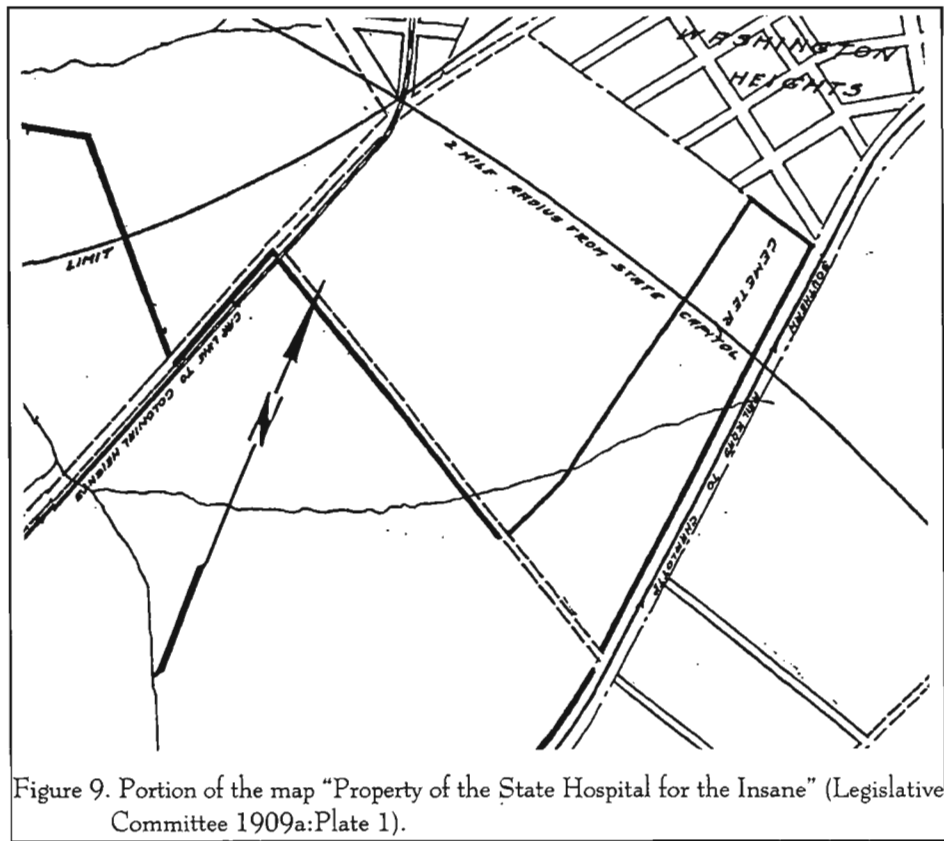

Figure 9. Portion of the map "Property of the State Hospital for the Insane" (Legislative Committee 1909a:Plate 1).
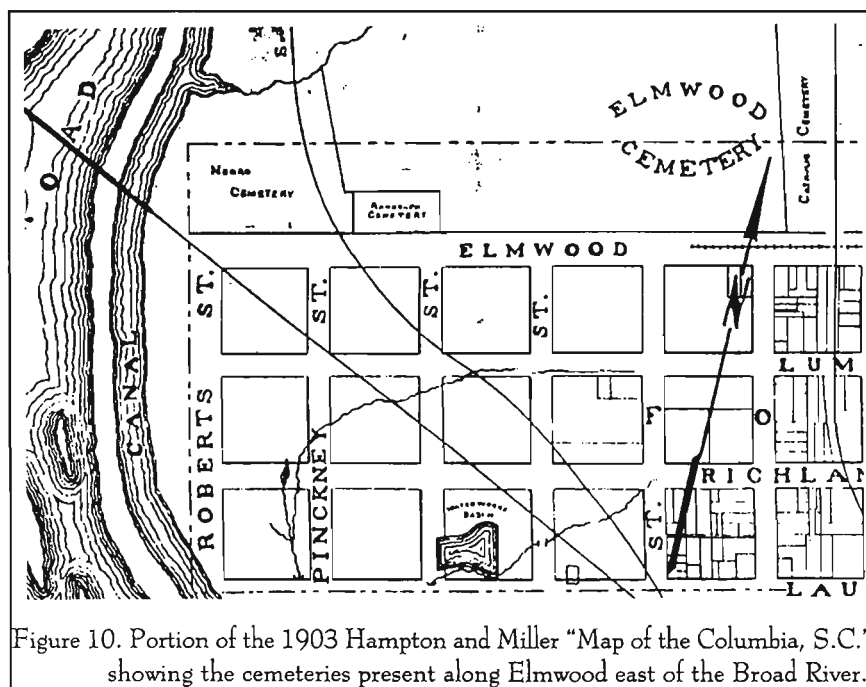
Figure 10. Portion of the 1903 Hampton and Miller "Map of the Columbia, S.C." showing the cemeteries present along Elmwood east of the Broad River.

Dr. Thompson's memoirs.

For several years the Annual Reports included passages similar to this one from 1901, repeated again in 1905, "we learn with shame, from time to time, that Confederate veterans have been placed in our County poor houses" (Anonymous 1905:7). Each time the suggestion was made that the State acquire a proper "home" for these veterans. The reason for their concern is not entirely clear, but in 1908 the South Carolina legislature acted, creating the Confederate Infirmary on what was known as the "Bellevue Place on Wallace Land" which had been acquired by the Regents of the State Hospital in 1896 (Richland County Clerk of Court, DB Z, page 324). The 5 acres struck off from the 110 acre parcel, as well as the home itself, would revert to the Regents when it was no longer needed. Thus began a poorly documented, if not actually tangled, web of activities creating both a cemetery for the white patients at the Hospital, as well as a cemetery for the Confederate Veterans.

As previously mentioned, the white patients' cemetery was initially in a hog lot on the side of a hill on the Wallace Land. Through time this cemetery appears to have expanded upslope (perhaps as a result of the 1910 Legislative report and their condemnation of the cemetery conditions). In addition, a spot was also set aside for the burial of those dying at the Confederate Home. Initially, the State Hospital cemetery was to the east of the small Confederate Veterans' cemetery. In 1933 the State Hospital was allowing the field west of the cemetery to be farmed by the Confederate veterans "and so relieve ourselves of the labor of keeping the weeds off it. It is too small for us to farm profitably" (S.C. Department of Archives and History, S 190085).

Farm, was "straightening out and piping the branch running from the Southern Railway near the colored patients' cemetery to Smith's Branch" (Anonymous 1910:9). This reveals that an African American cemetery was located on the Hospital grounds by at least 1909-1910.

While the legislative report failed to make any mention of the African American burial ground, its map did reveal the location of a cemetery at the northeast edge of the hospital's property. In reference to other maps this location is found to be northeast of the hospital's dairy. It represents the location of the African American burial ground and also reveals that it was being used by at least 1909 (Figure 9).

Although the 1903 Map of Columbia fails to provide any information on activities on the State Hospital grounds, it does reveal activities at the turn of the century around Elmwood and Randolph cemeteries (Figure 10). Potter's Field, for example, is called the "Negro Cemetery," perhaps indicating that for most African Americans in Columbia in the early twentieth century, even Randolph was too expensive. It also makes it a little more unlikely that the State Hospital was burying its white patients "by the canal" as claimed in

In 1924 the State Hospital had all of its property surveyed, apparently for the first time (Richland County Clerk of Court, Plat Book E, page

Figure 11. The 1924 Tomilinson Engineering Co. plat of the S.C. State Hospital property, including cemeteries.

110). This plat, reproduced here as Figure 11, shows both the State Hospital White Cemetery, located north of the Confederate Soldiers Home, and also the State Hospital Colored Cemetery, northeast of the New Dairy Barns.

Through other documents we discover that the State Hospital realized that corrections in the acreage were needed. Although the plat shows the white cemetery to be 0.85 acres (about 185 by 200 feet), this was quickly revised to 1.83 acres by the State Hospital, perhaps reflecting that not all graves were visible or recognized by the surveyors. The African American cemetery was originally itemized as 3.60 acres and the plat reveals that it measured about 280 by 560 feet. It was bounded by private property to the north and west, but on these sides there was also a ditch. To the east was the Southern Railway, and the southern edge of the cemetery was marked only by a wire fence.

The plat also reveals another cemetery at the north edge of a cultivated field northeast of the Confederate Soldiers Home and southeast of the white cemetery. There are only vague references to this cemetery in the State Hospital reports — for example, "the little, old cemetery in the field north of the Association of the Blind" (S.C. Department of Archives and History, S 190085). Our best guess is that this was a family graveyard, perhaps associated with the Wallace Place. While additional examination of the deeds and wills associated with this property transfer might help resolve this issue, **the cemetery itself has been destroyed by a state parking lot** — another activity approved by the State Budget and Control Board.

As for the Confederate Home itself, the State decided that it had too few residents in 1957. Four years before the State celebrated the centenial of the Civil War, its veterans still living there were transferred to the Department of Public Welfare, although the Superintendent of the Home, T.E. Cummings, was allowed to continue living there for some years. Although the building and property is referred to as "sacred" in several state documents, the structure was torn down in 1963. Today there is a granite marker on the still vacant lot, which we presume remains sacred.

Our research also reveals that, in what can

only be described as an ironic twist, the State Hospital property south of the African American cemetery, described as being "on the corner of Harden Street and Sligh Avenue, east of the Zayre's Dept. Store," was leased to Albert J. Asmer for use as a golf driving range about 1963 (S.C. Department of Archives and History, S 190095). We haven't done enough research to determine how long the range was open, but in 1967 neighbors of the cemetery complained to Governor Robert McNair concerning the woods and poor maintenance of the area. The letter was passed from the Governor to the State Commissioner of Mental Health, Dr. William S. Hall, who responded to the governor that:

> I have investigated this matter and wish to advise that the grounds in question will be cleaned off beginning Wednesday of this week and they will be kept in satisfactory condition from here on out (Letter from William S. Hall to Governor Robert E. McNair, dated August 14, 1967, S.C. Department of Archives and History, S 190085).

Handwritten boundaries on the letter indicate that the State Hospital recognized the location, noting that it bounded the "railroad - east, Sligh Ave - south, Booker St - north, Fields toward Farrow Road - west."

The promise that the property would be keep up doesn't seem to have lasted long. Reference to aerial photographs from 1970 show the tract as wooded.

In summary, it appears that the white patients dying at the State Hospital were buried in Square 41 at Elmwood Cemetery until about 1908, when that plot was essentially abandoned by the State Hospital. A new cemetery north of the newly created Confederate Soldiers Home was created and eventually encompassed at least 1.83 acres.

We believe that a portion of Square 80 at Elmwood was used to bury African American patients, through perhaps 1899, when that area was sold to Randolph Cemetery. For a brief period it seems likely that the State Hospital used Potter's Field for the
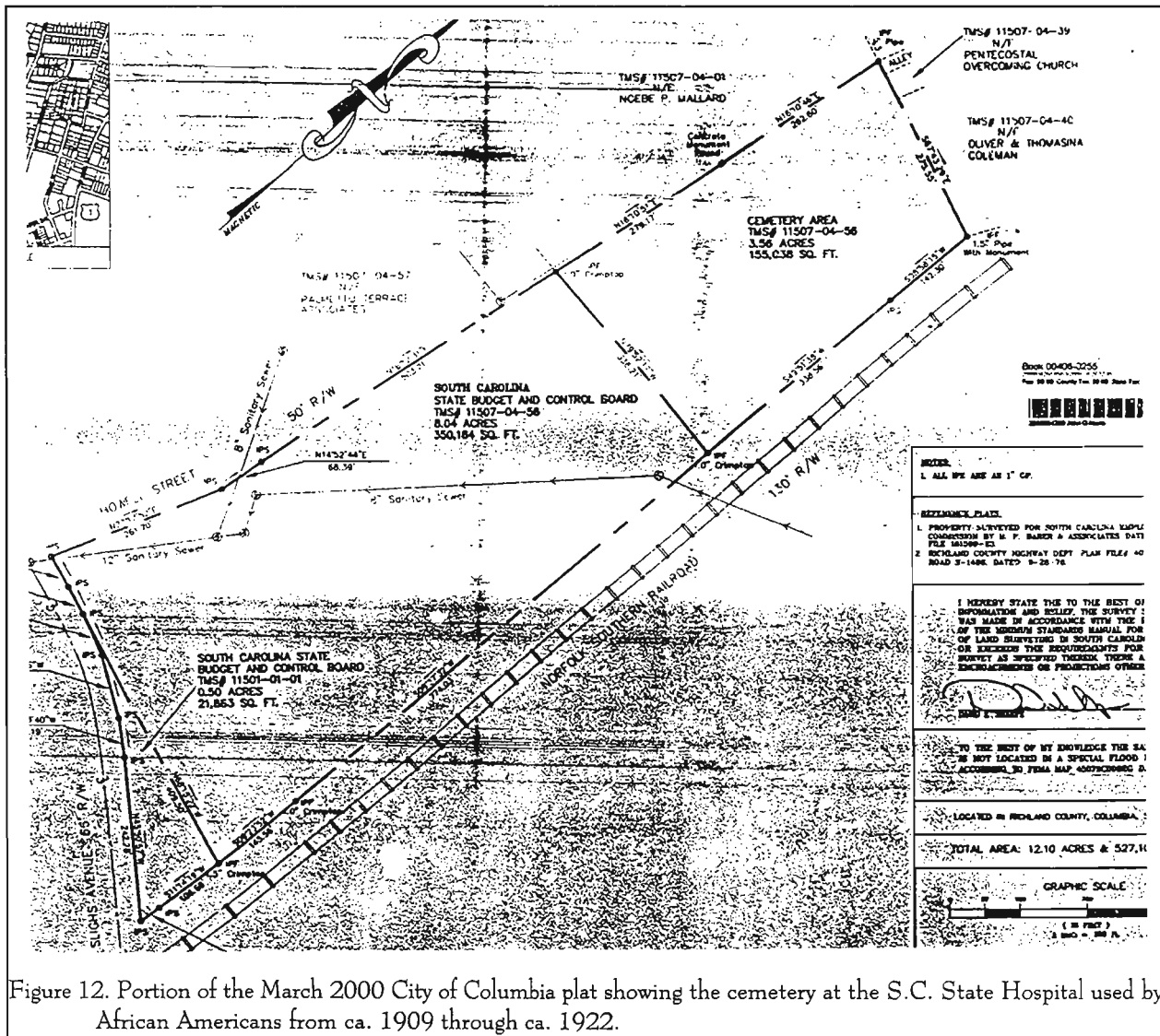
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Figure 12. Portion of the March 2000 City of Columbia plat showing the cemetery at the S.C. State Hospital used by African Americans from ca. 1909 through ca. 1922.

burial of African Americans, although the cemetery "north of the new dairy" seems to have been opened at least by 1909 and possibly earlier.

Although black patients began to be transferred out to Crafts-Farrow Hospital at State Park as early as 1914, it wasn't completed until the 1930s and there is no indication that burials took place there before about 1922. Consequently, we believe that the cemetery north of the new dairy continued to be used until at least 1922 and perhaps intermittently after that (we haven't, for example, found any indication that blacks dying in Columbia were transported out to

Crafts-Farrow for burial). Certainly by the 1960s the cemeteries inside the City limits were no longer being used.

There is, however, yet more history. In 1974 the S.C. Department of Mental Health conveyed property at the northeast edge of their holdings to the S.C. Budget and Control Board (Richland County Clerk of Court, DB 327, page 195). The deed at that time included a clause warning of the cemetery and transferring liability to the Budget and Control Board. Specifically, it noted:
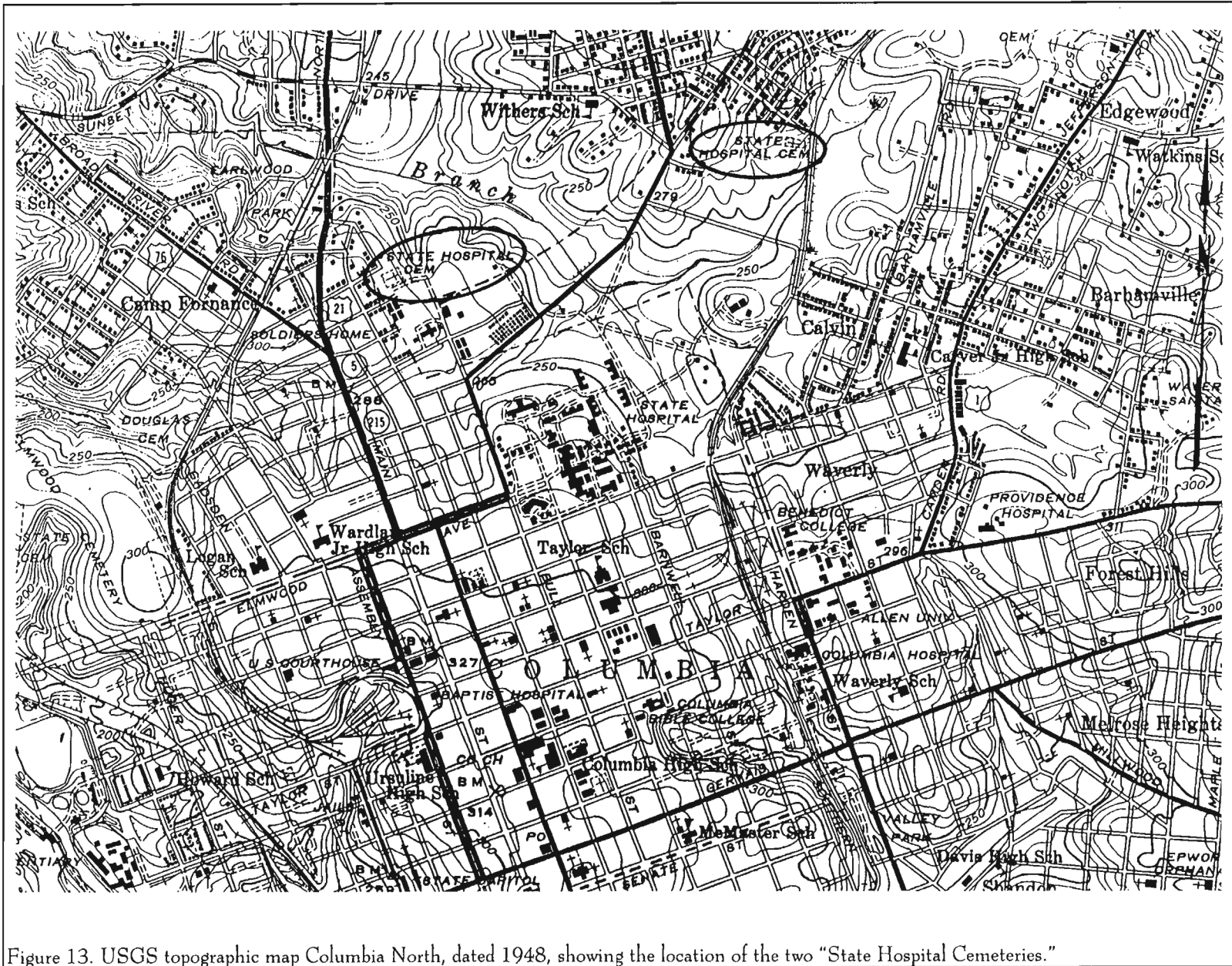
Figure 13. USGS topographic map Columbia North, dated 1948, showing the location of the two "State Hospital Cemeteries."

the grantee and its successors and assigns, by acceptance of this deed, hereby agree to assume any and all responsibility, obligation, and liability for the proper upkeep, care maintenance, and removal, if it should become necessary, of the cemetery located on the above described property (Richland County Clerk of Court, DB 327, page 196).

In 1983 the City of Columbia apparently used the cemetery for the reburial of 37 individuals removed from the potter's field adjacent to the Broad River during the city's efforts to place the railroads below grade. This event was marked by the erection of a small granite monument.

Beyond this, the property remained unused and, by all accounts, uncared for during the following two decades.

In May 2000 the Budget and Control Board transferred the property acquired from the S.C. Department of Mental Health, including this cemetery, to the City of Columbia in a Limited Warranty Deed[5] (Richland County Clerk of Court, DB 406, page 252). No mention was made of the cemetery, although the accompanying plat, surveyed by the City of Columbia in March 2000, clearly reveals the cemetery, along with an acreage of 3.56 acres — not much reduced from its historical size of 3.60 acres (Richland County Clerk of Court, PB 406, page 255; Figure 12).

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[5] We are not attorneys and cannot offer legal advice. These comments are only intended to represent general historical information. A "limited warranty deed," sometimes called a "special warrant deed" or a "bargain and sale deed," warrants that no defects arose in the title during the time that the grantor — in this case the State Budget and Control Board — owned the property, but no warranty is made concerning defects that arose before the grantor owned the property. In general, such deeds should wave a red flag to the purchaser.

THE VARIOUS GRAVEYARDS TODAY

The Public Burying Ground

As previously noted, this burial ground, used by Columbia's white and black population, was the block enclosed by Senate Street to the north, Wayne Street to the east, Pendleton Street to the south, and Pulaski Street to the west. On November 5, 1856 its use was abolished by the City Council; shortly thereafter it began to be used by the railroads as yard area. It seems likely that much of the cemetery was preserved into the late twentieth century.

The eastern third of the block was significantly altered by Columbia's railroad relocation project, when the tracks in this area were relocated about 20 feet below grade (Figure 14). More recently, the western two-thirds of the block has been destroyed by a HUD housing project, called Vista Commons (Figure 15). To the best of our knowledge no archaeological or historical research was conducted; this is especially curious since the project is federal and should have come under the review of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

It is unlikely that any intact remains are still present and the earliest graves of Columbia's residents — as well as those of the earliest patients at the S.C. State Hospital — have been destroyed.

Elmwood Cemetery

Square 41 at Elmwood is still present and is minimally maintained (Figure 16). There are only a few monuments present, several of which are broken and many others are nearly illegible. The Square is not obviously designated as belonging to the S.C. State Hospital nor is there any marker for the hundreds of white patients who were buried in this lot.

Pauper's or Potter's Field Cemetery

Very little of the original Potter's Cemetery remains today. The first incursion we can document occurred in 1977, when construction for I-126 uncovered 692 reported graves. Although the project was federally funded, and the National Historic Preservation Act had been passed 11 years earlier in 1966, the S.C. Highway Department and the Federal Highway Administration failed to conduct any historical or archaeological research. The remains were "relocated" by James R. Baker, a Great Falls undertaker who won
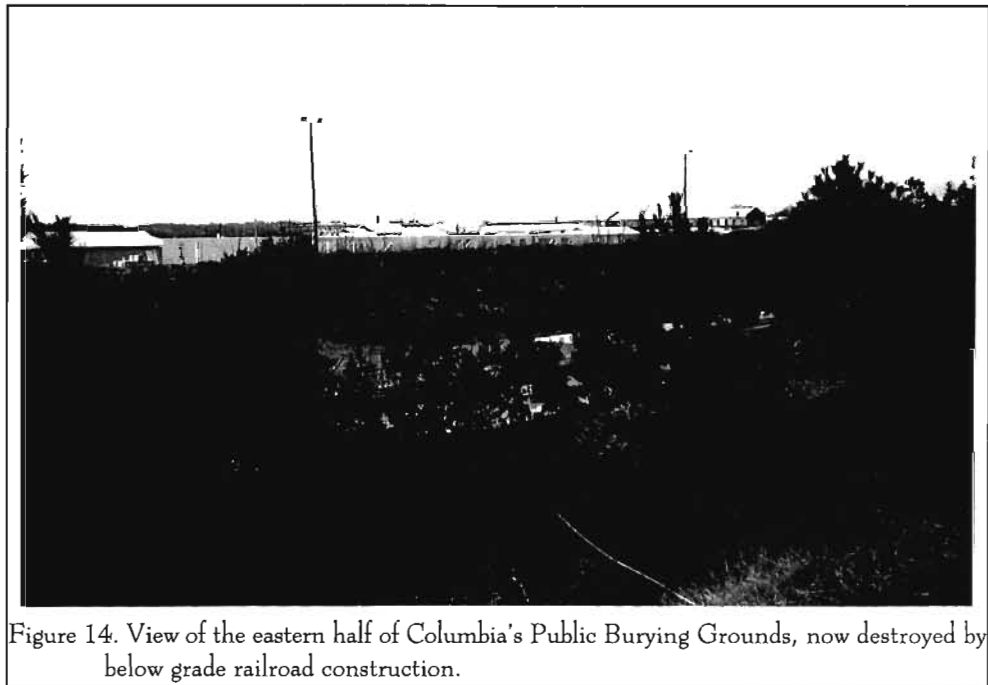

Figure 14. View of the eastern half of Columbia's Public Burying Grounds, now destroyed by below grade railroad construction.

location.

Erected by the South Carolina State Highway Department April 12, 1977.

When the remaining portion of the potter's field was professionally examined four years later in 1981, it was reported as covering about 4.5 acres and included 22 marked graves and several hundred unmarked graves. The observers commented that not

Figure 15. View of the western portion of Columbia's Public Burying Grounds, being covered by the HUD Vista Commons project.

the Highway Department's low bid for the removal. He commented that "there were skeletal remains, casket handles, and other artifacts" ("Secrets buried in unmarked graves," *The Columbia Record*, April 21, 1986, page 1-A). The remains were transported the short distance to the 14.4 acre pauper's cemetery operated by the S.C. Correctional Institution (Richland County TMS 090-08-01-5). The signage erected states:

Cemetery
Herein lie the remains of 692 individuals -- perhaps early settlers of this area -- whose identities are unknown. These remains were moved from their earlier resting places near the east bank of the Broad River, in order to permit the widening of Route I-126 on that

only had I-126 damaged the site, but so had the construction of an SSE&G transmission line across the cemetery. The remaining portion of the site was given the S.C. Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology site number 38RD227.

Figure 16. View of Square 41 at Elmwood Cemetery looking east-southeast.

Figure 17. Original portion of the white cemetery north of the Confederate Veterans Home, situated on the eastern slope. Compare this photograph to Figure 8 from 1909.

or near the cemetery. While seemingly benign, we suspect that this project will require the area to be "b e a u t i f i e d," resulting in loss of whatever human remains are still present.

We should include in this discussion the portion of Square 80 w h i c h was transferred from Elmwood Cemetery to Randolph Cemetery in 1899. While restoration efforts are in

A second incursion (or actually third, if we count the utility line) occurred in 1983, when the City of Columbia removed 37 graves as a result of the railroad relocation project. Again, there was no professional involvement and the remains were relocated by an undertaker. It seems likely, given the small number, that only those graves which were most obviously visible were relocated. Many more were likely destroyed by the project.

A fourth potential incursion is in the planning, with Columbia's "Three Rivers Greenway Project." A pathway is proposed through

progress, Randolph is also a largely ignored, and abused, cemetery. There is no preservation plan and much of Square 80 is on a slope, resulting in erosion. This, coupled with tree cover, has made it difficult to establish

Figure 18. View of the main portion of the Confederate Veterans Home cemetery, looking southwest. Note the number of sunken graves.

Figure 19. Engraved slate marker for a S.C. State Hospital patient. Now out of the ground, it no longer marks the grave and is likely to be stolen.

various wire fences erected by the S.C. State Hospital are still visible, as is underground piping conducted by the State Hospital post-1910 to control mosquitoes (Anonymous 1910:9).The area is also littered with trash and debris, providing clear evidence of the limited maintenance it receives.

any consistent ground cover. Moreover, the area has been extensively used for more modern burials, so it is unlikely that any remains from the S.C. State Hospital could be identified.

Confederate Home Cemetery

36Rd 1180

Records indicate that the S.C. State Hospital was using the eastern slope of this hill as a cemetery as early as 1909, apparently as a result of recognizing that the Elmwood tract (Square 41) was completely filled. The cemetery apparently expanded upslope, to the west, eventually encompassing at least 1.83 acres.

This cemetery, today euphemistically called the "Geiger Ave. Cemetery," is located on Geiger Avenue, north of its intersection with Cardinal Street. It consists of an open block bounded to the north and west by residences. To the east is the slope on which the cemetery first began (Figure 17). This slope is thickly wooded. Walking through the woods the remains of the

The central portion of the cemetery is found on the ridge top and encompasses an area perhaps an acre in extent. While the Confederate Veterans' cemetery dominates the landscape because of its brick and iron railing fence, the surrounding grounds evidence a large number of sunken graves (Figure 18). Careful inspection reveals that the individual graves were originally numbered. Apparently the first several hundred were designated by slate tabletstones measuring about 0.5 by 1.5 feet with a carved number (Figure

Figure 20. Example of cast concrete marker for State Hospital graves. Many of these are sunken and no longer visible.

Figure 21. View of the S.C. State Hospital Cemetery for African American patients, now being converted into a golf course by the City of Columbia. View looks to the northeast.

"colored patients" was usually described as "beyond the new dairy barn," subtly reflecting its very marginal position. Indeed, it was situated at the very edge of State Hospital property. It wasn't until 1897 that there was even a public road in this area. At that time a "county chaingang" built a dirt road running from Asylum Road (now Colonial Drive) eastward to the Southern Railway track. This would eventually become Sligh (or Slighs) Avenue. All of the maps showing this cemetery agree on its location and the best maps reveal that it was about 3.6 acre or nearly twice as large as the white cemetery (reflective of the different death rates).

19). We identified three of these lying loose on the ground; none were found standing in situ. At some point the Hospital switched to flush concrete markers with cast numbers (Figure 20). These measure about 3 by 6 inches and many are sunken below grade. We estimate that over 1,000 graves are present in this cemetery.

The cemetery is marked by a granite memorial in a landscaped setting at the street edge. The memorial states:

Geiger Ave.
Cemetery
In loving memory this cemetery contains Confederate Veterans and their families in the central area and State Hospital patients in surroundings locations.
S.C.D.M.H.
Erected 1982

The State Hospital Cemetery for African American Patients

3BRd 1179

This cemetery, typically referenced as being for

While the cemetery had been allowed to grow up in trees, it is today entirely clear cut. Tree roots have been grubbed out and there is evidence that the lot has been graded (Figure 21). The landscape transformation is so complete that there is no remaining evidence of the property having been a cemetery — there are no standing markers, there are no grave goods (common to African American cemeteries), and there are no sunken graves. All outward evidence of the cemetery has been removed.

The cemetery has been further damaged by the construction of underground utilities. One excavation (Figure 22) remains open and is at least 3 feet in depth. Evidence of underground trenching is clear throughout the cemetery area.

Only two stones were identifiable during our visit. Both had been knocked down and were lying flush with the ground. Other stones may have been present

Figure 22. Example of construction activities that are likely to have damaged African American burials at the S.C. State Hospital Cemetery for African American patients.

One of the two markers, ironically, was erected by the City of Columbia and reads:

Herein lie the remains of 37 individuals who were moved from their earlier resting places near the east bank of Broad River to permit con-struction of the Columbia Railroad Relocation Project City of Columbia 1983

and were perhaps destroyed by construction. Other markers may have been present and not even recognized, such as metal posts or perhaps even concrete numbers such as those seen in the white cemetery.

This granite marker still evidences ground staining (Figure 23) to document that while it had been erected upright, the current site con-struction knocked it over. There is no information on where it was originally placed.

The other stone, in marble, is for a private individual and reads:

Mrs. Amanda Lewis
Died June 3, 1918
Bemourned by Dixie B. Brooks, Daughter and Joseph Frazer Blessed are they that die in the Lord.

Figure 23. One of the two markers dislocated by the grading at the S.C. State Hospital cemetery for its African American patients.

We examined the death certificate for Mrs. Amanda

Lewis. She was an African American, a widow, and a "domestic." She was born in Kansas, sometime in April 1874. Her father was Charles Thomas, although her mother's name had been lost to her friends. She resided at 1422 Oak Street and the cause of death, according to her physician, B.A. Everrett, was an aneurism. She was buried on June 5, 1918 in Randolph Cemetery by Hardy and Pinckney, an African American funeral home that is not longer in business.

Beyond this, all we know is that Mrs. Amanda Lewis had been in the way of Columbia's expansion once before. Then she was unearthed and moved to what seemed like an out of the way location and reburied. Perhaps lost to family and friends, she remained at the State Hospital Cemetery for 17 years before, once again, she was in the way. But this time the City of Columbia couldn't be bothered to move her and her gravestone, erected by mournful loved ones. It was easier to just knock it over and grade over her remains.

CONCLUSIONS

Summary

At the most general level, it seems clear that Columbia's graveyards have always been considered old and in the way. There seems to have been little reservation on the part of either the city fathers or business concerns to move, dig up, or pave over human remains. While there were occasionally efforts to move the remains, there is a conspicuous lack of effort to learn anything from the various relocations. Done as quickly and with the least cost possible, the relocations take on a shabby appearance. This has promoted many complaints, perhaps the most cogent by Dr. Ted Rathbun, a board certified forensic anthropologist. In 1986 he called for revision of the laws concerning relocation projects, noting:

> These deceased individuals deserve documentation in their own right. Seldom does the window of the past open enough for us to get a good look inside. We need to reclaim all the information we can, every time the opportunity arises ("Secrets Buried in Unmarked Graves," *The Columbia Record*, April 21, 1986, page 1A).

Nothing has come from his, and other, urgent pleas for both more respect and better investigation. In fact, as we see from this brief overview, if anything the situation has gotten worse. The City's "Public Burying Grounds" are in the process of their final destruction and the City continues to move forward in their plans to destroy the S.C. State Hospital cemetery for African American Patients. This last case deserves some additional attention.

It is reasonable to compare the care and maintenance that the two in-city State Hospital Cemeteries have received (excluding the Elmwood Cemetery). The cemetery for white patients is marked by a large granite monument. Much of the lot is at least periodically mowed. At least some of the graves are still visibility marked. In contrast, the cemetery for the African American patients was rarely cleaned (apparently only when complaints were received), there was never any marker to the African American patients buried there, and there seem to have been no individual plot markers.

While the S.C. State Mental Health Commission sought to commemorate the white patients' cemetery, they sought to dispose of the property containing the African American burials. And while the one cemetery continues to be at least minimally maintained, the other is again sold by the State of South Carolina for use by a city government for a golf course.

The difference in the treatment of the two plots is remarkable in documenting what only can be described as the bigoted politics of the state and city.

Such bigotry directed to the dead, however uninformed and lacking in moral character, is not illegal. On the other hand, the activities which have taken place at the African American cemetery appear to us — as laymen — to fly in the face of the South Carolina Code of Laws protecting human remains and cemeteries. As previously discussed (see Figure 2), the state law seems quite clear in making it illegal to "obliterate, vandalize, or desecrate a burial ground . . . deface, vandalize, injure, or remove a gravestone . . . destroy, tear down, or injure any fencing, plants, trees, shrubs, or flowers located upon or around a repository for human remains."

There is no question but that the cemetery has been obliterated — today it looks only like a golf course and there is no inkling that it was once a cemetery — or that markers have been damaged — two markers are clearly knocked over and displaced — or that the vegetation has been completely altered — the area is

today marked only by recently planted grass. Each of these is a clear offense.

The State Code seems to make no allowance for the acts being done by a municipality. It only requires that the acts be willfully and knowingly committed. We recognize that these are legal terms and we are not able to offer any legal opinion.

But as lay persons, there seems to be no doubt that representatives of the City of Columbia knew of the cemetery. It was clearly marked on a variety of maps, most recently the map prepared by the City's own survey crews. In addition, the deed the City received for the property appears to have waved a red flag, alerting any reasonable individual to potential problems.

Similarly, the actions taken by the City of Columbia appear willful. The property wasn't "accidentally" intruded upon; there was no "mistake" in crossing over the cemetery boundary line. The entire parcel is included in the City's plans.

Recommendations

It seems inappropriate to criticize without offering recommendations — some way or process of making a horrible situation at least somewhat better. There are, of course, two issues.

The first issue is the violation of state law. It is our opinion that the law has been broken, that there is sufficient evidence available for a legal case to made, and that those having the authority to do so should proceed to press charges.

Failure to prosecute sends two very clear signals. First, it would tell the public that South Carolina law protecting cemeteries is meaningless verbiage and might as well be repealed. No matter how clear-cut the case, violators won't be taken to court. Second, it also sends the signal that municipalities are beyond the law. While individual citizens are subject to the force of the state, governmental entities are free to do as they please. In today's climate of governmental distrust, this is a very dangerous signal to send.

The second is issue is what will be done

from this point on at this particular site. We believe that there are only two moral and legal choices: either abandon the golf project, moving it elsewhere, with the City restoring and maintaining the cemetery, or removing the burials present on the property, allowing an opportunity to learn from the past, and then appropriately reburying them somewhere safe from all future disturbance.

We also believe that once this situation is resolved, a variety of long-term recommendations are appropriate.

Most fundamentally, Richland County should take a leadership role by enacting strong and clear protection for human remains — whether found in traditional, and easily recognized cemeteries, or found in isolated areas with no clear indication of burials. Cemeteries must be protected and this protection should minimally include:

  ▪ recordation of all cemeteries on tax maps. In this way the County can offer an incentive to property owners by waiving property taxes on the acreage recorded, and preserved, as a cemetery. There should be a penalty if the property is not preserved, or if the cemetery is taken off the listing within 50 years of its recordation.

  ▪ Renewed enforcement of existing state law by local law enforcement jurisdictions. The County Council should ensure that the local law enforcement is aware of the problem and has the incentive to aggressively deal with vandalism and damage to cemeteries.

  ▪ Development of subdivision and similar regulations which require developers to (1) undertake a complete inventory of existing cemetery elements (stones, fences, and other physical features), (2) draw lot lines in a way that ensures the preservation of the cemeteries, (3)

require that the cemetery be deeded to an existing cemetery association, a homeowner's association, or other responsible party, (4) ensure that a fund is established to care for and maintain the cemetery, and (5) establish at least a 50-foot buffer around the obvious cemetery elements, such as stone walls or marked graves.

- Development of minimum standards for the study of any cemetery or graveyard which must be moved. These standards should involve a minimal level of mapping of the cemetery, a minimal level of forensic excavation and analysis, and a minimal level of publication of the results for the public. This would ensure that if we *must* disturb the rest of the dead, their removal provides the opportunity to learn from them. This provides a far better and more noble reason for disturbing the dead than simply allowing another commercial venture.

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Cemetery Preservation Plans

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**Identification of Grave Locations
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Condition Assessments

Treatment of Stone and Ironwork