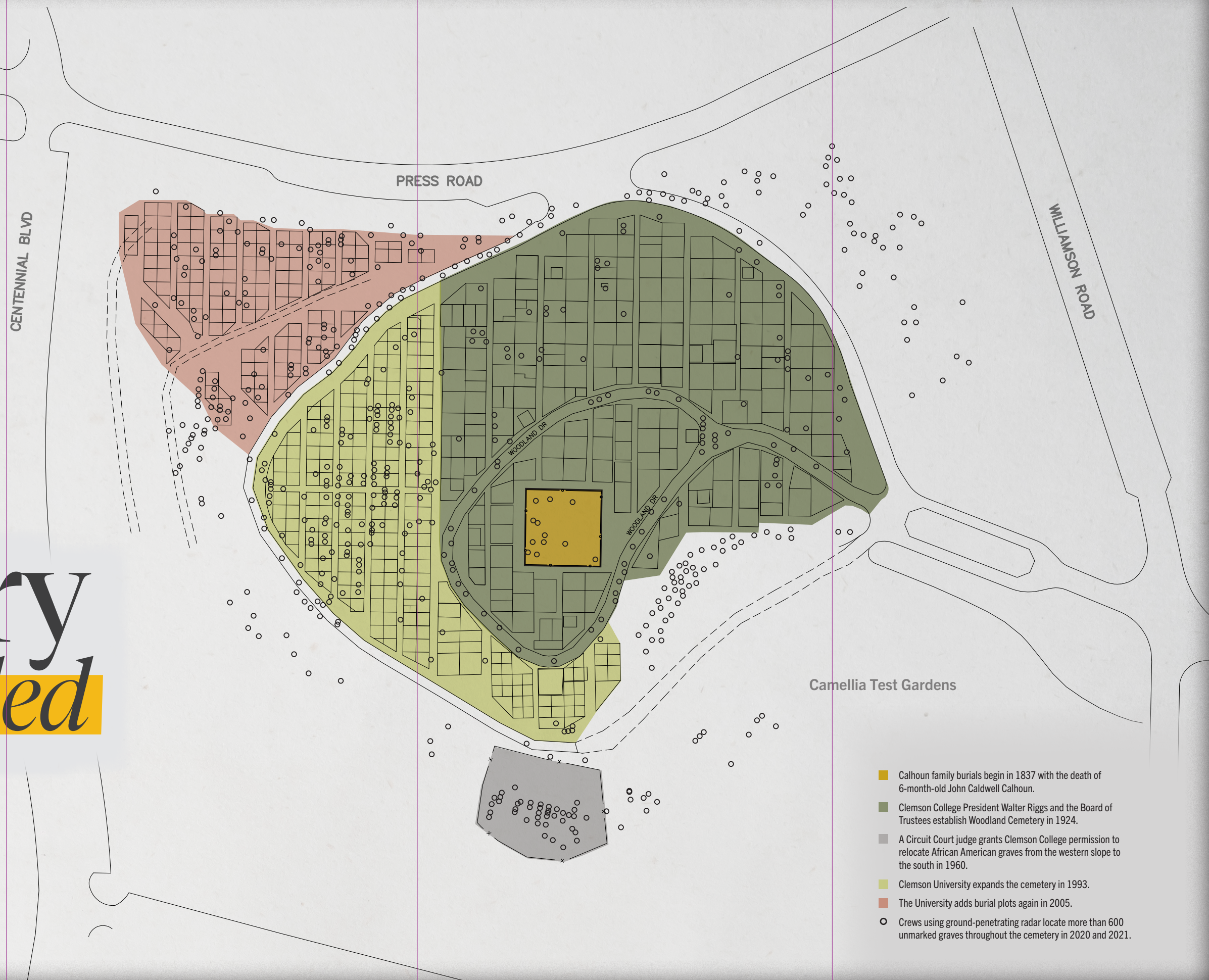


Who Might Be Buried Here?

- › Enslaved people who worked at Clergy Hall, originally built in 1803
- › More than 139 enslaved people who lived and worked at John C. Calhoun's Fort Hill Plantation from 1825 to 1865
- › Sharecroppers and other laborers who worked on this land from 1865 to 1888
- › Convicted laborers leased by Clemson trustees from the state who helped construct Clemson Agricultural College from 1890 to 1915
- › Wage workers employed by Clemson College from 1890 to the 1940s

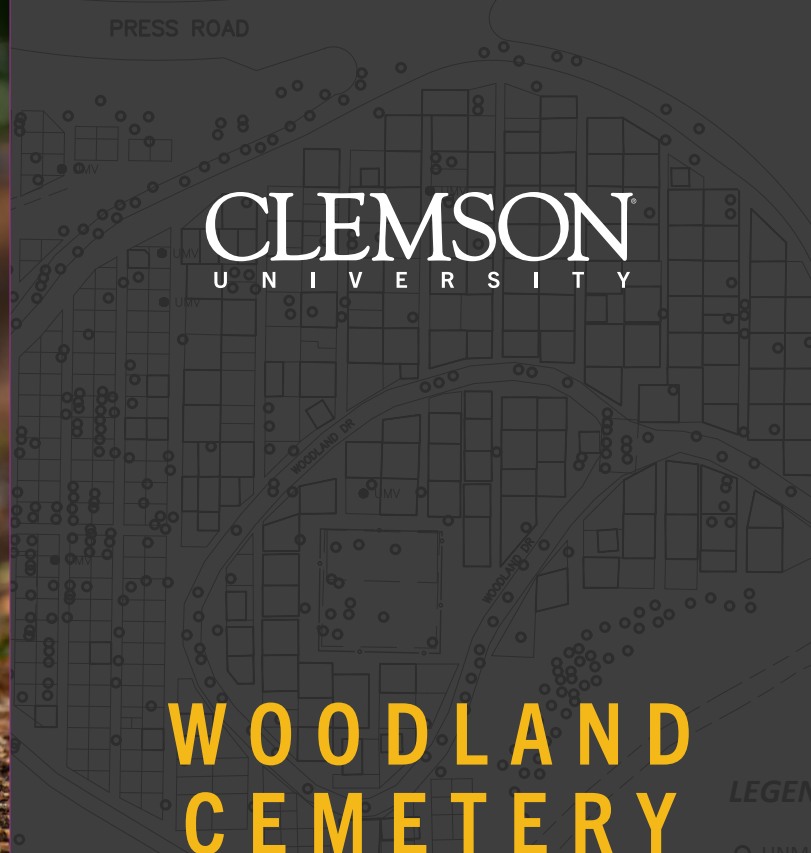
History Revealed

This map of Woodland Cemetery marks approximate locations of burial sites of enslaved people, sharecroppers, wage laborers and convicted laborers dating back to potentially c. 1803 and identified through ground-penetrating radar testing in 2020 and 2021.



Camellia Test Gardens

- Calhoun family burials begin in 1837 with the death of 6-month-old John Caldwell Calhoun.
- Clemson College President Walter Riggs and the Board of Trustees establish Woodland Cemetery in 1924.
- A Circuit Court judge grants Clemson College permission to relocate African American graves from the western slope to the south in 1960.
- Clemson University expands the cemetery in 1993.
- The University adds burial plots again in 2005.
- Crews using ground-penetrating radar locate more than 600 unmarked graves throughout the cemetery in 2020 and 2021.



WOODLAND CEMETERY TIMELINE

A partial working account of the events and activities concerning Woodland Cemetery from 1946 to present day

April 2004

The Woodland Cemetery Stewardship Committee requests funds for “ground-penetrating radar work by the State Archeology Department to determine whether or not slave graves exist on the site.”

2005

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) testing on the western slope finds no conclusive evidence of unmarked gravesites.

2016

The University erects South Carolina historic markers on campus, including one at Woodland Cemetery that includes information about the “Fort Hill Slave and Convict Cemetery.”

February-March 2020

After taking a Call My Name campus tour, two Clemson University students visit the fenced-in burial site and discover it is in a state of disrepair. A conservation and memorialization process for the site begins.

July 2020

GPR testing reveals what are believed to be 215 unmarked graves, most of them on the western slope of the hill.

August-September 2020

Additional GPR testing reveals what are believed to be 389 more unmarked graves in other areas of Woodland Cemetery, including under the roads. An ad hoc task force comprising three members of the Board of Trustees is appointed to develop a preservation plan for submission to the Board. A Legacy Council is also appointed to conduct research and to assist and engage the local African American community.

January 2021

An additional 63 unmarked graves are located on 4 ½ acres of previously unmapped ground in the northeast and southeast corners of the cemetery. This brings the total number of unmarked graves to 667.

WOODLAND CEMETERY

Historic Preservation

An ongoing project by Clemson University to locate the unmarked African American graves in Woodland Cemetery and to engage the local community in giving voice to those who are buried here in order to protect and memorialize them.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY REGULARLY SCHEDULES TOURS OF WOODLAND CEMETERY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS THAT ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Visit clemson.edu/cemetery for current information about these opportunities to learn more.

CONTACT US

For inquiries about the African American burial ground and ongoing historic preservation efforts, please contact afamburials@clemson.edu or 864-656-8719.

To share information about the African American burial ground, please email afamburials@clemson.edu or call 864-656-8855.

March 1946

The College Buildings and Grounds Committee reports that 200-250 graves of enslaved people and convicted laborers are believed to be buried in Woodland Cemetery and recommends installation of a permanent marker on the site — a recommendation that goes unheeded.

October 1952

The western slope of Cemetery Hill is significantly altered during the expansion of the College and the building of Lake Hartwell by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

September 1960

A Circuit Court judge grants Clemson College’s request to disinter the remains of enslaved and convicted people on the western slope of the cemetery and to move them approximately 300 feet south in order to provide for the “orderly and proper development of the campus.” The Court order also stipulates that the area of reinterment “be suitably marked.”

1991-1993

Carrel Cowen-Ricks, an African American archeology professor working in what was then called the Department of Historic Houses, conducts survey work on the hill, completing three digs on the western slope of the cemetery. The project ends without conclusive evidence of African American graves.

2003

The University’s Woodland Cemetery Preservation and Development Plan notes that “some areas of the site are suspected to contain unmarked burial plots.”