NEW SOUTH ASSOCIATES ARCHAEOLOGISTS • HISTORIANS

a women-owned small business

September 30, 2025

W. Tim Walker, Executive Director
Metro Historical Commission
1113 Kirkwood Ave
Nashville, TN 37204

RE: Davidson County Cemetery Survey, Phase 4, Management Summary

Mr. Walker,

New South Associates, Inc. (NSA) has completed the fourth phase of the Davidson County Cemetery Survey (DCCS) for the Metro Historical Commission (MHC) in fulfillment of a 2024-2025 federal Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant awarded by the Tennessee Historical Commission (THC).

The project began with an in-person kickoff meeting at Sunnyside (MHC offices) on November 20, 2024. MHC staff member and DCCS project manager Caroline Eller met with NSA Branch Manager Lauren Walls, Senior Historian Dr. Lydia Simpson, Assistant Archaeologist Clélie Cottle Peacock, and Historian Holly Adington. The meeting included a discussion with Danielle Greer, Metro ITS staff, about optimization of the DCCS Open-Source dataset, as well as vendor survey data input abilities and ideas for future use. Caroline Eller and NSA separately discussed Phase 4 scheduling, logistics of the field survey, and safety of the field crew. Fieldwork began on February 18, 2025, in the Donelson community of eastern Davidson County. The last day of fieldwork was July 2, 2025.

Between February 18 and July 2, field crews completed a survey of cemeteries identified through a combination of datasets and sources, including the original DCCS, parcel data from the Metro Nashville Planning Department, community research, historical topographic map reviews, and landowner/ descendant informants. The team surveyed two primary community subareas, as specified by the grant contract. During Phase 4, cemetery survey work addressed the final two subareas: 13 (Antioch-Priest Lake) and 14 (Donelson-Hermitage-Old Hickory). The other 12 subareas were surveyed in Phases 1-3 (2022-2024). In Phase 4, the surveyors visited 140 sites, verified 131 as still extant, and identified five as being under immediate threat or displaying evidence of desecration (Table 1).

The team attempted visits to an additional six cemeteries that were inaccessible. Property owners of three inaccessible cemetery sites have not responded to multiple contact attempts, and those sites cannot be accessed without their assistance. Property owners and/or legal situations denied the team access to two of the six—Ballentine Cemetery (HE-32) and Carper-Shelton Cemetery (AN-30). The remaining two sites—

Hayes Cemetery (possibly NE-37) and Peal Cemetery (PP-91)—were determined to be inaccessible due to safety concerns. The team also encountered access issues at a seventh site, the Hagar Cemetery (HE-11). While we were able to verify Hagar Cemetery from outside of its fence and locked gate, the property owner (a Hagar descendant) refused to grant access permission to the cemetery proper. The nine other cemetery sites that were visited included three that were previously recorded in the original DCCS (LA-57, LA-27, and NE-26) and six unrecorded sites that would have been new additions; however, those nine sites could not be verified at the time of survey due to a combination of vegetative overgrowth, ground disturbance, and incomplete locational data.

Table 1. Total Cemetery Visits in Phase 4

Cemetery Breakdown	
Total Attempted	146
Visited	140
Visited not verified	9
Inaccessible	6
Total verified	131

METHODOLOGY

Phase 4 survey was initiated with a regular field crew of one NSA team member and one MHC staff member. This approach was done for safety reasons and community engagement purposes, and it enabled MHC staff to accrue hours towards their required matching funds on this grant project. The MHC crew primarily rotated between Caroline Eller, Dr. Adam Fracchia, and Bryan Gilley. Assistant Archaeologist Clélie Cottle Peacock served as NSA's primary crew member, with Dr. Lydia Simpson, Lauren Walls, and Holly Adington assisting as needed.

While in the field, the crew conducted a pedestrian survey of each cemetery; collected GPS boundary points using the Avenza mapping application based on a combination of parcel data and landscape observations; took extensive photographs of each site using high-resolution iPhone and Android field phone cameras along with a Cannon EOS Rebel T7 digital camera; and completed THC-required Survey123 forms. The NSA crew members assigned each cemetery a unique field site number (e.g., NSA 400) in addition to their DCCS IDs. The field site numbers assist with internal tracking and help to maintain consistency between the data collection and processing steps. They also act as the main alphanumeric identifier for newly recorded cemeteries that do not have DCCS IDs.

As a supplement to the Survey123 forms, which were not designed for cemetery documentation, MHC staff used the FileMaker app to complete a detailed field survey form at each site that provided an in-depth description and overall conditions assessment. The required Survey123 forms for Phase 4 were completed by the end of the grant period (9/30/2025) and submitted directly to THC. All survey photographs as well as the data collected in the FileMaker app and on the Avenza handheld units have been electronically shared with MHC, including GIS shapefiles and Excel point lists with GPS coordinates. Copies of the GPS data are also included with this memo.

Phase 4 began two and one-half weeks earlier than Phase 3 did in 2024, which afforded safer working conditions with less abundant overgrowth for the first 12 weeks of survey. The team worked to complete the bulk of survey during the cooler spring months and worked shorter days during extreme weather conditions, including spring storm threats and high heat indexes during the early summer. Other hazards frequently encountered included flora (poison ivy) and fauna (snakes and ticks). Field crew were provided with cold water, personal protective equipment, and first aid access at all times.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Of the 131 cemeteries visited and verified during the Phase 4 survey, the vast majority were found to be Euro-American family or community cemeteries of the vernacular/informal subtype. Where possible, using census data and obituaries, NSA staff attempted to identify the primary racial or ethnic affiliation of surveyed cemeteries for which a primary affiliation could not be determined or confirmed in the field. Of the verified sites, the survey identified 15 known African American and 97 Euro-American cemeteries. The ethnic affiliations of three cemeteries were complex and did not fit into one specific category. These were classified on the survey forms as "Other." Cherry Hill Cemetery (NE-11) is known to include a mass burial of Indigenous Native Americans who were originally buried individually on the property, and their remains were removed by a former landowner in the 1980s, then reinterred by local Indigenous Native American tribes/groups. The James Buchanan Cemetery (NE-30) primarily consists of Euro-American burials but also contains two known graves of Martha Dabbs and her son John, African American people enslaved by the Buchanans. The third "Other" cemetery, Hermitage Memorial Gardens (new addition, NSA 419), is a large, modern cemetery that offers burial services to people from all ethnic/racial backgrounds. The remainder of the sites will require further research into census records and community-based resources to determine or confirm affiliation.

During Phase 4, the team surveyed 21 potential cemetery sites that had not been previously recorded for the DCCS. The existence/location of six of those sites could not be verified in the field. The remaining 15 previously unrecorded cemeteries were successfully verified, surveyed, and they will be added to the DCCS database. Most of the additions were brought to the team's attention by community members and landowners.

Several African American cemeteries surveyed in this phase were notable for their unique markers. One standout example is the Collier-Harris Cemetery (AN-45), which features a wide variety of marker types including at least six fieldstone markers with hand-chiseled inscriptions dating from 1909 through the 1960s. This shows the Collier and Harris families continually used the same homemade marker type for at least five decades, serving as a visual statement of their familial ties expressed and preserved through burial tradition. Furthermore, the most recent burial date is 2012, meaning the cemetery has been in use for at least 103 years—possibly longer, as the site's uninscribed fieldstones could represent burials that pre-date 1909. A helpful neighbor stated that Collier-Harris is/was a Black/African American cemetery, and historical records confirmed this information, once again demonstrating how valuable community input can be. With funds provided directly by the MHC, NSA recently drafted a separate memorandum discussing the totality of African American cemeteries identified by DCCS since Phase 1. As of this month, MHC and NSA have started planning for a separate project phase with increased community outreach and engagement, historical research, and additional grant funding to comprehensively document Davidson County's historical African American cemeteries and locate any associated unsurveyed sites. Through consultation with NSA staff and community stakeholders, MHC determined this component is an important next step in the overarching multi-phased project that necessitates completion prior to initiating development of the countywide cemetery preservation plan.

The cemetery survey form included five subcategories of cemetery types: lawn park, memorial garden, rural garden, Upland Folk, and vernacular/informal. The survey team identified 130 cemeteries as the "vernacular/informal" subcategory and one memorial park. Some cemeteries exhibited characteristics of the Upland Folk type, but because Upland Folk cemeteries are a regional subtype of vernacular/informal and have many overlapping defining features, all such cemeteries were categorized as vernacular/informal. Importantly, many larger community/corporate cemeteries can be considered "transitional" because they display characteristics of multiple types due to their many years of continued use, during which time different styles rose and fell in popularity.

The conditions of the cemeteries surveyed in Phase 4 ranged from pristine to unidentifiable (but known from other sources). Common issues contributing to preservation needs include neglect by property owners, improper lawn maintenance and cleaning/restoration techniques, intrusive plantings, and security problems (e.g., vandalism, trash dumping, and urban encampments). Many grave markers observed throughout the survey showed scarring from weed wackers and damage or displacement from mowing and/or heavy equipment. A prime example of the combination of neglect, improper lawn maintenance, and vandalism is at the Hays-Rieves Cemetery (AN-51). This family cemetery is located behind one of the earliest brick homes in Nashville—Locust Hill (c. 1805), listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974—and serves as the burial grounds of the Hays family, with many burials pre-dating the Civil War. The cemetery is difficult to access as there is no gate in the fence from the right-of-way, and nearly all the markers are scarred/chipped, broken, fallen, missing, or otherwise damaged.

Additionally, there were cases in which custodial care caused unintended harm to cemetery resources. For example, in the Albert H. Ellis Cemetery (HE-25), a lawn mower was parked directly on top of a formal headstone and a burial marked by a fieldstone, both endangering and damaging the markers and making them difficult to spot during survey. Many other markers were tilting, fallen/knocked over, broken, scarred, and chipped from maintenance equipment. Damage from repairs using improper materials (e.g., Portland cement, caulk, mastic adhesives) was evident on several markers, with breaks re-occurring at the repair points along with new cracks and breaks caused by stress to the stones resulting from the improper repairs.

Below is a list of some of the most endangered Phase 4 cemeteries as compiled by MHC (Table 2). This list is based upon conditions observed in the field and reported or documented threats related to factors like maintenance, access, damage, and/or proximate development/urban encroachment. A separate appendix includes historical summaries for some of these sites.

Table 2. Phase 4 Endangered Cemeteries List

Cemetery DCCS Map ID	Cemetery Name
HE-35	Shane (Morris) Cemetery
AN-09	Ezell Cemetery
HE-51	Baker-Faulkner Cemetery
HE-60	Lorenza and Elma Benson Cemetery
New addition – NSA 531	Grinstead Cemetery
AN-22	Murrell Cemetery
HE-04	Evans Hill Cemetery
AN-92	Burnett Cemetery
LA-12	Charlton-Henry Cemetery
HE-07	Joseph Cook Cemetery
Total Number of Endangered Cemeteries	10

While many cemeteries were easily accessible and clearly visible, others like the Pigg Cemetery (new addition, NSA 491), were difficult to access, requiring significant time and physical effort just for ingress and egress. These cemeteries are often not clearly marked, obscured by brush and overgrowth, behind large fences without marked entrances, and are generally not readily accessible for descendants and other visitors. These factors can also significantly inhibit needed caretaking. Pigg Cemetery (NSA 491) is surrounded on three sides by tall chain-link fence and a long-term parking facility for the nearby airport. The fourth side of the cemetery parcel is open to a public roadway, but the access point on this side is located at the top of a steep, heavily-vegetated embankment and there is no sign to indicate the cemetery's presence. It would not have been identified at all if it were not for the parcel research conducted as part of this project.

The landscape characteristics of cemeteries have important implications for their care and preservation. For instance, trees and forested areas can both enhance and protect the setting of burial grounds while simultaneously posing a risk to both the above- and below-ground features within them. Of the confirmed cemeteries, 33 were within forests, 14 in open or overgrown meadows, two were in gravel-covered formal interpretive areas, and 82 were in areas classified as "open with a few trees." Forty-nine (49) sites were considered overgrown and/or the surrounding landscape was overgrown. Providing proper care to both the constructed and natural environment within a cemetery can significantly improve its preservation by preventing fallen trees, unruly root systems, and overgrown ground cover from damaging stones and interments.

The two oldest cemeteries surveyed in Phase 4 contain burials dating to 1812 (Gregory, LA-08) and 1816 (Donelson Family, HE-18). The Phase 4 data set contains twice as many cemeteries with known establishment dates in the nineteenth century (n=57) than in the twentieth century (n=24), with the average establishment date of 1876.. Further research may change these numbers, as some of the cemeteries visited did not have clear establishment dates.

While the survey focused on documenting historical burying grounds, the survey team recorded the presence of multiple burials as recent as the current year (2025), showing sustained use and community value of these sites. Forty-six (46) cemeteries continued to be active burial grounds in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Such longevity of use was also observed in previous phases, making it an

established pattern that supports the trend suggested in previous phases: families with roots in Davidson County value keeping their family burials in their original locations. The persistent use of historical burial grounds continues to demonstrate that Davidson County residents are dedicated to local history and consider it to still be an active part of their lives; in short, they see historical cemeteries as meaningful places worthy of preservation. Based on comments made by landowners, neighbors, and descendants, there is a clear need to locate, record, and preserve historical cemeteries within the communities of Davidson County and to ensure they do not fall into a state of neglect that could lead to actionable abandonment, exposing these sites to potential adverse possession. Furthermore, there seems to be an abundance of interest in learning proper conservation methods, understanding cemetery laws, and/or supporting and participating in preservation efforts.

CONCLUSION

The Phase 4 field survey successfully verified the location and assessed the condition of 90% of the cemeteries visited, including 15 cemeteries that were not previously documented in the DCCS. Observations from this phase have been consistent with those made in previous phases, reinforcing the need for organized, countywide preservation efforts focused on the specific needs of historical cemeteries. Most of Davidson County's historical cemeteries would benefit from preservation efforts ranging from brush clearance to significant headstone conservation to Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey for unmarked burials. The findings from Phase 4 and subsequent phases will continue to inform and guide the development of the forthcoming countywide cemetery preservation plan that will aid in MHC's continued involvement in historical cemetery preservation and documentation. This will also ensure that information and location data are easily accessible, helping these important places be more easily identified and carefully considered in planning and review processes across the county.

The antebellum history of Davidson County strongly suggests the existence of many lost and/or forgotten cemeteries, once part of plantations, that likely contain marked and unmarked burials of enslaved people. The recently located Enslaved Cemetery at the Hermitage (new addition, NSA 520) underscores how elusive such cemeteries can be, even at well-known and extensively researched historical plantation sites. The Phase 1 and Phase 4 subareas each included more Black/African American cemeteries (n=14 and 15 respectively) than the Phase 2 and 3 subareas combined (n=12). This unbalanced distribution suggests that there are likely more little-known and currently unrecorded cemeteries across Davidson County that were created and used by free Black/African American families and communities both pre- and post-emancipation. Continued public engagement will enhance MHC's institutional knowledge of such sites and associated communities and will help protect the final resting places of historically marginalized people.

Burial practices have historically been and continue to be an important part of American culture, and Tennessee law mandates the protection of these sacred sites that serve as places of remembrance and reflection that connect us to history. They safeguard not just the physical remains of our dead, but also the stories and humanity of past peoples. Over the last four years, MHC and NSA team members have interacted with numerous community members—both with and without direct familial ties to Davidson County's historical cemeteries—who have consistently expressed an impassioned desire to learn about, honor, protect, and preserve the final resting places of those who came before us. Survey, research, and community engagement will continue to improve our knowledge of these hallowed grounds and the people interred within, allowing for a more informed cemetery preservation approach and strategic protection of the history and ancestors of Middle Tennessee.

DELIVERABLES PER PHASE:

Database/Spreadsheet of survey form data for all cemeteries visited
GIS data of all cemetery boundaries visited
Photos of each cemetery visited
Survey123 forms submitted to THC
Management Summary

Sincerely,

NEW SOUTH ASSOCIATES, INC.



Lydia Simpson, PhD
Senior Historian

and



Clélie Cottle Peacock, M.A., RPA
Assistant Archaeologist

Appendix B- Endangered Cemeteries

At the end of Phase IV, Metro Historical Commission (MHC) staff created a list of ten endangered or threatened cemetery sites surveyed during this phase of the project. MHC identified these sites using notes and photos from the current survey, as well as additional existing Davidson County Cemetery Survey (DCCS) files that include correspondence, prior documentation, and archival research.

Phase IV sites listed below have some of the greatest need based upon factors like physical condition of the markers and overall site, visible maintenance issues, and urban encroachment. These sites are not ranked or presented in any particular order, except alphabetical listing. Original DCCS site numbers are indicated where applicable (DCCS), in addition to the Phase IV field numbers for all. The following pages contain historical summaries for five of these sites, researched and written by MHC staff as part of their local matching funds on this grant project.

Cemetery Name	DCCS	Phase IV Field #	Notes on Threat(s)
Baker-Faulkner	HE-51	464	Abandoned, unmarked depressions, damaged markers, urban encroachment, difficult access
Benson (Lorenzo and Elma)	HE-60	473	Abandoned, trash dumping, trees down, overall damage, difficult access, unmarked graves, no known descendants
Burnett	AN-92	434	Trash, abandoned, depressions, no inscriptions
Charlton-Henry	LA-12	455	Abandoned, overgrown, depressions, fragments, damaged markers
Cook (Joseph)	HE-07	472	Abandoned, overgrown, trash, neglect, damaged/altered fence
Evans Hill	HE-04	422	Abandoned, tree fall, overgrown, no inscriptions, unmarked graves, pile of suspected fieldstones
Ezzell/Ezell	AN-09	444	Abandoned, overgrown, uninscribed fieldstones, unmarked depressions, urban encroachment, neglect
Grinstead	N/A (addition)	531	Abandoned, overgrown, overall damage, unmarked depression
Murrell	AN-22	435	Abandoned, illegible inscriptions, depressions, neglect, damaged markers
Shane (Morris)	HE-35	411	Abandoned, overgrown, no inscriptions, inscriptions, custodial care, depressions

Baker-Faulkner Cemetery

The Baker-Faulkner Cemetery is located in a modern subdivision in Hermitage, Tennessee. Surrounded by residences, the site is characterized by trees, stones, and fallen branches. Known burials date from 1852 to 1905, and there are several depressions indicating unmarked graves. The cemetery site retains part of a stone wall, 14 fieldstones, and several grave markers in damaged condition. A more recent burial may be for a pet and is located within a stone circle with a Marian Grotto statue.

The cemetery contains burials from the Faulkner family. A marker inscribed with J.T. and M.M. Faulkner may be for one of the Faulkner children. The *Tennessee Baptist* published a death notice for Mary Elizabeth Faulkner, giving her death date as June 18, 1852, and noting she was the daughter of James T. and Margaret M. Faulkner. She was only 8 months and 28 days old. The notice of her death states "Richmond Va., papers please copy." Another Faulkner child's death was published in the *Republican Banner*. Five-year-old Willie Watson died on July 11, 1857. There were several notices in newspapers over the years about the Faulkner's selling land or an enslaved person. When Margaret died on July 23, 1885, at age 58 she was already widowed. Her funeral services were held at the family residence, and she is buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery.



While most markers are heavily damaged, Jas W. Jackson's (James Whitfield Jackson) marker is embellished with an arch with a keystone, gates to heaven, the words "truth" and "life" at the base of the gates, a dove, flowers, cross, and stylized steps leading to the gate. Raised block letters give his birth and death dates as March 15, 1858, to October 25, 1905. His death notice stated he was "aged 47 years, 6 months and 29 days." Jackson's funeral services would be conducted at his home at 1604 Jefferson Street, and he would be buried at Hermitage Cemetery. There are no markers for two people mentioned in newspapers as being buried at Hermitage Cemetery, and it may be a different cemetery. On March 17, 1898, E.M. Caldwell was to be buried in Hermitage Cemetery and when Vernice Elizabeth Sharp died on July 26, 1900, she was also buried in Hermitage Cemetery.

An interesting feature on a base of a marker separated from its headstone is the epitaph, "His spirit smiles from that bright shore, and softly whispers, weep no more." The origins of the epitaph are unknown, but it shows up in an undated copy of a booklet of epitaphs and lettering designs from the Vermont Marble Company (est. 1880). The quote was used to provide solace for the families of the deceased.

The Baker-Faulkner Cemetery was surveyed in 2025, and the primary threat is neglect. The site is overgrown, markers are broken, and the cemetery is difficult to access. Most inscriptions on markers are difficult to read, have suffered from lack of upkeep.

Burnett Cemetery

Burnett Cemetery is located in the Antioch neighborhood of Nashville off Smith Springs Road near Nashboro Village. The 0.37-acre cemetery is fenced off and a marker for Cary Felts (d. 1840) sits outside the parcel. It is unknown if Felts is associated with Burnett.



Burnett Cemetery is believed to contain 60 burials, including 14 markers with inscriptions and many unmarked burials. In 1980, a project from Glencliff High School recorded the names of the 14 inscribed tombstones, which were again inspected during surveys in 2002 and 2025. *Find a Grave* lists 47 memorials in the Burnett Cemetery, which death notices and obituaries often call the "Burnett burial ground" or "Burnett family cemetery."

Earliest burials at the cemetery are Christine Jeanetta Davis Burnett (1823-1856) and Margaret Faircloth (1795-1861). The latest burials are Andrew Jackson Burnett (April 14,1886 to April 26, 1969), with the most recent burial placed in 1980. One of the more interesting burials is Henry Burnett (Feb 1806 to November 9, 1900). His death certificate attributes a fractured femur as the cause of death. He was married three times and fathered 18 children. Eleven children, at least 87 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and his last wife all survived him. News reports noted he lived in Una in the Fifth District and called him "a venerable man of 94 years." Another report wrote, "He lived in the days of David Crockett, and like him, when he put his trusty old rifle to his shoulder and fired he could tell you where he hit his game. The old rifle as yet on the wooden hooks over his door where it has been unused for many years." He was one of two registered voters over 90 years old. His grave marker is embellished with a hand pointing to heaven and inscribed, "He was an honest man."

In 1991, *The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County vs. Unknown Heirs of Henry Burnett* resulted in termination of the cemetery for burials. The decision did not "affect or damage any grave sites or removal of human remains." The judgement stated that the title to property was "divested out of Respondents and all other persons…[and] is vested in The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County…." However, Metro's Assessor of Property web page lists Burnett Cemetery as the current owner, under the ownership history category, which typically indicates ownership has reverted to descendants.

In 2004, the Sherriff's office conducted a cleanup of the cemetery following letters of concern from the public. The cemetery had gone years without being cleaned up, and it was noted that a fallen tree was present, as well as trash dumped along the fence line. The difficulty of access to the cemetery, abandonment of the burial ground, unmarked graves, no known descendants, and neglect pose threats to the Burnett Cemetery.

Charlton-Henry Cemetery

The Charlton-Henry Cemetery is located in the Peninsula Point development near Percy Priest Lake. The 0.14-acre cemetery is currently under the ownership of Butler Development, LLC. Butler Development, LLC acquired the cemetery in 1995 from Pinnacle Point, LLC (Davidson County Register of Deeds Book 9789, Page 995), who previously acquired the land from Allen Lentz in 1987 (Book 7254, Page 896).

The cemetery was surveyed in 2001, with surveyors recording a total of 13 inscribed grave markers as well as two fieldstones. Along with these recordings, it was noted that the cemetery was in very poor condition. The cemetery was vandalized in 2000 and had several graves deeply sunken and some overturned, along with overgrown vegetation and some potentially exposed caskets. In 2006, the cemetery was re-surveyed at the request of descendant John Charlton. Surveyors reported the cemetery to be in much better condition after efforts from neighbors to clean and beautify it. In 2025, surveyors noted indications of about 20 burials.



Burials at this cemetery date to as early as 1848 with the interment of a Charlton family member. It is one of three markers inscribed with "At Rest" in the cemetery. Another early burial is Mollie B. Henry (1866-1897), the daughter of Overton Henry (1846-1915) and Caroline Walpole Henry (1846-1923). Overton Henry, from Sevier, Tennessee, and Caroline Walpole Henry, from Smyrna, Tennessee, mark the beginning of the Henry family lineage at the cemetery. The most recent burials are 1970 and 1972. In 1970 Edward Carlton, a member of the Charlton (Carlton) family, was buried here and in 1972 Eula Charlton was interred. The Charlton family first came to the area with the arrival of James D. Charlton (1842-1924), who moved to Nashville from DeSoto, Mississippi in 1862 for military service during the Civil War. All inscriptions in the cemetery belong to either the Charlton or Henry family except for one with the surname Taylor, although the first name is illegible.

The primary threats to this cemetery include a lack of upkeep, allowing vegetation to become overgrown, as well as the deteriorating condition of many of the burials at the cemetery. Poor custodial care, along with illegible inscriptions and deteriorating tombstones, make the property an endangered cemetery. Descendants of the Charlton family remain involved in the cemetery, including John Charlton from Virginia who requested the cemetery to be re-surveyed in 2006. Along with the Charlton family, residents of the home which the cemetery is located behind have aided in making attempts to keep the cemetery from further deterioration.

Joseph Cook Cemetery

The Joseph Cook Cemetery is located in the Hermitage area of Nashville. The cemetery is accessible via a point along Hunting Drive, although it is located behind some buildings. The 0.05-acre cemetery is currently listed under the ownership of "unknown cemetery," which it has been listed under since 1978. Prior ownership and sale records prove difficult to find, leaving little information on the ownership history of the site.



The cemetery was surveyed in 2003 by two descendants of the Cook family, who recorded two grave markers with inscriptions, two grave markers with no inscription, and ten fieldstones. Extant grave markers are tympanum headstones, characterized by a rounded top over a traditional slab of stone. Additionally, the survey noted that more burials could exist at the site due to other stones potentially marking burial sites, although that is unconfirmed. The survey also noted that the fence around the cemetery appears to have been moved, possibly making the size of the cemetery smaller.

As a result of there being only two inscriptions, it is difficult to know when the first or most recent burial at the cemetery occurred. Both inscribed grave markers at the Joseph Cook Cemetery belong to members of the Cook family. The first tombstone belongs to the namesake, Joseph Cook (1766-1810). The Cook family originates from Virginia, where Joseph Cook was born, but Cook and some of his siblings moved to the greater Nashville area in the late 1700s. The other inscribed grave marker belongs to William Cook (unknown-1866). The birth year on Cook's tombstone is no longer legible, though it can be made out that the inscription on that stone reads, "an honest man – the noblest work of God." *

Primary threats to the cemetery include overgrown vegetation, neglect, lack of custodial care, and alteration of the fencing. Photographs taken during the 2003 survey suggest that some of the tombstones may be slightly sunken into the ground. Additionally, a lack of care for the cemetery has resulted in overgrowth of vegetation while the fencing around the cemetery appears to have been damaged or moved at some point.

*"An honest man's the noblest work of God" is a quote from Robert Burn's *The Cotter's Saturday Night (1785)*. Also found in Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man (1734)*.

Murrell Cemetery

Located in Nashville's Una neighborhood near Antioch, Murrell Cemetery sits on a high hill with little marking of the property, totaling 4.73 acres in size. The cemetery is overgrown with many grave markers appearing illegible or damaged. There are an estimated 100 burials in the cemetery. Deed records show several owners, although the names do not always appear in extant burials. Burial surnames include Charlton, Powell, Aldridge, Haggard, and Robinson.

The cemetery is named after the Murrell family, who owned a large portion of land in the Una area during the antebellum era. Along with these tracts of land, the Murrell family owned many enslaved persons, but the Murrells either moved away or died out, and little trace of their history remains. The cemetery is one of the oldest burial grounds in the area, with burials dating back to pre-Civil War times.



A notable extant tomb in the Murrell Cemetery is for William Perry and his wife. This is a large crypt designed for the remains of two people. The brick crypt has "W.M. Perry 1904" incised in stone at the apex. The remains appear to no longer be there, with the tomb standing open, full of leaves and debris. Another W.M. Perry who died in 1925 was buried in the Murrell Cemetery. He was a farmer and said to be "respected by all who knew him."

W. (Willis) B.H. Clements has one of the more intact markers in the cemetery. Set inside a derelict wood fence, his marker has birth and death dates (Dec. 25, 1809 and July 5, 1893), a hand pointing to heaven below a segmental arch, tooling at the edges and a tooled half-circle at the bottom, with an inscription that reads, "an honest (man's the) noblest work of God."* There are discrepancies on his death date with several sources placing it in 1891.

The most recent legible burial is for John G. Cason, who died on October 17, 1945, at the age of 90. He was the proprietor of Cason's Store in East Nashville/Edgefield. A local newspaper stated the store was "one of Nashville's oldest and best known grocery stores." He retired from business around 1930.

The cemetery was surveyed in 2001, 2008, and 2025. Primary threats to this cemetery include a lack of upkeep, uncontrolled vegetative overgrowth, and deteriorating condition of many of the burials at the cemetery. Poor custodial care, along with illegible inscriptions and deteriorating tombstones, make the property an endangered cemetery.

*Quote from Robert Burns' *The Cotter's Saturday Night* (1785). Also found in Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man* (1734).