

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM



56711

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name ROSE HILL CEMETERY

other names/site number Rose Cemetery FMSF# PI 11168

2. Location

street & number 0 Jasmine Avenue N/A  not for publication

city or town Tarpon Springs N/A  vicinity

state Florida code FL county Pinellas code 103 zip code 34689

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Glisse Lotane 12/21/14  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register  See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register  See continuation sheet
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Jon Fulk  
Signature of the Keeper

3-7-2017  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	total

**Name of related multiple property listings**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

\_\_\_\_\_ "N/A" \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

\_\_\_\_\_ 0 \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY: cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY: cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A  
walls N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof N/A  
other N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 36) has been requested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1904 - 1967

Significant Dates

1904

1916

Significant Person

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

African American

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other

Name of Repository

#

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.63 acres

**UTM References**

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	7	3	2	9	6	0	4	3	1	1	4	8	6	1
	Zone		Easting					Northing							
2															

3														
	Zone		Easting					Northing						
4														

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Dr. Tina Bucuvalus/Robert O. Jones, Historic Preservationist

organization Bureau of Historic Preservation date December 2016

street & number 500 South Bronough Street telephone 850-245-6333

city or town Tallahassee state FL zip code 32399-0250

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Rose Cemetery Association, Inc.; attn: Alfred Quarterman

street & number 531 East Oakwood Street telephone 727.937.8627

city or town Tarpon Springs state Florida zip code 34689-4449

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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SPRINGS, PINELLAS COUNTY,  
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**SUMMARY**

Located on Jasmine Avenue in Tarpon Springs, Florida, Rose Hill Cemetery is a significant historic cemetery that preserves a strong African American ethnic character. The cemetery measures roughly 4.63 acres, and is divided by an unpaved road. The historic core of the cemetery is fenced in and bounded by East Cypress Street on the north, East Orange Street on the south, and Jasmine Avenue on the west. Established in 1916 in response to segregationist policies, the cemetery has remained in constant use into the present and includes over 1,000 grave plots of African Americans from Pinellas County. Markers include both commercial and handmade examples in a variety of materials, such as granite, marble, concrete, wood, and stainless steel. The grave markers range in height from flat on the ground to several feet high. The site shows many earmarks of traditional southern cemeteries, such as scraped landscaping, plantings next to graves, and conch shells on some graves. Although upkeep was sometimes neglected in the past, today the site is in moderately good condition and retains its historical design, setting, and integrity to a high degree.

**SETTING**

The City of Tarpon Springs is located in north Pinellas County, approximately 30 miles northwest of Tampa. The City of Clearwater, the seat of government for Pinellas County, lies fifteen miles to the south. The city limits of Tarpon Springs measures approximately twelve square miles. A dominant feature of Tarpon Springs is the Anclote River and its corollary bayous, which have greatly influenced the historical development of the city. The terrain is relatively flat, although the topography in some neighborhoods close to the river displays slight undulations. The Anclote River widens at Tarpon Springs with numerous bayous extending into the city, leaving few points more than several blocks from the water.

Rose Hill Cemetery is located 1.5 miles east of the intersection of Tarpon and Pinellas avenues, which can be considered the center of Tarpon Springs. It is situated east of the Cycadia Cemetery, the city-owned cemetery. A City of Tarpon Springs recreational

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complex is located directly to the south, and residential neighborhoods are located to the north.

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

The Rose Hill Cemetery landscaping consists primarily of flat land with several varieties of native trees and shrubs, such as oaks, pines, palmettos, and azaleas (**Photos 1-2**). Measuring roughly 4.63 acres, the layout of the cemetery is a modified rectangle with the length running east/west. An unpaved road divides the cemetery. There are two entrances on Jasmine Avenue, both of which accommodate vehicles. The main entrance on the western side of the cemetery is framed by a decorative steel arch and gate (**Photo 3**). There is a second entrance/exit through a chain link fence on the west end of the cemetery, to the north of the main exit. The cemetery is bordered on the west by a concrete block wall, and chain link fencing on the north, east, and south. There is one unpaved pathway for vehicles that circles the early portion of the cemetery and connects the entrances (**Photo 1**).

Like many cemeteries in the American South, Rose Hill is not part of the sanctified grounds of a church. Formally established in 1916 in response to segregationist policies, the cemetery has remained in constant use into the present and includes over 1000 grave plots of African Americans from Pinellas County. The cemetery has been in continuous use from at least 1904 until the present. The most recent observed gravesite is of Bobby Lee Humphrey Sr. (1990-June 13, 2016) (**Photo 4**). With a few exceptions, the graves are arranged in an east-west alignment. When married couples are buried together, the man is usually situated to the right of the woman. Chairs or benches are placed by family members near a few graves to allow for a more comfortable time spent visiting the graves of loved ones, such as near the Quarterman family plot (**Photo 5**).

*Scraping*

Rose Cemetery is not a lawn cemetery. However, there is sparse volunteer grass growth throughout the cemetery—especially in those areas that have not been consistently raked. Some family plots are still devoid of grass, and the dirt shows the patterns of a rake (**Photo 6**). This follows the widespread southern practice of scraping (or raking) cemeteries.

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Alfred Quarterman and Annie Dabbs of the Rose Hill Cemetery Association and Rev. Milton Smith of the Mt. Hermon Baptist Church verified that Rose Hill was traditionally a scraped or raked cemetery.<sup>1</sup> Quarterman believes that the original term was scraping, but because they eventually used a yard rake to scrape, the term raking came to be used interchangeably. As a justification for the practice, he noted that writings in the Negro National Archives refer to the practice of scraping.

***Grave Markers***

Grave markers include both commercial and handmade examples in a variety of materials, such as granite, marble, concrete, wood, and stainless steel. They are of various ages, sizes, materials, and influences. However, they are primarily rectangular tablets/headstones, ledgers, and few footstones made of marble, granite, and concrete. Most are commercially made, including numerous marble or granite headstones provided by the federal government for military veterans. There are also numerous small, stainless-steel markers that were added in 1999, when a survey found 200 unmarked graves (**Photo 7**). Most markers include the name, birth, and death dates, often with designations such as mother or father, as on the marker for Charity Carter (1869-1944) (**Photo 8**), or the addition of words of hope, condolence, or faith, such as “Gone But Not Forgotten” on the grave of Amanda Willis (d. 1922 age 56) (**Photo 9**) or “It Is Well With My Soul” on the grave of Timothy Pitts (1948-1991). Many headstones are also graced with ceramic portraits of the deceased, such as the graves of George Darling (1960-1968) or Mahalia Jones (1856-1924) (**Photo 10**). Common motifs incised on grave markers include clasped hands, praying hands, angels, roses and other flowers, crosses, lambs (**Photo 11**), birds, ivy, and masons’ symbols (**Photo 12**). Some graves are covered with paving, i.e., a concrete slab or, in one case, concrete paving stones (**Photo 13**). The joint graves of Abraham and Julia Lambright are covered with marble slabs (**Photo 14**).

During the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, most north Pinellas County funeral services were provided by Larkin’s Funeral Home or Young’s Funeral Home in Clearwater. These

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Quarterman, telephone interview with Tina Bucuvalas, January 22, 2016; Rev. Milton. Interview with Tina Bucuvalas, March 1, 2016; Annie Doris Dabbs, interview with Tina Bucuvalas, March 30, 2016.

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black-owned businesses often provided bronze plaques for concrete grave covers. The plaques usually have decorative motifs surrounding the name and dates of the deceased as well as the name of the funeral home.

Several areas are set aside for the graves of a particular family group. Some family plots are surrounded by low curbs usually made of poured concrete or small concrete blocks, and sometimes metal or wood such as that of the McCrary family (**Photo 15**). Occasionally, a single grave may also be surrounded by a curb, such as that of Eugenia Muniz (1919-1987).

***Commercial Markers***

Madie Mae Arline's marble headstone engraved with flowers and containing a ceramic photograph is an example of the many commercially made markers (**Photo 16**). There is also a large squared vertical marble column on the grave of Annie Mae Reese (1901-1921) (**Photo 17**). In some cases, temporary metal markers with paper identification tags from the funeral homes still remain, e.g., Amanda Small (December 1942) (**Photo 18**). The grave of Richard Quarles (1833-1925) has a granite military marker provided by the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy (**Photo 19**). There are several marble or granite military markers issued by the federal government to veterans of wars stretching from World War I to Desert Storm, such as those for Tommy Dorsett (1896-1981), WWI (**Photo 20**), WWI; Eddie Cooper, Jr. (1915-1956), WWII (**Photo 21**); Robert Edwards Jr. (1929-1996), Korea; David McCray, Jr. (1942-2002), Vietnam; and Arthur Jay Hayes (1958-2006), Desert Storm. The commercially made granite marker for Wilburt Brooks (1898-1958) is also unique in its engraving of a man in scuba gear in an underwater scene. The engraving identifies him as an African American pioneer sponge diver (**Photo 22**). There are a few footstones, such as the marble one for Florence White (1875-1919) (**Photo 23**).

***Handmade Markers***

Locally made markers have a variety of forms though they are usually an upright rectangle or crowned rectangle. Often made from concrete, they are frequently inscribed with the



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birth and death dates, age, and name. Several crowned markers are inscribed with a rose. Examples of handmade markers include those for Bell White (1863-1963) (**Photo 24**) and Wilfred Brooks (d. 1960) (**Photo 25**). A metal bed frame marks the Morris Lofton (1862-1910) grave site (**Photo 26**). A number of simple weathered wooden crosses made from 2x2 wooden sticks still mark the graves of Hannah family members, including that of Rev. Zachariah Hannah of Mt. Hermon Missionary Baptist Church (1907-1991).

***Grave Decoration***

On or beside many graves, family members or friends have left decorative items, such as plastic or fresh flowers; potted plants; crosses; plaster statuary of angels, kneeling children, or praying hands; balloons; candles; snow globes; plaques; or whirligigs. Some graves and family plots have been covered with shredded red wood mulch. On several of these, there are designs (such as a cross, circle, or heart) with small white stones. Conch shells have been placed on several graves, usually on those whose families who were originally from the Bahamas. For examples, there are conch shells on the graves of Willa S. Reese (1868-1948) (**Photo 17**) and Rev. Jacob Benjamin Reece (1858-1950) (**Photo 27**). Following common southern practice, some families planted bushes beside the graves. The most commonly planted are juniper bushes—some of which have grown quite large. However, there are also palm trees (**Photo 28**), rubber plants, and one hibiscus bush (**Photo 29**)—plants suitable to the subtropical environment of central Florida.

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**SUMMARY**

Rose Hill Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History, for its association with racial segregation practices, the development of Tarpon Springs's African American community, and as a site at which community members maintained Southern and African American burial practices. The period of significance ranges from 1904 to 1967. The earliest recorded burial dates to 1904, but it was believed to have been used by black community members to bury their dead since the 1870s. Originally known as Rose Hill, the property was owned by the Lake Butler Villa Company and was located east of the white cemetery, Cycadia. As a result of local and county segregationist policies that sought to bury African Americans separately from other citizens, the Lake Butler Villa Association gave a 99-year lease to the citizens' board that was formed in 1916. In 1917, they deeded the property to the Rose Hill Association. Cultural beliefs from African and southern American traditions are apparent in the east-west orientation of graves, scraping, positioning of couples, chairs and benches, and decorative elements on the graves, such as conch shells and symbols engraved on the markers. Rose Hill Cemetery maintains its historical integrity and has remained in active use by the African American community of Tarpon Springs since its inception. The name Rose Hill Cemetery was changed to Rose Cemetery in 1979, with a change in the managing association.

**HISTORIC CONTEXT**

**Ethnic Heritage and Social History**

*African American Context*

With 12 million Africans forcibly shipped to the Americas, the transatlantic slave trade was the largest forced migration in human history.<sup>2</sup> Although poor in material goods,

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<sup>2</sup> Charlotte King, "Separated by Death and Color: The African American Cemetery of New Philadelphia, Illinois." *Historical Archaeology*, 2010, 44(1):125.

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Africans brought with them extensive knowledge of rich traditional cultures that influenced their new lives. Burial grounds manifest the history and culture of both the departed and the living. In *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*, folklorist John Vlach posited that, “Across rural Afro-America the cemetery is very special. Not only is it the realm of the deceased, but it is also where we find the strongest material demonstration of African-inspired memories.” He also observed that the decorative expression in black cemeteries throughout the South reflects African religious beliefs and aesthetics.<sup>3</sup>

In the early years, funerary expressions may have assumed great importance among African Americans because death was the only guaranteed escape from a life of poverty or enslavement—and sometimes the cemetery was one of only a few arenas in which they could express their identity.<sup>4</sup> Over time, African-based customs and beliefs merged with Christian practices, and often the original reasons for rituals or objects were reinterpreted. General beliefs included the idea that the spirit lingers on earth and must be somehow placated, such as by an extravagant funeral. Some Southern blacks held a ceremonial second burial a few months after death, during which they eulogized the deceased.<sup>5</sup>

African American cemeteries share many characteristics with the burial grounds of other American groups. For instance, as in white cemeteries, the most commonly preserved grave markers in African American cemeteries are vertical and made of stone. After World War II, the memorial park styles in cemeteries have favored the use of flat, horizontal markers made of bronze or stones. In African American cemeteries, the second most common grave marker material is wood. Too often, the names on these markers become illegible, or the marker itself disappeared. Historical accounts sometimes mention wooden posts—probably the remains of a wooden marker, in African American

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<sup>3</sup> John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), p. 139, 147.

<sup>4</sup> King, “Separated by Death and Color,” p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> John Michael Vlach, “Funerary Customs, Black.” In *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*. Ed. By Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 162.

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cemeteries.<sup>6</sup> In addition, many graves were marked by handmade stones or markers or left unmarked. It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that more ornate gravestones became common.

A third type of marker encompasses flowers or trees planted to mark a grave—but without the presence of associated oral traditions it is difficult to discern if cemetery plants mark burials or reflect landscaping. Scholars believe the practice of placing flowers or planting flowering trees and shrubs derives from ancient eastern Mediterranean cultures. While some scholars perceive a correlation to ancient pagan mother deities or to the Virgin Mary, others see a relationship to the concept of rebirth or eternal life through plants arising from or near the grave. In particular, the presence of roses and evergreens is so widespread that myriad cemeteries, such as Rose Hill, bear their names.<sup>7</sup>

Like British Protestant cemeteries, cemeteries in the American South are not necessarily situated in sanctified ground near a church or chapel. This represents a departure from the general western European custom. Moreover, most adhere to the common practice of locating the cemetery on a hill or other elevated place.<sup>8</sup> Certainly, both of these practices are true of Rose Hill Cemetery.

Scraping is a southern folk cemetery practice that rarely occurs outside the Gulf and Atlantic coastal plains, where many African Americans have lived. Scraping involves chopping and hauling away the grass and weeds that grow on the family plots, then raking

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<sup>6</sup> See the online preview of Lynn Rainville, Chapter 3-Accidental Museum/Gravestone Design, pages 2-3 in *Hidden History: African American Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2016).

<https://books.google.com/books?id=mHpHAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT44&lpg=PT44&dq=Rainville,+Lynn++accidental+museum+gravestone+design&source=bl&ots=RLreX8VZw0&sig=t6nMer8PtKZrwBxxuoeOrudUZPI&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiZ5OeI947OAhXG0SYKHluABwQ6AEIHDAA#v=onepage&q=Rainville%20%20Lynn%20%20accidental%20museum%20gravestone%20design&f=false> Accessed July 25, 2016;

and Lynn Rainville, "Gravestone Variability,"

[http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/cem/AACemeteries\\_Gravestone.shtml](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/cem/AACemeteries_Gravestone.shtml), Accessed July 25, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1982), p. 28-30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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the dirt. Many who practice this tradition do so because they believe it looks nice or that allowing grass to grow on a grave would be disrespectful. However, scholars posit an African origin for this practice, since equivalent bare-earth graveyards are found on the West African coast.<sup>9</sup> Jordan noted this practice in Texas cemeteries, and in Louisiana graveyards respected cultural geographer Fred Kniffen found annual “scrapings,” to eliminate grass and leave the ground bare.<sup>10</sup> Jordan also mentions annual days set aside for scraping or grave decoration by men, women and children in Texas. Often they stopped for a mid-day picnic in the cemetery.<sup>11</sup> King also noted that in 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century African American cemeteries, there few attempts made to control vegetation so as not to disturb the spirits.

In the South, African American graves are distinctive in the variety of offerings left on top of the burial mound. Pottery and glass are especially prominent, but other objects include conch shells, oyster and clam shells, cups, saucers, bowls, clocks, bottles, medicine bottles, white pebbles, toys, light bulbs, dolls, statues, flashlights, and much more. In the cemetery, these funeral offerings create a virtual world of the spirits, reflecting the needs and character of the ancestors.<sup>12</sup> Placing personal objects on a grave might also encourage the spirit rest easy and remain in the cemetery.<sup>13</sup> Many believed that containers should be slightly broken on the bottom, but their form maintained. This was intended to break the connection with the family and thus assure that other family members would not die. African antecedents for grave decoration with containers and other objects occur widely in west and central Africa.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 14-16.

<sup>10</sup> Fred Kniffen, “Necrogeography in the United. States,” *Geographical Review*, Vol. 57 (1967), p. 427.

<sup>11</sup> Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>13</sup> Vlach, “Funerary Customs, Black,” p. 162.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 142-43. Also: Jerrilyn McGregory. *Wiregrass Country* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), p. 98; and Charlotte King. “Separated by Death and Color: The African American Cemetery of New Philadelphia, Illinois.” *Historical Archaeology*, 2010, 44(1):127.

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Like grave goods in Africa, many of the grave decorations in African American cemeteries are white and/or are associated with water. In many African religions, the kingdom of the dead was underwater and the color white is associated with the dead. Thus in African American cemeteries, sea shells and mirrors (representing smooth shiny water) are often placed on graves to symbolize an underwater environment. One or more conch shells are sometimes set near the headstone or at the foot of the grave. Clam and oyster shells can frame or cover the burial plot.<sup>15</sup>

Scholars have noted that in most of the American South and in Central Africa, graves are oriented with the feet to the east and the head to the west—reflecting a shared cosmology. Rural Southern Christians interpret this to mean they must be facing east to in order to arise facing Christ on Judgment Day. This is also true in Rose Hill Cemetery.

In Southern graveyards, the male member of the couple is buried to the right or south of the woman. Scholar Terry Jordan encountered this arrangement from 60 to 100% of the time in Texas graveyards among Anglos and blacks, though other groups did not share this practice.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Southern cemeteries often cluster family graves together in a family plot or section—sometimes bounded by fencing or objects. This compartmentalization frequently extends to different sub-sections of larger cemeteries on the basis of race, culture, or sometimes religion.<sup>17</sup>

Through his research into Texas cemeteries, Jordan felt less like an intruder among the dead as he realized that cemeteries were primarily for the living and reflected the customs, beliefs, and social structure of the survivors. He found that “The living, singly and in groups, are frequent visitors....in many Texas cemeteries, lawn chairs for visitors are place alongside some graves.”<sup>18</sup> And he noted that living visitors...“converse with the dead and

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<sup>15</sup> Vlach, “Funerary Customs, Black,” p. 143.

<sup>16</sup> Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

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leave favorite foods for the departed to consume. Life, death, and afterlife converge in the folk culture of the burial ground. The living have every right to be there.”<sup>19</sup>

As business leaders and providers of essential services, African American funeral directors have long played a central social role. Since few white funeral directors would serve their communities, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, African American undertakers created independent businesses that led to economic independence. The first black funeral home was founded in Savannah, Georgia, in 1876. Funeral directors prepared the body, counseled the family, and also oversaw gatherings and the “setting up” or sitting up with the body before burial. Their business leadership and financial freedom were important during the civil rights movement, when funeral homes sometimes served as safe meeting places. In a few instances like the 1955 Montgomery bus boycott, funeral directors provided covert transportation by hearse to demonstrators.

***Pinellas County Context***<sup>20</sup>

Despite the challenges Rose Cemetery faces due to periods of neglect and poor maintenance, this site remains better preserved and more intact than all other historically African American cemeteries from the era of racial segregation along the Pinellas peninsula. By comparison, graves and burial sites at many of the original African American cemeteries in St. Petersburg—Pinellas County’s largest city—were removed, disturbed, and/or placed elsewhere, oftentimes at locations with poor or non-existent records, which make it difficult to locate the exact spot where bodies rest today. Similar challenges face the small cemeteries established for early members of the African American communities in Clearwater and Safety Harbor. Although Rose Cemetery’s condition is far from perfect, it offers the best example of a segregation-era cemetery for

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> This section consists of the essay by historian and archivist James Schnur on “Uncovering the History of African American Cemeteries of Pinellas County: The Importance of Designating Rose Cemetery as a Cultural Heritage Site,” 2016.

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African Americans in Pinellas County that has not faced substantial disruption or outright destruction.

Neighborhoods in the diverse “Midtown” area in southern and south-central St. Petersburg—which include Bartlett Park, Childs Park, Cromwell Heights, Fruitland Heights, Jordan Park, Lake Maggiore Shore, and Thirteenth Street Heights—have many churches of various sizes that serve worshippers who are primarily African American, and these churches maintain well-kept cemeteries on their grounds.

Despite the presence of these African American congregations, in many cases, most if not all of the gravesites at these churches have Caucasians buried within them and, at the time of their establishment, customs and traditions prohibited non-whites from burying their loved ones at these locations. Aside from the Jordan Park neighborhood, restrictive covenants and overt racism prohibited African Americans from moving into the aforementioned neighborhoods or attending the original congregations in these churches until the 1950s or 1960s. For example, the Glen Oak Cemetery located between 26<sup>th</sup> and Auburn streets south, approximately two blocks north of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South, became the first established cemetery in what is present-day St. Petersburg when Miss Emma B. Kimball was buried there in 1874, fourteen years before the Orange Belt Railway arrived. At that time, St. Petersburg, did not even exist. A small church on that site served pioneer residents. Today, only a few headstones remain and the church at the site, St. Jude United Holiness Church, serves a different population. Although this cemetery sits in the heart of Midtown, it has no known African American burials from its earliest years.<sup>21</sup>

The two earliest segregated communities for St. Petersburg during the late nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries were Methodist Town (sometimes known as Jamestown or James Park) and the Gas Plant area (with areas in this tract known also as Pepper Town). Although a handful of older structures, such as the Bethel African

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<sup>21</sup> Pinellas Genealogy Society, and Lesleigh Laite Butts, “Glen Oak Cemetery, St. Petersburg, Pinellas County, Florida,” *Pinellas Genealogical Society Cemetery Index Pages*, accessed 11 May 2016, <<http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/pinellas/cemetery/glenoak.txt>>.



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Methodist Episcopal Church, do exist in Methodist Town, portions of the Gas Plant district have been demolished to make room for Interstates 275 and 75 and later for Tropicana Field. Churches within the Gas Plant area that likely had small cemeteries disappeared by the mid-1980s, and asphalt parking lots covered the former footprint of homes, streets, churches, social areas, and businesses before 1990.

Moffett Cemetery

Prior to 1900, an early cemetery for lower Pinellas residents, Moffett Cemetery, came into use at the western corner of Sixteenth Street South and Fifth Avenue, across the street from present-day Campbell Park and near Tropicana Field. Located adjacent to Evergreen Cemetery and Oaklawn Cemetery, the boundaries of some burial sites became difficult to distinguish as early as the 1920s. By the early 1900s, Moffett Cemetery became the primary burial site for residents of St. Petersburg's African American communities but it was not exclusively black. Whites occupied graves in some other portions of Moffett and the other, adjacent cemeteries. One of the early white merchants in St. Petersburg, S. D. Harris, acquired the cemetery in 1911. Workers from Sumner Marble and Granite Works relocated graves from Moffett to the newly established Lincoln Cemetery beginning in the mid-1920s.<sup>22</sup> Moffett Cemetery served as the first legitimate African American cemetery in the county. Burials continued there until the late 1920s. By one estimate, approximately 450 bodies remained in June 1953, while others believed the site had between 50 and 100 bodies at that time.<sup>23</sup> Deterioration of the remaining white and non-white gravesites at Moffett continued during the mid-1950s. Some of the lands near and along these former cemeteries of Evergreen, Moffett, and Oaklawn became the Royal Court Apartments, which opened in 1950 as housing for non-whites near the Gas Plant. After years of neglect, the original African American gravesites at Moffett had disappeared by the 1960s; 20 years later, the Gas Plant area was levelled. Although there is speculation that forgotten bodies

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<sup>22</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 1 April 1921; *Evening Independent*, 30 January 1939.

<sup>23</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 29 March 1953, 3 June 1953, 7 June 1953, 16 June 1953, 18 June 1953, 23 June 1953; *Evening Independent*, 9 November 1949, 24 November 1949.

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remain under the parking lots and interstate overpasses near Tropicana Field, no tangible evidence of St. Petersburg's earliest cemetery for African Americans remains.<sup>24</sup>

Lincoln Cemetery

As St. Petersburg's boundaries expanded during the land boom of the 1920s, city officials sought to contain the African American community into a couple of segregated residential districts while removing African American cemeteries to locations outside of the city limits. After burials at Moffett came to an end, non-whites in lower Pinellas had two other options: Lincoln Cemetery and Oakhurst Cemetery.

Established in 1926, Lincoln Cemetery occupies land along the eastern side of 58<sup>th</sup> Street South between the Pinellas Trail and Boca Ciega High School (BCHS). Although now part of the City of Gulfport, at the time of its establishment, Lincoln occupied a remote tract of land near some areas prone to flooding across the railroad tracks from all-white Royal Palm Cemetery, now known as Royal Palm Cemetery South. The tracks once sat on the present-day Pinellas Trail right-of-way when it served as the route of the Tampa and Gulf Coast Railway beginning in the mid-1910s. Isolated from St. Petersburg and Gulfport until the construction of BCHS and nearby homes in the 1950s, Lincoln Cemetery offered a remote location for African American residents of St. Petersburg to bury their dead. Many of the original burials were reinterments that came from Moffett Cemetery. During its early years, the grounds of the Lincoln Cemetery remained well-maintained, but owners failed to collect funds that related to perpetual care. By October 1952, the *St. Petersburg Times* documented deplorable conditions at Lincoln when compared to its neighbor, Royal Palm, north of the railroad tracks. Despite a massive cleanup that took place in 1953, debris and waist-high weeds cluttered the site by mid-1964.<sup>25</sup>

During the past half century, Lincoln Cemetery has faced many instances where tall weeds, missing headstones, and exposed gravesites attracted the attention of families with loved

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<sup>24</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 June, 1953, 8 July 1953, 23 July 1957, 29 July 1970.

<sup>25</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 26 October 1952, 3 January 1954; *Evening Independent*, 8 June 1964.

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ones buried there, as well as the press. Recently various parties have taken an interest in maintaining the cemetery, including the Gulfport Historical Society, a white resident of Gulfport, and the St. Petersburg NAACP. Much remains to be done, and despite the noticeable improvements in 2015 and 2016, Lincoln continues to suffer from neglect.<sup>26</sup>

Memorial Colored Cemetery/Oakhurst

A second, and even more remote, cemetery opened in the 1920s at Oakhurst. Also known as “Memorial Cemetery (Colored),” Oakhurst was in unincorporated Pinellas County on lands now known as Garden Sanctuary. The cemetery originally occupied five acres south of 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and west of 131<sup>st</sup> Street, at a time when few residents lived in the area with a handful of farms and large groves. Similar to Lincoln when established, this cemetery was located far away from residential communities. Although few African Americans lived anywhere near Oakhurst Cemetery, the site on a slight hill offered a quiet location for them to bury their dead without any challenges. Few records were kept and many headstones were simple in form.

By the early 1950s, white residential subdivisions sprouted amidst the nearby citrus groves. As developers planned to build additional communities, bulldozers came to Oakhurst in November 1953, and leveled many of the headstones in this cemetery as the new landowners planned to create Oak Hill Cemetery for whites. Gravesites suffered damage, and many in St. Petersburg’s African American community believed that the intent was to destroy Oakhurst entirely, without regard to those buried on the land. By the early 1960s, vandalism at the site on the remaining headstones became so problematic that workers erected a barbed wire fence around the handful of remaining headstones. The lands that comprised the bulk of the former Oakhurst Cemetery—now absorbed as part of the larger Garden Sanctuary funeral home and cemetery site--consists of unmarked graves

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<sup>26</sup> *Evening Independent*, 17 August 1968. Helen J. Simon, “Lincoln Cemetery Gets Love, Still in Limbo,” *Gulfport Gabber*, 22 May 2015, <<http://thegabber.com/lincoln-cemetery-gets-love-still-in-limbo>>; Helen J. Simon, “Finally Help for Lincoln Cemetery?” *Gulfport Gabber*, 6 April 2016, <<http://thegabber.com/finally-help-for-lincoln-cemetery>>.

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and only a few headstones clumped together that may not have the proper bodies buried beneath them.<sup>27</sup>

Clearwater

Similar to the disruptions that occurred to cemeteries serving St. Petersburg's African American population, the small cemeteries originally established for non-whites in Clearwater and Safety Harbor also have suffered from neglect far worse than Rose Hill Cemetery. Clearwater had a segregated African American community in an area known as "North Greenwood" by the early twentieth century. In January 1940, city commissioners in Clearwater passed a resolution that set aside a tract of land in this community near Stevenson's Creek as a cemetery for African Americans and called for a group of trustees to manage the site. The small cemetery began operations shortly thereafter. By 1948, the Pinellas County Board of Public Instruction (now the School Board of Pinellas County) set its sights on acquiring 30 acres adjacent to the cemetery for a new school to serve the African American community. School officials apparently came to an agreement that the "Negro cemetery" would be eliminated without a specific plan of a new cemetery or for moving those already buried.<sup>28</sup>

By the early 1950s, public officials decided to move forward with the construction of the segregated high school at the expense of the small cemetery. In August 1953, hoping to maintain black-only facilities, the city and school board discussed plans to build a "Negro swimming pool" and recreation facilities, the new Pinellas High campus, and move the graves from the 1.5-acre cemetery to another location so high school students could attend classes on the soon-to-be former cemetery site. As construction of the new high school began, negotiations ensued about the best site for another cemetery. Chester B. McMullen Jr. offered a cemetery site in unincorporated Pinellas County along Highland Avenue in the spring of 1954, and city leaders planned to disinter and reinter them at the new site, but

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<sup>27</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 22 June 1966; James Anthony Schnur, *Seminole*. Images of America Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 47.

<sup>28</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 4 January 1940, 9 December 1948; *Evening Independent*, 9 December 1948.

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this plan was scrapped after repeated protests and lawsuits filed by neighboring landowners.<sup>29</sup> By the late summer of 1954, McMullen and Milton Jones located another site in a less developed area east of Dunedin. Once again, protestors opposed the creation of this cemetery, this time largely on the grounds that it might inhibit future development. City officials had little recourse, however, since the site clearly rested outside of city limits. By October 1954, Clearwater's city manager acted on a work order to finish the transfer of bodies to the new site.<sup>30</sup>

Safety Harbor

The African American cemetery in Safety Harbor is an excellent example of how "separate and unequal" resting places for African Americans led to neglected and forgotten burial sites in Pinellas County. Safety Harbor is a city located east of Clearwater. Small unincorporated African American settlements such as "Brooklyn" took shape "on the other side of the tracks" to support the businesses of this city. Lacking a site nearby to bury their departed, the local African American community established a cemetery on a small piece of land once owned by Solomon Smith Coachman, a white landowner and business leader who came to Pinellas in the late 1800s and who served as a forceful advocate of the county's creation. Burials on this land quietly took place by the early twentieth century, with the earliest known burial being that of a man who passed away in 1896. It remains uncertain whether he was buried there at the time or reinterred there. By the 1930s, Coachman lost this land and some of his other holdings to the state for delinquent taxes. Alfred and Louisa Ehle acquired some of Coachman's land and platted a subdivision for much of it except the lot where burials had occurred. In 1951, the Ehles deeded the cemetery to the St. Vincent Helping Hand Society and two years later this lot was transferred by deed to the "Safety Harbor Colored Community." Burials continued, but the site fell into a terrible condition by the 1960s as adjacent lands became a predominantly

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<sup>29</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 4 August 1953, 7 June 1954, 8 September 1954.

<sup>30</sup> *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 August 1954, 8 August 1954, 8 September 1954, 4 October 1954.

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white subdivision. In time, Clearwater annexed the formerly unincorporated land that included this cemetery and the adjacent subdivisions.<sup>31</sup>

As the residential subdivision expanded, the cemetery was all but forgotten by the 1990s. In the mid-1990s, a Pinellas County work crew “discovered” this cemetery while clearing the overgrowth on the land surrounded by ranch homes with manicured lawns. The exact number of burials remains a mystery. During a canvassing of the cemetery site in August 2000, a handful of markers were located. One tombstone had cracked into more than 30 pieces. Although the grounds of the site are better maintained today, very little is known about the history of the Safety Harbor African American Cemetery and its rediscovery has led to more questions than answers.<sup>32</sup>

***Tarpon Springs African American Community Context***

Tarpon Springs is a unique community with a rich heritage which the African American community helped to shape. African Americans first arrived in Tarpon Springs after the Civil War, and many more arrived from other parts of Florida and the South during the 1880s. Tarpon Springs became a winter home to wealthy northerners by the early 1880s. Hamilton Disston, a wealthy manufacturer from Philadelphia, acquired 4,000,000 acres of state land from the Florida Internal Improvement Fund in 1881. Disston formed the Lake Butler Villa Company (Lake Tarpon was then called Lake Butler) and made centrally located Tarpon Springs his base of business operations. In 1887 not only did Tarpon Springs become the first incorporated town in the Pinellas peninsula, but the Orange Belt Railway also arrived, making travel more convenient for the wealthy northerners to whom Disston sold land for winter homes.

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<sup>31</sup> Pinellas Genealogy Society, and Lesleigh Laite Butts, “Safety Harbor African American Cemetery, Clearwater, Pinellas County, Florida,” *Pinellas Genealogical Society Cemetery Index Pages*, accessed 11 May 2016, <<http://files.usgwarchives.net/fl/pinellas/cemetery/safety.txt>>.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

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During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, African American men worked in the lumber mill, citrus groves, livery stables, hotels, and cutting railroad ties. Many of the women worked as housekeepers for wealthy families. As time went by, African Americans also found work in fish houses, sponge harvesting and processing, ship building, construction, the railroad, and government jobs—while others established small businesses or community schools.

Harvesting sponges was an important economic activity in Florida during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1873, Key West turtle fishermen located large untouched sponge beds near the mouth of the Anclote River in Tarpon Springs. The sponge beds stretched over 9,000 square miles. Before 1890, commercial sponging was centered in Key West, the Bahamas, and Cuba, but it accelerated in the Gulf during the late nineteenth century. By 1889, John Cheyney began supplying sponges on a small scale from Tarpon Springs to the U.S. market through the Anclote and Rock Island Sponge Company. During the 1890s, the industry shifted to the Tarpon Springs area, where buying and selling were originally conducted at the mouth of the Anclote River. With the Spanish American War of 1898 raging in Cuba, sponging vessels from Apalachicola came to Tarpon Springs rather than Key West to sell their harvest.

African Americans were particularly important to Tarpon Springs's sponge business. In the early 1890s, African American families arrived from Key West, the Bahamas, and other Caribbean islands to work in the sponge industry. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these early connections continued to attract Bahamian immigration, as did opportunities for migrant workers in the fishing and sawmill businesses. Early documents, such as the ledger of the all-black Odd Fellows Lodge No. 3116, reveal that the most common occupations among black men in the late nineteenth century were sponging and general labor. As the sponge industry expanded during the 1890s, blacks worked across the river at Bailey's Bluff, and especially the Union and Sawyers kraals.<sup>33</sup> Most African Americans hooked or processed sponges, but many also owned boats and eventually some dove for sponges.

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<sup>33</sup> "Kraals" a term as used by sponge divers refers to enclosures made of tall poles side-by-side driven into the ocean floor near the shore. The enclosures held quantities of harvested sponges in the water until the sponge skins have fallen off.

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Beginning in 1905, Greek immigrants significantly grew in numbers and changed the sponge industry. Using deep sea diving rather than hooking techniques and boats with both sails and engines, they quadrupled the number of sponges harvested and soon dominated the industry. The focal point of the industry shifted to today's Dodecanese Avenue, where they created the Sponge Exchange and Sponge Docks. By 1913, as many as half of Tarpon Springs residents were reputedly Greek. They remained the largest population in the city for many decades.

After the arrival of the Greeks, some African Americans retained their own boats while others worked on Greek boats as crew or divers, often learning to speak Greek with a Dodecanese accent and developing lifelong friendships. In the 1930s, the Greeks gradually began to exert greater control over municipal politics. When it came time to raise money to build St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral, African American spongers joined the Greeks in donating a portion of their catch to pay for building supplies—and some also donated their labor.

***Neighborhoods***

Initially, many black Tarpon City residents lived in cabins built to accommodate them in the "Quarters," located east of Patten's sawmill near the Anclote River by today's Alternate Highway 19 bridge. The area gradually expanded south and west to the Fish House neighborhood (a part of what is now the Greektown Historic District), where many black families lived alongside the Greeks.

In the 1890s, the small community of Sponge Harbor (Pointe Alexis) developed at the mouth of the Anclote River, across the river from the Anclote settlement. Many of the boats working out of Bailey's Bluff docked there, and the black sponge men and their families lived in several blocks of houses.



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Some early African American families built homes in the southeast section of town, where they could maintain gardens and farm animals. Known as “Charlestown,” the area was located east of Lemon Street, between South Levis and South Pinellas Avenues near East Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, and is the site of today’s community. Most black families relocated to the Charlestown area after World War II.

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

***Rose Cemetery Context***

Rose Cemetery, historically known as Rose Hill Cemetery, is one of the oldest African American cemeteries in Pinellas County. The earliest recorded burial dates to 1904, but there are strong indications of earlier interments. Some people believe that the property had been used by black community members to bury their loved ones since the 1870s. It was located east of the city cemetery, Cycadia.<sup>34</sup> Originally, Rose Hill Cemetery was considered to be at the rear of Cycadia Cemetery and was contiguous with it. Members of the African American community believe that Jasmine Street, which forms the western edge of Rose Hill, has either paved over graves or that the graves were disturbed in order to build the road.<sup>35</sup>

Rose Hill Cemetery was established as a private entity for the purpose of officially creating a separate black burial ground in accord with the segregationist practices of the era.<sup>36</sup> In

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<sup>34</sup> Denise Roane, “The Rich History of Rose Cemetery and Its Inhabitants,” *Tampa Bay Small Business Examiner*, February 24, 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Milton Smith Interview with Tina Bucuvalas, Tarpon Springs, Florida, March 1, 2016; Rev. William Emerson Interview with Tina Bucuvalas and Christopher Moore, Tarpon Springs, Florida. February 18, 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Although segregation officially ended in the 1960s, lay community historian Annie Dabbs and African American funeral director Robert Young believe that very few African American burials in nearby Cycadia Cemetery took place before about 2000 (Annie Doris Dabbs Interview with Tina Bucuvalas, Tarpon Springs, FL, March 30, 2016; Robert Young Interview with Tina Bucuvalas and Christopher Moore, Clearwater, FL, February 10, 2016).

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1916, the Lake Butler Villa Association, operated by the Disston family and John Cheyney, gave a 99-year lease to a local citizens' board that was formed on November 22, 1916. In 1917, the property was officially deeded to the Rose Hill Association.<sup>37</sup>

In the late 1940s, the Rose Hill Association petitioned the City of Tarpon Springs and the State of Florida for the land surrounding the cemetery to accommodate the increased usage of the site. The state deeded land to the Association in March 1949, and the City of Tarpon Springs followed in February 1953, raising the total cemetery area to about 4.63 acres. With the potential for about 2,000 grave sites, spaces were sold to individuals and families.<sup>38</sup>

Through the 1950s, the Rose Hill Cemetery served other black communities throughout the county. Many difficulties through those years, including destroyed records, haphazard burials, and limited funding, resulted in many unmarked and misplaced graves. By the 1960s and 1970s, care of the graves became inconsistent as family members died or moved away. There was no funding or plan for maintenance, and the cemetery fell into neglect. Although burials continued, dates and details of ownership were not always accurately recorded.<sup>39</sup>

In 1978, attorney Herbert Elliott assisted the African American community in setting up a non-profit organization. In September, 1979, Rose Hill Cemetery became Rose Cemetery Association, Inc. In 1998, the Association received federal non-profit 501c3 status.

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<sup>37</sup> Information about the Association formation comes from a Notice in *The Evening Leader*, a Tarpon Springs newspaper. It states: "Notice is hereby given that the undersigned will on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of December, A.D. 1916, apply to the Honorable O. K. Reaves, Judge of the Circuit Court of the Sixth Judicial Circuit of the State of Florida, for a charter incorporating Rose Hill Cemetery Association of Tarpon Springs, Florida." Although copy of the page was included in a 2011 National Register nomination draft, it did not show a publication date.

<sup>38</sup> Alfred Quarterman, Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Rose Cemetery, 2011, Section 8, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

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Beginning in the early 1990s, the Association made significant improvements. This included organization of clean-up and awareness campaigns, installation of a decorative steel gate and archway with rose-shaped handles at the southern entrance, documenting the Rose Cemetery in the Florida Master Site File, and installing a state historical marker on the site.<sup>40</sup>

In 1999, a survey of cemetery headstones only found approximately 600 marked graves although caretakers were aware of about 1,000 burials. Volunteers recovered the names and dates of burials, and used Pinellas County ground-penetrating radar equipment to find 200 unmarked graves. Cadaver dogs found another 20 unmarked graves. The newly found graves were given stainless steel markers. Polaris Surveying made a map documenting all the grave locations so that no new graves will be dug at existing grave sites.<sup>41</sup> In addition, gravestones were donated to replace some of the temporary markers.

According to local sources, burial practices started changing around the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Previous to that time, few African Americans were taken to local white-owned funeral homes, such as Vinson or Dobies. Instead they were received by black funeral businesses in central Pinellas county. At the same time, Tarpon Springs's city cemetery, Cycadia, saw more African American burials.<sup>42</sup>

Within Pinellas County, African American cemeteries established along the Pinellas peninsula prior to the end of segregation offer a sad tale of neglect and malicious destruction. The original Jim Crow era cemeteries serving the populations of St. Petersburg and Clearwater no longer exist. Replacement cemeteries, such as Lincoln, continue to suffer in 2016. By comparison, Rose Cemetery in Tarpon Springs remains viable and in better condition than its peers. Gravesites have suffered less disruption or destruction. Rose

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<sup>40</sup> Nicole Johnson, "Tending to Those Forgotten," *St. Petersburg Times*, October 2, 2005, accessed December 20, 2016. [http://www.sptimes.com/2005/10/02/Northpinellas/Tending\\_to\\_those\\_forg.shtml](http://www.sptimes.com/2005/10/02/Northpinellas/Tending_to_those_forg.shtml).

<sup>41</sup> Richard Danielson, "Radar Reveals 200 Unmarked Graves," *St. Petersburg Times*, August 5, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Young Interview with Tina Bucuvalas and Christopher Moore, Clearwater, FL, February 10, 2016; Rev. William Emerson Interview.

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FLORIDA**

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Cemetery still occupies its original location, has not moved or disappeared, and continues to have strong support by families with loved ones buried there. Among the municipal cemeteries created for African Americans in Pinellas County, it is the best example of an intact cemetery and is worthy of inclusion on the National Register for the cultural heritage it preserves and maintains by its very existence.<sup>43</sup> Interviews with community members and an African American funeral home director indicate that there were only a few African American burials in the municipal cemetery until approximately 2000. This reflects an extended period of social, though not legal, segregation.

Notable Burials

Significant burials in Rose Hill Cemetery include founders of the local African American churches first established in the 1880s and 1890s, veterans from the Civil War to Desert Storm, and various men and women important in community history:

- One of the most interesting graves is that of Richard “Christopher Columbus” Quarles (1833-1925) (**Photo 19**), a former slave born on a South Carolina plantation. Quarls served in the 7th Regiment of South Carolina's K Company during the Civil War with his master's son and fought several battles against the Union Army. After the war, he changed his name to Christopher Columbus to obscure his Confederate service, and moved Tarpon Springs around 1910 with his second wife and child. Quarls became a respected businessman who owned a horse and carriage service and chicken farm, and reported on African American community events for the local paper. He received a Confederate pension from the State of Florida beginning in 1916, and attended a National Convention of the United Confederate Veterans in Washington, D.C., probably in 1917. Quarls's original headstone disappeared, but in 2003, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy honored him. At a ceremony attended by four

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<sup>43</sup> James Anthony Schnur, “Uncovering the History of African American Cemeteries of Pinellas County: The importance of Designating Rose Cemetery as a Cultural Heritage Site.” Manuscript. 2016.

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FLORIDA**

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generations of his descendants and the Confederate Honor Guard, they installed a new headstone marked by a beveled top edge and the Confederate seal.

- Rev. George Washington Archie II was the minister of Mt. Moriah A.M.E Church. He had attended Howard Academy, which had an architectural curriculum, and he planned the new church that was built in 1896 on the corner of Pine and Eagle Streets (Pinellas).
- In addition to being among the original members of the Rose Hill Association, Mahalia B. Jones (1856-1924) (**Photo 10**) was a respected midwife and charter member of Mr. Mariah A.M.E. Church. Affectionately known as “Aunt Hay,” she and husband Handy Jones came to Tarpon Springs from Cedar Key. Jones was also considered an excellent cook, seamstress, and laundress. The marker is upright granite engraved with her name, birth and death dates, and roses. A ceramic portrait of Jones is above her name.
- Originally from Nassau, Bahamas, Wilfred Brooks (d. 1960) and his wife Mary came to Tarpon Springs after the massive Okeechobee hurricane hit south Florida in 1928, killing three of their children. Brooks captained his own hook boat, the Doris B, worked as a sponge hooker, and made and repaired sails. On the concrete marker, directly behind that of Wilburt Brooks, his name and death date were inscribed by hand (**Photo 24**).
- The granite marker for Wilburt Brooks (1898-1958) (**Photo 22**) is engraved with an unusual underwater scene of a diver with fish and sea plants. The marker states that Brooks was the father of one of the founding families of Tarpon Springs, the first African American to own his own boat, and an African American pioneer sponge diver.
- The grandson of a sponger, Edward Dorsett (1913-1999) worked as a sponger and stringer during his youth. He opened Dorsett Barber Shop at Lincoln Ave. and Harrison St. in the 1940s. Dorsett was instrumental in encouraging the City to establish recreational programs and spaces for the black community prior to desegregation. In the 1960s he worked for civil rights through efforts to desegregate Tarpon Springs High School. In 1984, the City of Tarpon Springs

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FLORIDA**

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honored him for outstanding community leadership by dedicating Ed Dorsett Park on Harrison Street.

- Samuel C. Archie, Sr. (1914-2009) was an auxiliary deputy sheriff and owned a small store and rental properties, but he is best known for his community service. When the Boys Clubs refused to open a branch in his predominantly African American neighborhood, he started the Better Boys' Club to promote good values and citizenship in young men. When he recognized inequalities such as unpaved streets and inadequate facilities, he sued the city for withheld services in African American neighborhoods. His son, David, became the first African American mayor of Tarpon Springs and the first African American mayor in Pinellas County.
- Ruth Lambright (1913-1996) was educated at Union Academy, Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, and did graduate work at Columbia University in New York. She began work as a teacher at Union Academy in 1937, where she became assistant principal, but retired from Sunset Hills Elementary School after education segregation ended in 1964. Lambright also wrote a column for the *Tarpon Springs Leader* for many years.
- Johnnie Mae Woods (1914-2003) was a dedicated educator who established the first day care center serving Tarpon Springs's African American community as well as one of only two private preschools.

Cultural Significance

Tarpon Springs' Rose Hill Cemetery reflects many southern historical and cultural burial practices. For instance, some family plots are scraped with a rake to clear grass (**Photo 6**). Common in the American South, this practice can be traced back to West Africa. Another southern custom of African origin is the decoration of graves with conch shells. In Rose Cemetery, the few graves with conch shells belong to families with Bahamian roots (**Photos 5, 17**). The east-west alignment of graves reflects the Christian belief that the dead must face east when they rise on Judgment Day (all but 2 of the submitted photos have this orientation). Gravesites also consistently place the husband to the right—again

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FLORIDA**

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following Christian tradition (**Photo 14**). The tradition of planting evergreens or other plants near graves is a common cultural symbol of resurrection (**Photos 27-28**).

Doctor Tina Bucuvalas from the City of Tarpon Springs conducted ethnographic research in the community to determine the current integrity of Rose Hill Cemetery's cultural heritage. Christopher Moore, Principal Planner with Pinellas County Planning Department, and Dr. James Schnur of the University of South Florida conducted historical research and oral history interviews. Alan Shellhorn from the Pinellas County Planning Department, prepared the maps. The team's research, as well as that of scholars who conducted past surveys, verifies the tenacity of African American culture in Tarpon Springs, and validates the status of the Rose Hill Cemetery as an important historical and cultural property.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATION D**

Although this property is a cemetery, it derives its primary significance from its connection to the African-American community of Tarpon Springs and Pinellas County. It is the final resting place of a number of prominent members of the community. It also embodies the cultural traditions of the southern historical and cultural burial practices.

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

According to the Pinellas County Property Appraiser;  
Tarpon Springs Official Map Blk 121, Lots 1 and 2 and W 1/2 Of Vac Camelia Ave Lying  
E & Ne'ly of Sd Lot 1 (See S07-27-16).

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

This boundary is historically associated with the Rose Hill Cemetery.

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National Park Service**

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SPRINGS, PINELLAS COUNTY,  
FLORIDA**

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PHOTOGRAPHY LIST

1. Rose Hill Cemetery (Rose Cemetery), Jasmine Avenue, Tarpon Springs
2. Pinellas County, Florida
3. Tina Buculavis
4. August 2016
5. View of the cemetery, looking east
6. Photo #1 of 29

Items 1-4 are the same for the following photographs.

5. Florida State historic marker, adjacent to Jasmine Avenue, looking north
6. Photo #2 of 29

5. Cemetery entrance gate, looking southeast
6. Photo #3 of 29

5. Humphrey burial, most recent, looking northwest
6. Photo #4 of 29

5. Quarterman family grouping, looking west
6. Photo #4 of 29

5. Raked earth, looking northwest
6. Photo #5 of 29

5. Cemetery cleaning and woman with rake, looking northwest
6. Photo #6 of 29

5. Detail photograph of steel marker indicating found burial
6. Photo #7 of 29

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- 5. Detail photograph of Charity Carter memorial
- 6. Photo #8 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Amanda Willis memorial
- 6. Photo #9 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Mahalia Jones memorial
- 6. Photo #10 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Claudye Reese memorial
- 6. Photo #11 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of R.F. Bryant memorial
- 6. Photo #12 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Willie Richardson memorial
- 6. Photo #13 of 29
  
- 5. Abraham and Julia Lambright memorials, looking northwest
- 6. Photo #14 of 29
  
- 5. McCrary family grouping concrete edging, looking southwest
- 6. Photo #15 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Madie Mae Arline memorial
- 6. Photo #16 of 29
  
- 5. Willa Reese and Annie Mae Reese memorials, looking west
- 6. Photo #17 of 29

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- 5. Detail photograph of Amanda Small funeral home marker
- 6. Photo #18 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of J. Richard Quarls, black Confederate soldier
- 6. Photo #19 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Tommy Dorset memorial
- 6. Photo #20 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Eddie Cooper, Jr. memorial
- 6. Photo #21 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Wilbert Brooks memorial, sponge diver carving
- 6. Photo #22 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Florence White memorial
- 6. Photo #23 of 29
  
- 5. Concrete memorials, looking southeast
- 6. Photo #24 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Wilfred Brooks concrete memorial
- 6. Photo #25 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of metal fence remnant at Morris Lofton grave
- 6. Photo #26 of 29
  
- 5. Detail photograph of Rev. Jacob Benjamin Reese memorial with conch shells
- 6. Photo #27 of 29

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_____	_____	_____	_____	

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- 5. Detail photograph of palm tree at Hattie Brown memorial
  - 6. Photo #28 of 29
  
  - 5. Detail photograph of hibiscus bush at family grouping
  - 6. Photo #29 of 29



# Rose Hill Cemetery Photo Site Key

0 Jasmine Ave. Tarpon Springs, Pinellas Co., Florida



## Legend



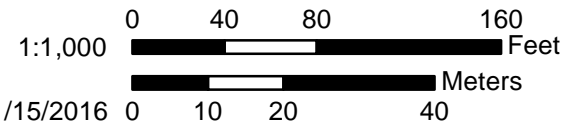
Proposed NR Boundary



Detail Photo



Photo with direction



Date: 11/15/2016

# Rose Hill Cemetery

0 Jasmine Ave.  
Tarpon Springs  
Pinellas Co., Florida

Lat./Long. Coordinates:  
28.148607 -82.734965

UTM:  
17R 329630 3114878

Datum: WGS84

## Legend

 Proposed NR Boundary

Date: 11/15/2016

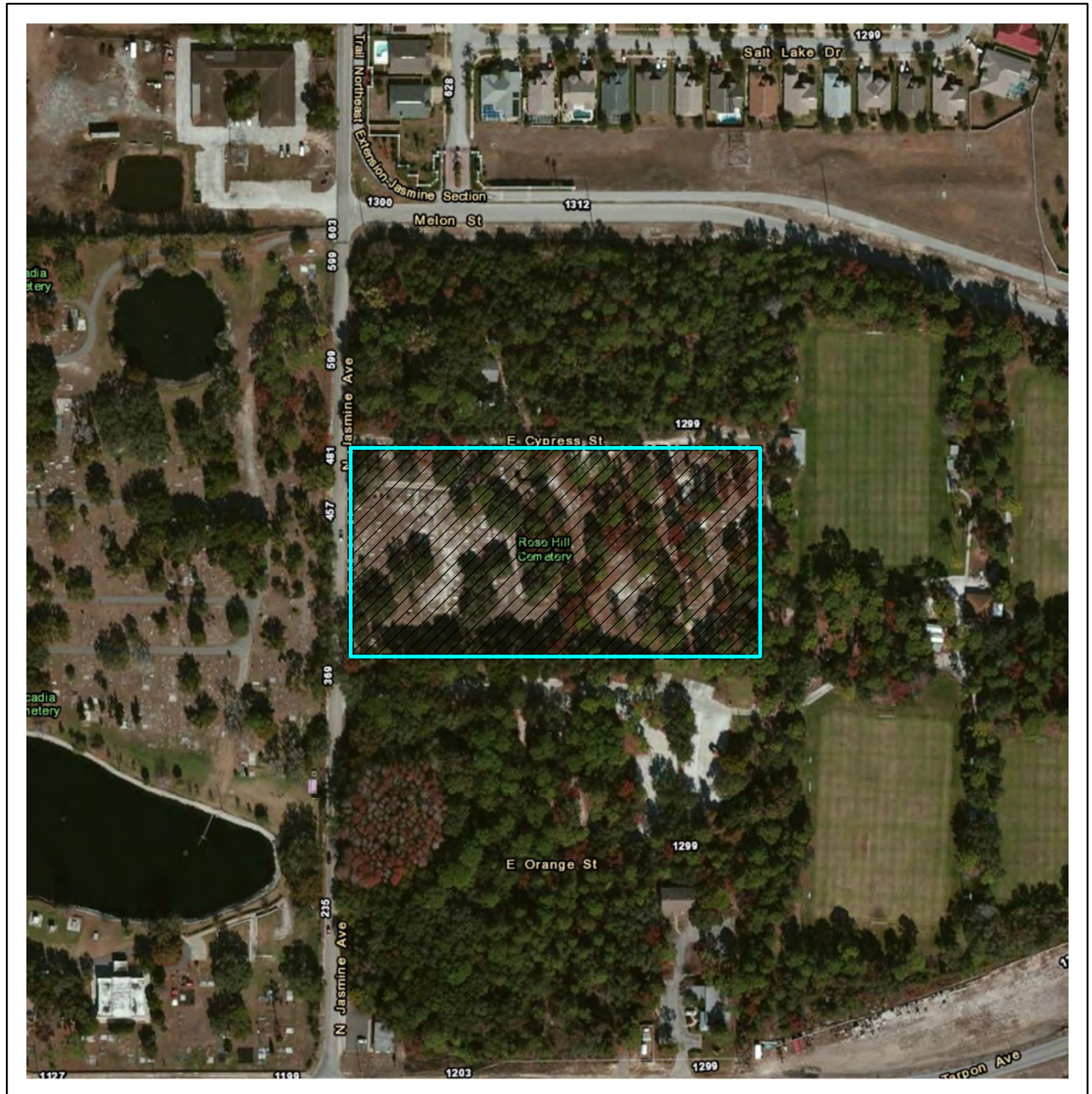
N

1:3,000

0 125 250 500 Feet

0 30 60 120 Meters

Basemap Source: Source: Esri,  
DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar  
Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS,  
USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping,  
Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo,  
and the GIS User Community



# Rose Hill Cemetery

0 Jasmine Ave.  
Tarpon Springs,  
Pinellas Co., Florida


Lat./Long. Coordinates:  
28.148420 -82.735260

UTM:  
17R 329604 3114861

USGS Quad: Elfers

Datum: WGS84

## Legend

 Proposed NR Boundary

Date: 11/15/2016

N



1:12,000

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

0 125 250 500 Meters

Basemap Source: 2013 National  
Geographic Society, i-cubed





  
**ROSE CEMETERY**

Rose Cemetery, also known as Long Hill Cemetery, established African-American burials in a segregated cemetery. It was created in the early 1800s in a segregated cemetery. Located on African-American property in Florida County, Leakea an approximately five miles from the cemetery, reflects the architectural and cultural traditions associated with Christianity and the burial practices of the African-American community. Many of the African-American buried here were of Bahamian descent, and some of their graves are marked by large stone shafts. Although the earliest grave marked dates 1824, there are several indications of earlier burials. Rose Hill Cemetery Association was first incorporated on November 21, 1968. The Rose Hill Cemetery Association was first incorporated on November 21, 1968. The Rose Hill Cemetery Association was first incorporated on November 21, 1968. The Rose Hill Cemetery Association was first incorporated on November 21, 1968.

Florida Department of Cultural Resources  
 1100 North Florida Avenue, Tallahassee, Florida 32304  
 Phone: 904-498-0900







BOBBY LEE  
HUMPHREY, SR  
MAY 11, 1990  
JUNE 13, 2016



QUARTERMAN

*"We Thank GOD Upon Every Remembrance Of You"*  
Philippians 1:3

MICHAEL  
QUARTERMAN JR  
BORN 1944  
DIED 2011

Q

Q

GRAVE MARKER

GRAVE MARKER

GRAVE MARKER

GRAVE MARKER





LOVING MOTHER  
BECCA HARRIS  
1916 - 2010





C  
1  
H  
2

MOTHER

CHARITY CARTER  
BORN MAY 29, 1869  
WRIGHTSVILLE, GA  
DIED SEPT. 19, 1944

WILLIS



AMANDA WILLIS

DIED NOV 25 1922  
AGE 58

GONE BUT NOT  
FORGOTTEN



MAHALIA JONES  
1856 — 1924





REESE

B. & W. S.  
REESE

BORN  
OCT 2, 1897  
DIED  
1984



R. F. BRYANT  
1887 - 1952

*Resting till the Resurrection*

WILLIE RICHARDSON  
NOV. 26, 1874  
1966







FATHER  
ABRAHAM L.  
DEC 24, 1867  
APR. 6, 1943

LAMBRIGHT

MOTHER  
JULIA M.  
MAY 26, 1881  
APR. 2, 1954

JONES





MADIE MAE  
ARLINE  
AUG. 12, 1945  
APR. 1, 1949





WHLA S. REESE  
FEB. 10, 1868  
JAN. 20, 1948  
MOTHER



*Amanda Small.*

Died *December 29*, 19*42*

aged *5*  $\frac{1}{2}$  Years *1* Months *5*

*Timar Pughsley's Funeral Home*  
*Tampa, Florida*





PVT

J RICHARD QUARLS

CO K 7 SC INF

CSA

DEC 21 1833

MAR 1 1925

THE BODY  
RICHARD QUARLS AKA  
CHRISTOPHER  
QUARLES



TOMMY  
DORSETT  
U.S. ARMY  
WORLD WAR I  
FEB 16 1896  
JUN 14 1981



EDDIE  
COOPER JR

FLORIDA

CPL

4255 QM TRUCK CO  
WORLD WAR II

FEBRUARY 11 1915  
SEPTEMBER 29 1956



# WILBURT BROOKS

Father of one of the  
founding Families of Tarpon Springs, FL

African-American  
Pioneer Sponge Diver  
of Tarpon Springs, FL

The first African-American  
to own his sponge boat

1898-1958



BELOVED HUSBAND AND FATHER  
WELL LOVED ALWAYS MISSED

IN MEMORY OF

FLORENCE WHITE

APR. 10, 1875

SEPT. 5, 1919





WILLIAM

BROOKS

1960





REV JACOB  
BENJAMIN REECE  
MAY 11 1858  
JUNE 1 1950

The gravestone is a light-colored marble with a decorative arched top. It is mounted on a rectangular base. The inscription is enclosed in a simple rectangular border. The stone is situated in a cemetery with other graves visible in the background, including a white headstone to the left. The surrounding area is overgrown with grass and weeds.









UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received:  Date of Pending List:  Date of 16th Day:  Date of 45th Day:  Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept  Return  Reject  Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria:

Reviewer Jim Gabbert Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2275 Date \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.



Heather M. Urwiller, AICP  
Director

*City of Tarpon Springs, Florida*

Planning and Zoning Department

324 E Pine Street

Tarpon Springs FL 34689

(727) 942-5611

FAX (727) 937-1137

August 2, 2016

Alfred Quarterman  
7704 Greybirch Terrace  
New Port Richey, FL 34668

RE: **Certificate of Approval – 0 Jasmine Avenue  
Application #16-76**

Dear Mr. Quarterman:

This letter serves to inform you that the City of Tarpon Springs Heritage Preservation Board at the August 1, 2016 meeting, reviewed and granted its support for the application to designate of the Rose Hill Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places. The Heritage Preservation Board recommends to the City of Tarpon Springs Board of Commissioners that the Rose Hill Cemetery be designated as a local historic site.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office.

Respectfully,

Heather Urwiller  
Director

Cc: File #16-76



# City of Tarpon Springs, Florida

324 EAST PINE STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 5004  
TARPON SPRINGS, FLORIDA 34688-5004  
(727) 938-3711  
FAX (727) 937-8199

OFFICE OF  
MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

August 16, 2016

Florida Division of Historical Resources  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 S. Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

RE: Nomination of the Rose Hill Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear State Historic Preservation Officer,

The City of Tarpon Springs is a Certified Local Government. As such, the City committed to an ongoing effort to preserve and protect its historical resources and cultural heritage. To that end, I, as Mayor of the City of Tarpon Springs, and on behalf of the City Commission and our citizens, enthusiastically support the nomination of the Rose Hill Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Rose Hill Cemetery is a significant historic cemetery that preserves a strong African American ethnic character. The cemetery has remained in constant use into the present and consists of more than 1000 grave plots. Rose Hill Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History, for its association with racial segregation practices, the development of the Tarpon Springs' African American community, and as a site at which community members maintain southern and African American burial practices.

The City of Tarpon Springs Heritage Preservation Board approved the nomination at their August 1, 2016 regular meeting and made a recommendation to the Mayor and City Commission to support the nomination application. On August 16, 2016, the Mayor and the Board of Commissioners reviewed and approved the nomination of Rose Hill Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact the City's Planning and Zoning Department at (727)-942-5611.

Respectfully,

Chris Alahouzos, Mayor

MAILED  
AUG 22 AM 11:11



**KAREN WILLIAMS SEEL**  
COMMISSIONER

# PINELLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

PHONE (727) 464-3278 • FAX (727) 464-3022 • 315 COURT STREET • CLEARWATER, FLORIDA 33756  
www.pinellascounty.org

September 13, 2016

Dr. Timothy Parsons, Director  
Florida Division of Historical Resources  
R.A. Gray Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
500 S. Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

RE: Rose Hill Cemetery Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places

Dear Dr. Parsons,

As a Certified Local Government, Pinellas County is committed to an ongoing effort to preserve and protect historical resources and cultural heritage throughout the County. As such, as Chair of the Pinellas County Historic Preservation Board, and on behalf of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, I whole-heartedly support the nomination of the Rose Hill Cemetery to the National Register of Historic Places.

As indicated on the Registration Form, Rose Hill Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for "local significance under Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History, for its association with racial segregation practices, the development of the Tarpon Springs' African American community, and as a site at which community members maintain southern and African American burial practices." Further, the Rose Hill Cemetery is also noted for having over 1,000 grave plots and serves as the best example of a segregation-era cemetery for African Americans in Pinellas County that has not been disrupted or outright destroyed.

The City of Tarpon Springs' Heritage Preservation Board, Mayor and City Commission have approved the nomination. Pinellas County is supportive of this effort and hopes this important historical resource receives the recognition we believe it deserves. If you have any questions or need further information, please feel free to contact the County's Planning Department at (727)-464-8219.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Williams Seel".

Karen Williams Seel  
Pinellas County Commissioner  
Chair, Pinellas County Historic Preservation Board

2016 SEP 14 11:10



**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE**



**RICK SCOTT**  
Governor

**KEN DETZNER**  
Secretary of State

January 19, 2017

J. Paul Loether, Deputy Keeper and Chief,  
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs  
Department of the Interior  
1201 Eye Street, N.W., 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for **Rose Hill Cemetery (FMSF#: 8PI11168), in Pinellas County**, to the National Register of Historic Places. The related materials (digital images, maps, and site plan) are included.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 245-6364 if you have any questions or require any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruben A. Acosta".

Ruben A. Acosta  
Supervisor, Survey & Registration  
Bureau of Historic Preservation

RAA/raa

Enclosures

**Division of Historical Resources**  
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) • FLHeritage.com

