



Reflections

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WHERE HISTORY MEETS TECHNOLOGY: ATLANTA CEMETERIES IMPLEMENT “AFRICAN AMERICAN VOICES” TOURS

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Oakland Cemetery was founded in 1850 on hilly terrain in what is today southeast Atlanta. The cemetery is the final resting place for some of Atlanta’s earliest residents, including mayors, other public officials and clergymen. A brick wall surrounding the cemetery was built in 1896, and inside its grounds lie miles of brick streets and walkways lined by magnolia and chestnut trees. Oakland Cemetery has distinct sections for Confederate, Jewish, paupers and black interments.

In 1852, the black section of the cemetery was established by the City Council on sloping ground in a small section of the original six acres in the northeast part of the cemetery. By the onset of the Civil War, 860 blacks were buried in the black section at Oakland Cemetery. When the City of Atlanta purchased the remaining land totaling 48 acres, black graves were moved to the newer section, while separate from other races. Little is known about the black burials prior to Emancipation. African Americans interred during Reconstruction and the latter part of the 19th century represent the full gamut of Atlanta’s black middle class. They include artisans, citizens, clergymen, educators, statesmen and businessmen.

Oakland Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 28, 1976. The cemetery is owned by the City of Atlanta and managed

by the Bureau of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. Historic Oakland Foundation is the nonprofit organization that educates visitors about the people who are buried in the cemetery, administers preservation initiatives, and sponsors public programs. Following the disastrous tornado that hit the cemetery and surrounding neighborhoods in March 2008, Historic Oakland Foundation (HOF) received a \$30,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for damages that were not reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Additional support came from a Save America’s Treasures grant. The \$200,000 provided funds to restore and preserve up to 55 mausoleums that were damaged. In December 2009, HOF received a \$15,000 Partnership-in-Scholarship grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The Partnership-in-Scholarship grant program is a component of the National Trust’s African American Places Initiative and is supported by the Ford Foundation. These grants provide financial support for collaborations involving a nonprofit organization and a university or college that aid the interpretation of an African American historic site and raise awareness of their importance in American history. Four projects nationwide were awarded grants totaling \$60,000, and this collaboration was the Georgia winner.



Antoine Graves Sr. is buried in the sole mausoleum in the African American Burial Ground at Oakland Cemetery. Eight family members are interred here. Graves was a principal at the Houston Street School and was a successful real estate broker.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

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WHERE HISTORY MEETS TECHNOLOGY: ATLANTA CEMETERIES IMPLEMENT “AFRICAN AMERICAN VOICES” TOURS

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Historic Oakland Foundation partnered with scholars from Kennesaw State University (KSU) to develop “*African American Voices*”, an exhibition, cell phone tour, and public preservation



Drs. Jennifer Dickey and Catherine Lewis are public historians from Kennesaw State University who collaborated with Historic Oakland Foundation to develop the cell phone tour, exhibit and public programs.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

program. The project team members were: Drs. Catherine Lewis and Jennifer Dickey, public historians from KSU, and Dr. D.L. Henderson, project director and Oakland Foundation board member. D.L. Henderson is currently a board member of Historic South-View Preservation Foundation, too. The project enhanced interpretive efforts and linked the African American burial site at Oakland to South-View Cemetery, Atlanta’s post-Reconstruction cemetery established by and for blacks in 1886 as “a cemetery of their own.”

The exhibition consists of four outdoor panels that focus on African Americans interred at Oakland and South-View. These were: *Geography of Race*, a panel that describes slavery and Jim Crow practices that shaped the landscape of Oakland Cemetery;



Outdoor panels provide comprehensive information at four stops along the cell phone tour routes at Oakland and South-View Cemeteries. Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Slave Square, a description of Oakland’s African American interments from 1853-1865; *African American Burial Ground*, the black section that opened in 1866; and, *Historic South-View*, a panel that describes the origin and history of the cemetery that was founded by six former slaves resulting in Atlanta’s first African American cemetery.

Cell phone tours were implemented at Oakland and South-View that provide audio summaries of the lives and accomplishments of the African Americans who are buried there. The heritage tourist simply stops by the visitors’ center at Oakland to pick up a rack card with the dial-up access phone number and the corresponding site map. Each stop also includes the phone number and the signage is unobtrusive so that the visitor can clearly view the gravesite and hear the audio presentation that is pertinent to that site. Normal minutes apply to the cell phone user as they tour the stops. Here are some of the persons interred in the *African American Burial Ground* at Oakland Cemetery:

Jacob McKinley, who was born enslaved in North Carolina, became a successful businessman in Atlanta. He employed 150 workers of both races at his brickyard, wood/coal business, and grocery store, and was one of Atlanta’s wealthiest African Americans. McKinley was one of the founders of South-View Cemetery.



Jacob McKinley’s gravestone is a single granite pedestal. The gravesite has a marble step engraved with his surname.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

Augustus Thompson owned a blacksmith shop in downtown Atlanta. He organized the St. James Lodge, the first African American lodge in the city. Thompson was an Odd Fellow, a fraternal organization that provided financial assistance with burials.

Bishop Wesley John Gaines wanted to preach from an early age, and was the second pastor of Big Bethel A.M.E. Church, founded in 1847. He founded a school in the basement of Big Bethel in 1881 that would become Morris Brown College.

Carrie Steele Logan was born enslaved and was orphaned as a child. When she



Dr. D.L. Henderson is an independent scholar who was the “African American Voices” project director. Henderson educates the focus group about Augustus Thompson and the significance of the anvil and the Odd Fellows symbol on his gravestone at Oakland Cemetery.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque



Bishop Wesley John Gaines' gravesite is planted with rosemary, a Victorian symbol of remembrance. He was a leader in the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

was freed, she began working as a maid at Union Station where she often saw abandoned children. In 1886, she began to take these children home at night, and began fundraising for a larger facility. Though she died in 1900, the Carrie Steele-Pitts Home, Georgia's first African American orphanage, still operates today. Carrie Steele Logan was inducted into Georgia Women of Achievement for her humanitarian contributions to women's history in the state.



Carrie Steele Logan's grave bears an inscription that reads "mother of orphans, she has done what she could." She founded the first orphanage in Georgia for African American children.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

William Finch was born enslaved in Wilkes County, and, at the age of 15, was an apprentice to a tailor. He opened a tailor shop in Atlanta, and became active in Atlanta politics. He and George Graham, a South-View Cemetery founder, were the first African Americans to serve on the Atlanta City Council in 1870. While a councilman, he fought for public schools and universal education.

The project team formed focus groups that provided input on the inaugural cell phone tour and the exhibition panels. Additionally, they hosted launch parties and volunteer workdays at the cemeteries. A subsequent *Reflections* article will explore the stops on the cell phone tour at South-View Cemetery, where African American Atlantans have been interred for 125 years. Visit these historic



The gravestone of William Finch is an open archway that represents the soul's passage from earth into heaven.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

cemeteries and learn more through your cell phone about African Americans who shaped the history of Atlanta. ■

THE GATE CITY AS A HUB FOR MEDICAL SERVICES: HEALTHCARE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN ATLANTA

Joy Melton, MHP

Atlanta was a hub for medical services, education and facilities for African Americans in Georgia in the 19th and 20th centuries. This article is the last of three consecutive *Reflections* articles about healthcare for African Americans in Georgia. Several prominent physicians, hospitals and schools emerged in Atlanta to serve, educate and make a positive impact on African American communities in spite of obstacles imposed in the segregated south.



Dr. Roderick Badger is buried at Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta.

Photo by Jeanne Cyriaque

As early as 1859, Dr. Roderick D. Badger (1834-1890) was practicing dentistry in Atlanta as the first African American dentist. Badger was the son of an enslaved mother and a white dentist in DeKalb County. Roderick Badger learned dentistry from J.D. Badger, his father and owner. In a December 1864 account to Governor Joseph Brown, Roderick and his brother Bob Badger are mentioned. They were assistant professors who were educating African American students at a local black church in the aftermath of the Civil War. Roderick became so popular among whites and blacks that white dentists



Gate City Drugstore, heralded as the first Negro drugstore in Georgia, was located on the corner of Auburn Avenue and Bell Street in the Odd Fellows building. The complex also housed the Colored Auditorium, Masonic Lodge and other businesses. The Odd Fellows Building and Auditorium were listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 2, 1975. Image courtesy of the Atlanta Time Machine

THE GATE CITY AS A HUB FOR MEDICAL SERVICES: HEALTHCARE FOR AFRICAN AMERICANS IN ATLANTA

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petitioned the City Council against black professional and business competition. The city took no resulting action against Badger, and he continued to serve Atlantans in his practice until his death in 1890. His office was located downtown on Peachtree Street where Woodruff Park is today.

Henry Rutherford Butler M.D. (1862/64-1931), Thomas Heathe Slater M.D. (1865-1952), and Moses Amos, Pharmacist (1866-1928) were among the leading healthcare professionals in Atlanta in the late 19th and early 20th century. They all were associated with the Gate City Drug Store, the first drugstore in Georgia issued a pharmacy license that was owned and operated by blacks. The pharmacy was located on the corner of Auburn Avenue and Bell Street in the Odd Fellows Building. The Odd Fellows Building is a brick, multi-story, Gothic Revival or Jacobean Revival style commercial building that is embellished with terracotta details. It was designed by William A. Edwards and erected by Robert E. Pharrow in 1912. Dr. Butler was influential in matters both within and outside of the medical field, serving as Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons and contributing writer for the *Atlanta Inquirer* and the *Atlanta Constitution*. Dr. Slater, whose medical career spanned over 40 years, paved the way for young African American physicians as superintendent of the Douglass Hospital that was open to more than 55 black physicians. Both Dr. Butler and Dr. Slater were founders of the Atlanta Medical Association and the National Medical Association.



Moses Amos, the first African American pharmacist licensed in the state of Georgia, invited the all-white licensing board to the Gate City Drugstore's grand opening. Amos apprenticed under a white pharmacist who later sent him to pharmacy school.

Image courtesy of Auburn Avenue

Moses Amos, the first African American licensed pharmacist in Georgia, served as the Gate City Drug Store manager and later gained full ownership of the drugstore. His nephew, Miles G. Amos (1898-1995) also was a pharmacist and owner of the Amos Drug Store in Atlanta for over 40 years. Miles Amos was one of the first African Americans to win an Atlanta City Council seat. Clayton R. Yates and Lorimer D. Milton purchased the Gate City Drug Store on Auburn Avenue in 1922 and renamed it the Yates and Milton Drugstore. Several chains of the Yates and Milton Drug Store were in operation in Atlanta until the 1970s. The Apex Museum, located on Auburn Avenue in Atlanta, contains



Dr. Eliza Ann Grier made her mark in Atlanta as the first African American female physician licensed by the State of Georgia. Image courtesy of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Milwaukee Journal described Eliza as "bright and intelligent and very popular with the people of her race." The *New York Times* noted keen interest in her medical practice. In 1898, the *North American Medical Review* stated Grier was "found to be thoroughly informed in her profession". Grier's desire to enter the field of obstetrics was influenced by seeing black women assist in childbirth while white doctors simply observed and collected all the fees. "For this purpose I have qualified," Eliza earnestly stated to the medical licensing board. Some white doctors in Atlanta welcomed Eliza into the profession. Unfortunately, Grier's medical career was brief, ending in 1901 when she fell ill from influenza. Nevertheless, Eliza

Grier made a significant contribution to the medical profession for African American women in Georgia.

In 1900, Dr. Georgia Rooks Dwelle was the first Spelman College graduate to attend medical school. After graduating from Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, she established the Dwelle Infirmary, also known as the Dwelle Sanitarium in 1920, that was then located on North Boulevard in Atlanta. To improve child health Dr. Dwelle held meetings for the Mothers Club Workers in connection



Dr. Georgia Rooks Dwelle

Image courtesy of the U.S. National Library of Medicine

with her well babies' clinic. Dr. Dwelle was an advocate for disease prevention and was appointed Vice-President of the National Medical Association. After the Dwelle Infirmary closed its doors on April 30, 1949, the Beaumont School of Vocational Nursing, a nationally recognized program, used the facility that no longer remains. Dr. Dwelle remained active in the community and wrote that the practice of medicine offered "an excellent opportunity to live the only worthwhile life, 'the life of Service'." Dr. Dwelle died in 1977.

Medical education for minorities played a significant role in Atlanta, particularly within the Atlanta University Center. By the early 20th century, Atlanta had become a hub for training black nurses and other healthcare professionals in Georgia at the Fair Haven Infirmary, the Gate City Drug Store, MacVicar Hospital, and Spelman Seminary. Beginning in 1886, Spelman Seminary (today known as Spelman College) is credited as starting the first nursing school for African Americans in the U.S. MacVicar Hospital, also known as McVicar, opened its doors to the public as a 30-bed hospital and training school on Spelman's campus in 1900. It was a training facility for Spelman College's nursing students.



In 1896 the brick, Italianate style MacVicar Hospital became a training ground for Spelman's nursing students. Although the nursing program closed in 1928, the hospital was subsequently used as an infirmary for the Atlanta University Center. The building was renovated in the late 1990s and is currently the Health Services Center for Spelman College.

Photo by Joy Melton

Mrs. Ludie Clay Andrews (1875-1969), public health and race relations advocate, served as the superintendent of MacVicar Hospital for 15 years. Andrews organized the Lula Grove Hospital and Training School for Colored Nurses in 1906. "As parents became interested I saw something happen to our people", Mrs. Andrews observed as she reflected on her resolve for disease prevention. She later served as the first superintendent of the Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses at Grady Hospital from 1914-1920.

Atlanta's Fair Haven Infirmary, later known as Mercer Hospital, opened in 1908-09 as an adjunct to Morris Brown College. A group of black physicians opened this 12-bed facility with an operating room. They were: Dr. Thomas Heathe Slater, superintendent; Dr. H.R. Butler, secretary-treasurer; Dr. L.B. Palmer, Dr. L.P. Walton, Dr. W.F. Penn, Dr. A.D. Jones, and Miss Rosa Harris, head nurse. Another facility opened in 1916 as the Morris Brown College School of Nursing to encourage nurse training. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that the benefit of this hospital would be twofold: providing more thorough training for colored nurses and decreasing the spread of disease along racial and social lines. When the new building was destroyed by fire in 1917, citizens of Atlanta raised finances to help rebuild the structure.

Morehouse School of Medicine was established in 1975 as the first 20th century medical school for minorities in the United States. Louis Sullivan, a 1954 Morehouse College graduate, was the founding dean of the medical education program at the Morehouse School of Medicine. Sullivan served as secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1989 to 1993 before returning to Morehouse School of Medicine to serve another term as dean from 1993 to 2002.



Holy Family Hospital was erected in 1962 and was renamed Southwest Community Hospital in 1975. This hospital that is presently vacant represents one of the last major efforts to improve health facilities for African Americans in Atlanta during segregation. Photo by Joy Melton

Holy Family Hospital was erected in 1962 several years after the Medical Mission Sisters of the Catholic Church had a vision in 1948 to build a facility for African Americans due to a shortage of hospital beds for blacks in Atlanta. Sister M. Theophane, Administrator of the Holy Family Hospital Building Program conducted a large campaign, raising well over one million for the project. The project was a joint effort between blacks and whites raising private funds as well as federal funds provided by the Hill-Burton Act. Aeck Associates designed the hospital and Beer Construction Company erected the hospital on a 60-acre site west of Fairburn Road and Sewell Road (now Benjamin E. Mays Dr.) in Southwest Atlanta. The *Atlanta Daily World* reported in 1962 that Holy Family Hospital was "designed to become Atlanta's first completely integrated medical facility" in that it would include a medical school, teaching staff, a chapel, facilities for surgery, pediatrics, obstetrics, orthopedics, an out-patient clinic and 128 beds. Although some amenities had to be compromised, the building was constructed debt free at a little more than half the original cost. The hospital was renamed Southwest Community Hospital in 1975 and opened a \$900,000 intensive care unit in 1984 that was paid in full. The hospital closed its doors on January 16, 2009 after over forty years of service. ■

THE LEGACY OF GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Joy Melton, MHP

Grady Memorial Hospital was one of the few hospitals established in Georgia during the 19th century where both rich and poor, whites and blacks, could go for medical attention. The Atlanta City Council named the hospital in honor of Henry W. Grady, former editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*. The original brick, Italianate style building with Romanesque influence was designed by architect Eugene Gardner and was built from 1890-1892. It contained several wards including about 50 beds for whites and 50 for blacks. On October 17, 1903 the male and female Negro wards that were wood frame rather than brick construction were destroyed by fire. In 1910 a new building was erected for the white patients and black patients remained in the original building.



Human Resources presently occupies the Romanesque style Georgia Hall, a portion of Grady Hospital's original building. Photo by Joy Melton

By 1915, the former Atlanta Medical College complex located across Butler Street became Emory University School of Medicine and the City of Atlanta converted the buildings into a hospital for African American patients in 1917. The basement of the black hospital contained a large classroom, autopsy room, laboratories, and the medical school library and offices. The original Grady Hospital campus became known as the “white hospital” and the



The 1917 J.J. Gray building is one of the few remaining buildings from the Emory Division of Grady Hospital for African American patients. Today, it is known as the Woodruff Memorial Research Extension. Photo by Joy Melton

other hospital across Butler Street (now Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive) was the “colored hospital.” Collectively, the buildings became known as the “the Gradys.”

A new, Neo-Classical style building named the J.J. Gray Clinic was built in 1917. J.J. Gray from Tennessee donated funds for outpatient and emergency services for African American patients. Architectural features at the entrance include a recessed roman arch porch topped with four pilasters. A Works Progress Administration rear addition was built in 1936. In 1965, the same year that Grady Hospital was integrated, the building was converted into the Henry Woodruff Memorial Research Building for Emory University faculty. The Gray Building and the former Atlanta Medical College complex were officially named The Emory Division of Grady Hospital. Here nurses, both white and black, received clinical training in the former colored hospital.



Ludie Clay Andrews sued the Georgia State Board of Examiners in 1909 to become licensed. In 1920, Andrews became the first African American registered nurse in Georgia. Her portrait hangs in the MacVicar Building on the campus of Spelman College.

The Grady Hospital School for Nurses was established for white students in 1898 and the Municipal Training School for Colored Nurses was established in 1917. Ludie Andrews, Georgia’s first black registered nurse, was the director of the school for black nurses from 1914-1922. Andrews made it possible for African Americans to become registered nurses through a court battle with the state of Georgia. Interestingly, while black nurses could be employed at the black division of the hospital, black physicians were restricted from practice. One black physician stated, “We envy the nurses, they at least get a chance – we have none.” Such restrictions led to the establishment of other medical clinics and hospitals in Atlanta. In 1975, the Morehouse School of Medicine was established to address the shortage of physicians in minority communities and to assume responsibility for patient care, education, and research at Grady.

THE LEGACY OF GRADY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL



Today, the Grady Hospital complex is a public hospital that serves residents of all races who reside in Atlanta and Fulton County. Photo by Joy Melton

Since some private African American patients were ineligible for admission to Grady Hospital due to income, the Hughes Spalding Pavilion of Grady Memorial Hospital was dedicated in 1952. This over 100-bed, \$2,000,000 hospital was built for African American patients whose income was too great to qualify them for admission into the Emory Division of Grady. The building was named for Hughes Spalding, a white attorney who served as chairman of the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority. In 1958, a new 21-story International style building designed by Abreu and Robeson was opened on Butler Street with 1,100 beds, 17 operating rooms, 12 x-ray rooms and a chapel for \$26,000,000. This H shaped plan building continued to operate on a segregated basis with half of the building used for whites and half for blacks.

In the 1990s several architectural firms participated in a \$298 million renovation of the hospital. Dr. Asa G. Yancey, chief of surgery, became the medical director at the Hughes Spalding Pavilion in 1958 and created an accredited program for surgical residents at Hughes Spalding. In 1965, Dr. Roy C. Bell, a black dentist, filed a lawsuit in Federal Court to integrate the medical staff and patients. After desegregation, fewer black patients used the Hughes Spalding Pavilion since they could receive service at any Atlanta hospital and white doctors could no longer service their black patients at separate facilities from white patients. The pavilion became the pediatric wing of Grady Hospital in 1990-1992 and later housed Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. The building was demolished in 2010 to build a new structure to better meet the needs of children.



Dr. Asa G. Yancey established the first accredited training program in surgery for African Americans in Alabama and Georgia. Source: African American Yancey Genealogy



Piedmont Hall is currently used by the Morehouse School of Medicine for classrooms and a clinic. Photo by Joy Melton

There are two buildings formerly used as nurse's homes that remain on the former black side of the Grady Hospital campus. The first nurse's home was built in 1946 with \$400,000 in federal funds provided from the Lanham Act. This building helped continue the nursing program threatened by inadequate housing and poor facilities. Robert & Company was the architecture firm employed to design the building to include an auditorium, laboratory, classrooms, and living quarters. The International style nurse's building was erected in 1961 at the corner of Armstrong Street and Piedmont Avenue. Both buildings have recently undergone rehabilitation. Today Grady Memorial Hospital continues its initial mission to serve all people regardless of race or status in the Atlanta area. ■



The International style Armstrong Hall, constructed in 1961, is currently being renovated. Photo by Joy Melton



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ABOUT GAAHPN



Georgia African American
Historic Preservation Network

The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and built diversity of Georgia's African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia's history. The GAAHPN Steering Committee plans and implements ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 3,000 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, *Reflections*, produced by the Network. Visit the Historic Preservation Division website at www.gashpo.org. Preservation information and previous issues of *Reflections* are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

Reflections

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