



We Wish to Honor Black History Month and Black Lives Matter

Who is buried here?

I read these words for the first time on a sign just off a path and was happy to see a cemetery preserved in the woods of a rural park in Hillsborough, NC. I read the 16 names of the slaves buried here. I saw periwinkle planted over a prominent grave. (I have since learned periwinkle was a common plant used in slave cemeteries.) Only mossy head and foot stones mark each grave. There were also metal markers in the soil from a survey that was done in 2016 by archeologists to help better locate the unmarked burials. The survey determined 34 graves in all. A cemetery for slaves and their descendants... but who were they? Who is buried here?



Pictured above, these graves for the children are very close together.
 Elsie is alerting where only a survey marker has been placed.
 The more fortunate had stone markers, but sadly no date of birth or day of death.

Very few slave cemeteries have survived over the years. Because, like this one, you can hardly make out that this is a cemetery. No large decorated headstones. No gate to protect it or make it known. I felt sad and cold when I read the words “Who is buried here?” I reflected on what their lives here were like. Were they well cared for or happy here? I imagined their faces and wondered of their suffering. Of the 34 buried here some slaves and some are those who fought in the civil war and saw the emancipation of slaves.

BURIAL GROUND for Slaves and Their Descendants

This burial ground contains the graves of 34 slaves and their descendants who lived, worked and died on this land.

It is being preserved to honor the people who were laid to rest here, and to allow future generations to remember and respect their contributions to history. Most of the burials are those of the men, women and children owned by Samuel Strayhorn while he farmed here from 1817 until his death in 1847, or owned by his son, William, who acquired the farm in 1849. According to oral tradition, descendants of the former slaves were buried here with their families after the Civil War.

Plain field stones mark the head of each burial, with smaller stones used at the foot. None of these markers are inscribed or decorated. Some graves also had wood markers of local red cedar, now vanished except for remnants in the ground. The graves are oriented east-west following traditional Christian burial customs. The small-leaved periwinkle plant (*vinca minor*) growing here is often found at historic African-American cemeteries. There are countless burying grounds for enslaved people across the state. Many have been forgotten, damaged or destroyed. Orange County now uses a digital mapping system to document and protect these cemeteries.

Who Is Buried Here?

Samuel Strayhorn's 1847 will lists the names of the 16 enslaved people in his household when he died: Amy, Anderson, Betsy, Charles, Ellen, George, Green, Jim, Joe, Nancy, Phillis, Rose, Sam, Sandy, Sophiah and Tarmilla. Strayhorn's slave holdings increased from 3 in 1820 to a high of 18 in 1840. Additional research is underway to learn more about those buried here and to identify their descendants.

This burial ground is a sacred place of rest. Please treat this area with respect.

Map by Legacy Research Associates, Durham, NC.

ORANGE COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA
 Department of Environment, Agriculture, Parks & Recreation

This cemetery is documented in the final will of Lieutenant Samuel Strayhorn 16 years before his slaves were freed and 18 years before the end of the civil war. Mr. Strayhorn fought in the war of 1812 and owned 400 acres of land here where he kept his slaves to work the farm. He and his descendants are buried in a much more traditional cemetery in town.

The life of slavery was difficult, with a life expectancy being around 22 years. Very little is written on how slaves were buried, typically owners furnished a standard pine box and permitted slaves to bury their dead with traditional rituals and death rites.

Here, these souls rest in a peaceful and lovely park setting for visitors to enjoy. The park is set up to reflect the life lived on a farm in the 1800's with beehives nearby abuzz, a pond stocked with fish and barns for livestock. It has laid in silent witness to the years of civil unrest, all but forgotten until this land was donated. This park sits at an intersection and could easily have been a shopping center or housing subdivision. Because it has been made into a park this small cemetery survives, honoring the slaves buried here.

The words "Who is buried here?" stir a deeper understanding with more respect than I can express in words. I returned to the slave cemetery a few months later to see Black Lives Matter ribbons on some of the gravestones. History has been preserved. These souls are not forgotten. The cemetery stands as a reminder to future generations of who is buried here.



Donna Randolph

2020 Year End Statistics

We had a total of 26 different projects in 2020, four of them were two or more days, at least 75% of them were looking for Native burials. This is not counting the cremains recoveries that were made by several of our team members. March and April we sheltered at home because of COVID requirements and many of our projects were postponed or canceled. Slowly projects that were considered essential infrastructure started to return to work.



Two of my favorite pictures from 2020 projects. On the left, Barbara holds Asha in our search area. By accident the client had mowed the field next to the correct one, oops! On the right, young Fionn finds the bear at Castro Adobe and is not sure what to do with it.



Introducing Clíodhna Our Newest Puppy-in-Training!

Handler Joseph Kral has high hopes for 11 week old Clío (KLEE-oh) as a future addition to the ICF Historic Human Remains Detection Dog roster. And she's got a lot going for her.

- She was specifically selected for this work (coming all the way from Mississippi.)
- She's related to several other dogs on the team with proven track records.
- She's a quick learner.
- She's easy to motivate.
- She's got a lot of drive.
- She's intensely focused.
- And, as her breeder Rachel Thornton describes, **she's got *spunk!***

Socialization is vital for any young dog; it's the foundation for... well... *everything*. Early experiences can form a dog's view of the world for their lifetime. Is it scary, boring, stressful, exciting or ? Clío's experiences during her 1st four months are the foundation upon which her work will be built. The goal is for her to learn that new experiences are nothing to be afraid of or stressed about - for her to be *resilient*. On the job, she will be constantly faced with new people / places / things and it's *very* hard to work well when you are stressed. So, Joseph's first job as her handler is to continue the great start on that foundation that Rachel gave Clío during her first two months. Socialization is hard, as puppies of this age are not yet fully vaccinated. And COVID lockdowns make it even more difficult. But with some creativity, a dog stroller, a long leash, and many fabulous masked and socially distanced helpers, Clío is having lots of positive new experiences. During her first two weeks in her new home she has seen, smelled, heard and / or met:

- Almost 100 people of various ages, ethnicities and accents, some in wheelchairs, using walker or canes, others wearing helmets & boots while climbing trees and running chainsaws!
- Over 25 dogs of differing breeds, sizes and ages, including her teammates.
- Cats, horses, cows, chickens, pigs, as well as wild turkeys, hummingbirds, and deer.

She's already had her first in-cabin plane rides on the way to California. (Thx again, Rachel!) She's seen, heard, smelled, and felt the vibrations from a huge crane, wood chippers, big trucks with air brakes, and an idling helicopter. She's even ridden on a tractor.

Detection dogs spend a lot of time traveling and waiting to work. So, she has also spent some quality time riding in cars and hanging in her crate / ex-pen learning to chill-lax. Accompanying Joe on trips to the grocery, post office, hardware store, etc., adds to her positive experiences.

Another important aspect for socialization is body handling. Remaining calm while a strangers sniff your ears, look at your teeth, fuss with your paws / nails, move you into odd positions, or look thru your fur (removing ticks and foxtails) is an important skill!

Joseph lined-up lots of experts and with their help Clío is becoming a *social-lite!*



Thanks to:

Dr. Sara Skiwski of [The Western Dragon](#) for some gentle pokes and probing, as well as an introduction to cats! (top left.)

Teammate Peg, for allowing visits to her ranch and livestock (top right.)

Carla Campbell of [Quadrassage](#) (bottom left) for some practice range-of-motion checks (“Baby’s first massage.”) As well as her GSD, Hope, for a gentle, positive, and fun introduction to up-eared dogs.

And Dr. Allie Turner of [Veterinary Acupuncture and Rehabilitation Service](#) (bottom right) for a patient practice physical exam.

Lisa 🕊️❤️🐾

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might be interested.



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We are happy to talk with you about your project and how our dogs might help locate human remains or burials.

Call, email, or check out our website.

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