

Eastern Lights Cemetery

Pennsylvania African American Preservation Plan Project

January 2024 | Report Number: EQ237123

Prepared for:

Preservation Pennsylvania
1230 N 3rd Street, Suite 1
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17102



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Eastern Lights Cemetery Preservation Plan
City of Altoona
Blair County, Pennsylvania

Prepared for
Preservation Pennsylvania
1230 N 3rd Street, Suite 1
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Executive Summary

Terracon Consultants Inc. (Terracon), of Jacksonville, Florida conducted a general site conditions assessment of Eastern Lights Cemetery in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The objectives of this project were to create a baseline Preservation Plan, to include recommendations for continued marker stabilization and future preservation activities. All work was intended to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) as implemented by 36 CFR 800 (Protection of Historic Properties), Pennsylvania History Code. All work also conformed to the professional guidelines set forth in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (48 FR 4416). Planning methods complied with the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission's Bureau for Historic Preservation's *Guidance for Historic Preservation Planning*.

The Eastern Lights Cemetery Preservation Plan introduction looks at the initiation of the Preservation Plan and provides a context for how the plan began.

Harriet Gaston from Penn State, Altoona, and Andraé M. Holsey from the NAACP (Branch #2252) serve as the current stewards of the cemetery and spokespeople. Terracon historic preservation staff met with the stewards on October 4, 2023, for a site visit to learn about the goals and successes of Eastern Light thus far. These goals are incorporated here in, as well as an outline of preliminary plan elements.

Acknowledgements

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Terracon is extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with Preservation PA and PAHG to provide planning assistance for Eastern Lights Cemetery in Altoona, PA. We would like to thank Harriet Gaston and André M. Holsey for their continued efforts to preserve this significant cultural resource.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction	7
Methodology.....	9
Background Research	9
Field Investigation.....	9
Inclusion in Inventories.....	9
Cemetery History	11
Evolution of Cemeteries	11
Brief History of African American Cemeteries in Pennsylvania	11
Eastern Lights Cemetery in Context.....	12
Significant People & Families	16
Physical Description.....	17
Built Environment	18
Grave Marker Types & Materials	18
General Cemetery Information.....	21
Local Setting	21
Zoning & Future Land Use	21
City/County Plans, Ordinances, Resolutions, Etc.	21
State Statutes	21
Documentation	22
Infrastructure.....	22
Security.....	22
Development.....	22
Disaster Preparedness & Resiliency	22

Cultural Landscape Information	23
Past Survey Efforts.....	23
Overall Assessment and Preservation Concerns	23
Natural Environment	24
Iconography of Existing Markers	27
Management & Operations	28
Cemetery Funding and Existing Maintenance.....	28
Markers & Monument Preservation	28
Recommendations & Implementation	30
Establish Cemetery Ownership	30
Improve Documentation	31
Coordinate with the City of Altoona.....	31
Provide Better Information Management	31
Implement Operations/Maintenance & Preservation Plans	31
Evaluate Funding	32
Implement Wayfinding System	32
Ground Penetrating Radar Survey	32
Security.....	32
Protect Landscaping, Tree Canopy, & the Environment	33
Create Programming & Outreach	34
Additional Resources	36
Bibliography	37
Appendices	38

List of Figures

Figure 1. Project location map	8
Figure 2. Excerpt of the 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Altoona, PA. Courtesy of PennState University Libraries	14
Figure 3. 1951 Aerial Image depicting Eastern Lights Cemetery. Image courtesy of Penn Pilot, Historical Aerial Photographs of Pennsylvania	15
Figure 4. 1958 Aerial Image depicting Eastern Lights Cemetery. Image courtesy of Penn Pilot, Historical Aerial Photographs of Pennsylvania	15
Figure 5. Burial markers of members of the United States Colored Troops	16
Figure 6. Different views of Eastern Lights Cemetery.....	17
Figure 7. General landscape of Eastern Lights Cemetery	18
Figure 8. Example of a granite headstone	19
Figure 9. Example of a marble headstone	19
Figure 10. The Paine enclosure	20
Figure 11. Broken grave stone in Eastern Lights Cemetery.....	23
Figure 12. PA Flood Risk - Flood Hazard Map of Eastern Lights Cemetery	24
Figure 13. Oak tree struck by lightning in Eastern Lights Cemetery	25
Figure 14. Tree canopy at Eastern Lights Cemetery.....	26
Figure 15. Example of hand gravestone symbolism in Eastern Lights Cemetery.....	27
Figure 16. Example of a Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) burial marker at Eastern Lights Cemetery.....	27

Introduction

Established in 1864, Eastern Lights Cemetery (also known as Eastern Light Cemetery) is located in Altoona, Pennsylvania. It is the earliest established African American cemetery in Altoona, created as a result of being denied internment at white cemeteries in Altoona. There are approximately two-hundred known burials, with death dates ranging from 1866 to 1944. It serves as the final resting place for at least seven members of the United States Colored troops who fought in the Civil War.

Eastern Lights Cemetery is located on a 0.37-acre lot and is bordered by Crawford Avenue Alley and dwellings to the north, Oak Ridge Cemetery to the southeast, S 10th Street and St Marys Cemetery and St Johns to the southwest, and a commercial building (Vicki's Florist) and dwellings to the west (**Figure 1**). The Cemetery is currently lacking legal ownership of property, and as a result is one of the biggest challenges Eastern Lights is facing. In July of 2023, a grant from Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds (PAHG), in conjunction with Preservation Pennsylvania, was awarded with the purpose of producing a comprehensive preservation plan for the Eastern Lights Cemetery.

The Historic Preservation staff for Terracon Consultants, Inc. (Terracon) of Jacksonville, Florida, coordinated these efforts and compiled data for final reporting purposes. The objectives of this project were to develop a plan to assist cemetery stewards with prioritizing maintenance, interpretation and preservation needs. In addition, the consultant was to assist the cemetery stewards with identifying and preparing specifications for priority tasks that address key cemetery needs.¹

A preservation plan for a historic cemetery is a working document intended to be a tool for local staff to use as a guide for both everyday maintenance and future management and interpretation efforts. Additionally, a cemetery master plan provides all known information about the site in a single location. For all these reasons, a master plan is not intended to be a static document and should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

¹ <https://pahallowedgrounds.org/grants-and-funding-sources/>

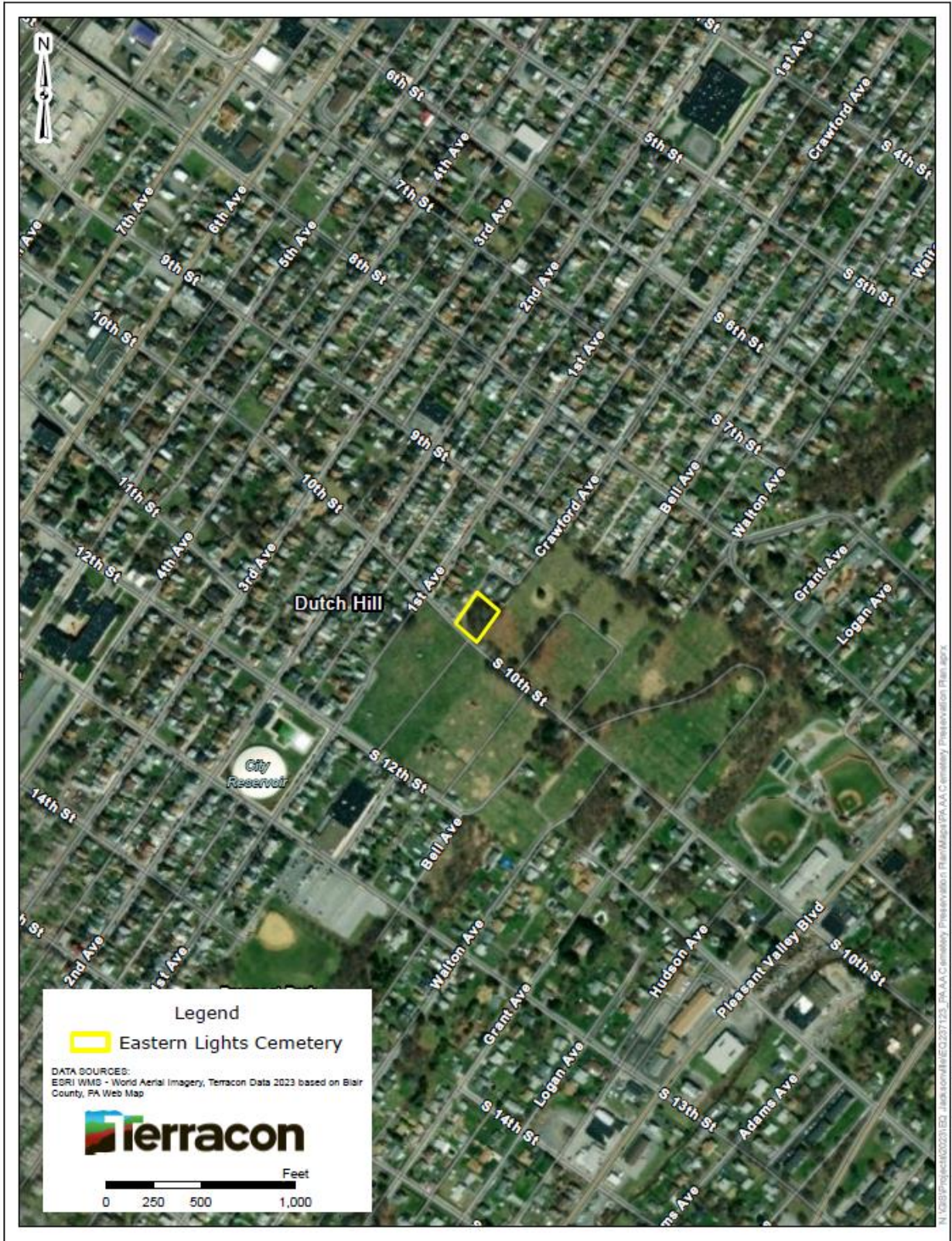


Figure 1. Project location map

Methodology

Background Research

Among the initial steps of developing the preservation plan was to review the records of PA-SHARE (Pennsylvania's Historic & Archaeological Resource Exchange) for the City of Altoona and County of Blair, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (State Archives), Penn State University Libraries (including historic aerials), Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Library of Congress (including Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps), and local newspapers and libraries. Harriet Gaston from Penn State, Altoona, and Andraé M. Holsey from the NAACP (Branch #2252) provided invaluable information and records regarding the history and conditions of Eastern Lights. All information collected is represented in this Preservation Plan.

Few surveys or reports have been conducted for the City of Altoona and Blair County regarding the extant historic resources. Each survey report holds valuable information relating to the development of Altoona, and Blair County, overall. Those reports include:

- 1995 City of Altoona Historical and Architectural Survey by American History Partnership
- 2020 - African American Churches and Cemeteries in Pennsylvania, c. 1644-c1970 (National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form) By Shelby Splain

Terracon followed the broad requirements of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and NPS's *Preservation Brief 48: Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries*. The *Brief* goes over burial marker materials and the risk factors that contribute to their deterioration. It also provides guidance on condition assessment and preservation treatments and resources.

Field Investigation

The goal of this Preservation Plan was to help prioritize marker repairs and provide Best-Practice Maintenance to eliminate vandalism and loss. Another important aspect was to provide the best solution for historic tree maintenance, as some markers were found to be altered or damaged due to historic tree growth.

With coordination from stewards of the cemetery and Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds (PAHG), fieldwork was conducted on October 4, 2023. Upon arrival at Eastern Lights Cemetery, the consultant met with stewards of the cemetery and walked the grounds to assess the cemetery's physical condition and appearance, as well as take photographs and documentation. In addition to on-site visits, the consultant and stewards of the cemetery held phone and virtual meetings regarding pertinent information related to Eastern Lights.

Inclusion in Inventories

The Eastern Lights Cemetery is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), nor is it included in a local historic district. In 1997, Eastern Lights was recorded on a Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form with the associated ID Number: 1997RE01084.² The cemetery has recently been recorded with the Pennsylvania Historic & Archaeological Resource Exchange (PA-SHARE) database, the state's GIS and online project management system for documenting and working with Pennsylvania's older and historic resources. The Cemetery was assigned ID Number: 2023RE08484 and its Eligibility

² Previous survey form and documentation can be found in **Appendix C**.

status is listed as 'Undetermined'. Currently there are fifteen resources in Altoona listed in the NRHP, three of which are historic districts. The historic districts are not geographically close enough to Eastern Lights Cemetery to consider including if the boundaries were expanded. However, if a historic district closer to the cemetery were to be nominated, Eastern Lights should be considered when defining the district boundaries.

Cemetery History

Evolution of Cemeteries

Early burials in the United States were primarily in churchyard cemeteries or common areas near the center of a city or town. These areas were typically treated as unattractive necessities to be avoided by the living and were most often neglected. The rural cemetery movement began in New England in 1831, as the central burial grounds became overcrowded and public health hazards. Larger cemeteries were established outside the city center, and many occupants of older graveyards were reinterred in these new, park-like settings. The movement redefined the public's perception and resulted in a positive image of peacefulness surrounded by nature and even led to the creation of public parks. Tombstones became an art form: elaborate markers and walls defining the grave plots were erected by families.

The following decades saw a rise in the popularity of cremation and declining demand for monuments. Due to this, by 1855 the rural cemetery movement had evolved into a lawn cemetery movement. Common open space with unbroken lawn scenery characterized cemeteries of this era.

After 1920, the landscape had changed yet again with the rise of the memorial park movement. This reflected changing opinions in American society on death and mortality and a movement away from earlier severe views on the life, afterlife, and morality towards a more contemplative—rather than instructional—eternal resting place. The creation of peaceful memorial parks with trees and lawns also reflected economic growth in the United States, as they were managed by professionals who cared for every lot and grave. Grave markers flush with the ground became popular around this time as well.

Brief History of African American Cemeteries in Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, African American communities were often buried in certain types of cemeteries, such as a church graveyard, a family cemetery, an independent cemetery, or a segregated cemetery. As Splain puts it, these Black cemeteries are “characterized more by the treatment of burials as guided by African American agency and race relations than by their date of construction, design, or ownership.”³ Like Eastern Lights Cemetery, the majority of Black cemeteries in the Commonwealth were legally segregated (or by de facto) from when they were started and did not integrate until the mid-twentieth century when the Civil Rights Movement established equal rights and treatment of African Americans and abolished legalized racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement. Cemeteries that are independent or segregated can fall into any time period as well as share the same characteristics of Potter's Fields or cemetery designs and styles from the Rural Cemetery, Lawn, and Memorial Park movements.⁴

Documented burial grounds for Africans and African Americans in Pennsylvania first appear during the early to mid-eighteenth century, with the 1740s Mohn's Farm Slave Graveyard in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County being an example. During the same period, free African Americans who owned land in rural Pennsylvania were likely buried on their own property in a family cemetery, such as the NRHP listed Dennis Farm in Brooklyn Township, Susquehanna County.⁵ If they did not own land in rural areas, free Africans or African Americans were buried either in a church graveyard or an independent or

³ Splain 2020

⁴ Splain 2020

⁵ Splain 2020

segregated cemetery, including Potter's Fields.⁶ The same burial treatment was done for those that were free who lived in small towns and urban areas. Church graveyards were often segregated when the church had both African American and white congregants. Many churches, particularly Lutheran, Catholic, Methodist, and Baptist would either deny interment of African Americans or would relegate them to be buried in a segregated area.⁷ It was not until the establishment of Black church congregations in the early 1800s, namely AME and AMEZ denominations, did they create their own graveyards at or close to the church property.

As African American churches and their graveyards were thriving by the mid-1800s in Pennsylvania, African American-owned and -operated cemetery companies also began popping up, bolstering the Black community to exercise more authority over death rites and burials. Formed to purchase public or private land, often as a joint-stock entity, these companies sought to "serve the larger needs of the African American community that was perhaps shut out from other burial opportunities."⁸ The rise of the Rural Cemetery Movement was concurrent with the emergence of African American cemetery or burial companies.

As Pennsylvania's African American population was booming during the Great Migration, the segregation of cemeteries (whether informal or formal) continued to be practiced. As mentioned before, it was not until the Civil Rights era of the mid-twentieth century when the segregation (legal or by de facto) of African American burials in Pennsylvania stopped. Several court cases associated with the segregation of cemeteries occurred during this era, establishing precedent in how public and private cemeteries managed the issue of race and guaranteeing equal rights in purchasing property (such as a cemetery plot).⁹ In addition to the influential court cases, on July 26, 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed Executive Order 9981. The order mandated the desegregation of the US military and, by extension national cemeteries.

Eastern Lights Cemetery in Context

Because African American burials originated at Eastern Lights Cemetery, it is considered as a legacy cemetery. It started out even smaller than what it is today, as Altoona's first segregated community cemetery solely for the purpose to inter Black residents. Eastern Lights is set within a much larger cemetery setting on the northwest edge of the cemetery complex, as was common with segregated cemeteries. Neighboring burial grounds were the Oak Ridge, St. Johns, and St. Marys Cemeteries.

Altoona's Eastern Lights Cemetery was founded in 1864 after three African Americans, John Ferguson, George Hooper (Hopper), and John Alexander, purchased land that now fronts 10th Street, across from Oak Ridge Cemetery.¹⁰ This was done to provide African American citizens of Altoona with their own cemetery, after being denied interment in white cemeteries.¹¹ At the time of its founding and the following decades, Eastern Lights was located on the fringes of Altoona.

⁶ See Woodlands Trust for Historic Preservation and Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Cemetery Preservation and Recordation: Preservation of Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries in Pennsylvania."

<https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/cemetery-preservation/index.html>

⁷ Kruger-Kahloula, 135-137

⁸ Splain 2020

⁹ Kruger-Kahloula, 133; *Shelley v. Kraemer (1948)*; *Jones v. Mayer (1968)*

¹⁰ John Simpson Africa, *History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Evarts, 1883), 180.

¹¹ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023.

The first burial to occur at Eastern Lights was that of Stephen Hollinger, Civil War veteran, in 1866. Within two decades, the need for more burial land was growing as Altoona's Black population was increasing. Many African Americans came to the flourishing town, seeking employment opportunities in service industries. According to deed records, Eastern Lights was expanded in 1887 after additional property surrounding the original cemetery was purchased.¹² Eastern Lights' original footprint, located in the southeastern portion, was only 61 by 60 feet (0.84-acres), less than half of the current size. W. B. McCormick sold the land for \$350 to a group of Black citizens; John Ferguson, George Hopper, George Jackson, Henry Johnson, and John Russell (who all may have been trustees of Eastern Light Cemetery). The following year after acquiring new land, in 1888, the Eastern Lights Cemetery Association of Altoona, PA was officially incorporated under the Act of Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.¹³

John Ferguson died in the 1890s and is buried in Eastern Lights. However, his death resulted in Eastern Lights acquiring "orphan cemetery" status, as no plans were in place to transfer ownership and the care of the cemetery after his death. It is now considered a non-functioning, non-profit piece of land that is declared as not dissolved, or no proof of ownership. Because of this legal concern, research has been conducted into ways of resolving this issue through the court system.¹⁴

By the early twentieth century, it appears that Eastern Lights Cemetery had reached a state of disrepair after a 1903 fence fire occurred and a lack of upkeep throughout the years. The 1909 Sanborn (shown in **Figure 2**) reveals that Eastern Lights was not even labeled on the map, unlike that of St Johns Cemetery across the street. In 1926, a committee composed of Alexander Taylor, R. D. Pittman, Martha Carl, William A. Jackson, and Dr. Katherine Graves initiated a project to improve the cemetery grounds. They proposed to have a fence built around the cemetery as well as a general cleaning be given.¹⁵

¹² See **Appendix C**

¹³ Altoona Times, March 10, 1888

¹⁴ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023

¹⁵ Altoona Tribune, May 27, 1926

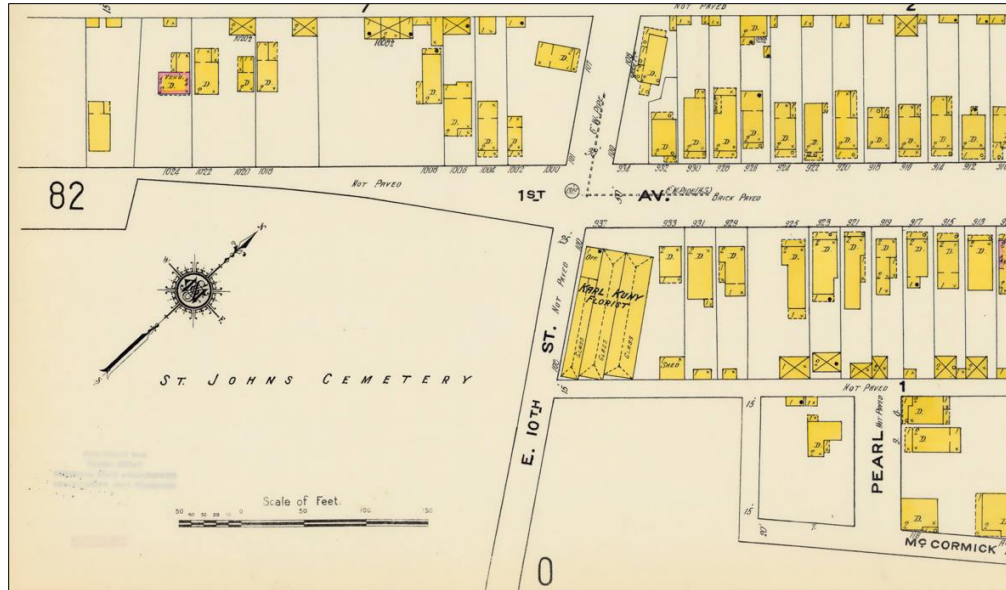


Figure 2. Excerpt of the 1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Altoona, PA. Courtesy of PennState University Libraries

According to discussions with the stewards of the cemetery, the City of Altoona possibly paved over existing burial sites when they constructed 10th Street and Crawford Ave Alley. The adjacent home to the north of Eastern Lights may have been built over existing burials as well.¹⁶

Although the latest burial marker is dated 1944 as the date of death, a newspaper article from 1951 indicate a local man named Ellsworth H. Jones was buried in the Cemetery in the same year.¹⁷ As Splain puts it, “the date of the last burial in a cemetery can suggest how long an African American community remained in the area, when segregation ended, or the cemetery abandoned.”¹⁸ In regards to Eastern Lights, the cemetery was not abandoned nor did the African American community in Altoona diminish to where internment was no longer needed. It could be that the cemetery was full by the time the last internment occurred.

¹⁶ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023

¹⁷ Walt Frank, “Revitalizing history—Historic Black cemetery to receive state funds,” *Altoona Mirror*, July 5, 2023, <https://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2023/07/revitalizing-history-historic-black-cemetery-to-receive-state-grant/>;

The Progress, March 10, 1951

¹⁸ Splain 2020



Figure 3. 1951 Aerial Image depicting Eastern Lights Cemetery. Image courtesy of Penn Pilot, Historical Aerial Photographs of Pennsylvania



Figure 4. 1958 Aerial Image depicting Eastern Lights Cemetery. Image courtesy of Penn Pilot, Historical Aerial Photographs of Pennsylvania

Significant People & Families

Eastern Lights Cemetery is the final resting place for William H. Smith who was the first African American to graduate from Altoona High School in 1890. Afterwards, he attended the Boston School of Technology (MIT) but sadly passed away before he could graduate.¹⁹

The Paine also spelled Payne; family is buried in Eastern Lights. The Paines were members of Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church, which still exists and just recently celebrated their 150th anniversary.²⁰ One of the family members, George Payne, was laid to rest in Eastern Lights in 1893 at age 59. During his life he had “conducted a restaurant on Tenth avenue and afterward in the post office [sic] building.”²¹

At least six African American Civil War Veterans, part of the United States Colored Troops, rest in Eastern Lights Cemetery (**Figure 5**). These include Pvt. Stephen Hollinger, Pvt. Granville Hurley, Sgt. George W. Jackson, Pvt. John Love, Cpl. William N. Molson, and Pvt. James W. Thomas. Corporal Molson is the most decorated soldier at Eastern Lights, having fought at the siege of Petersburg as a member of the 43rd Regiment of the USCT infantry.²² There is possibly a seventh Civil War veteran who was buried at Eastern Lights Cemetery, named Aaron C. Worley. There is not a marked burial for Worley at Eastern Lights, however, in 1911 he is mentioned in the newspaper as being interred there.²³ Recent records indicate Worley was moved to the adjacent cemetery, Oak Ridge, at some time.²⁴



Figure 5. Burial markers of members of the United States Colored Troops

¹⁹ Uncited but from “African American History in Blair County” PowerPoint, slide twenty-seven.

²⁰ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023.

²¹ Altoona Tribune, August 24, 1893

²² Walt Frank, “Revitalizing history—Historic Black cemetery to receive state funds,” *Altoona Mirror*, July 5, 2023, <https://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2023/07/revitalizing-history-historic-black-cemetery-to-receive-state-grant/>

²³ Altoona Tribune, May 29, 1911

²⁴ Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/10583171/aaron-c-worley>

Physical Description

Eastern Lights Cemetery located in Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania, is a small African American community cemetery that is no longer active. The small cemetery is on a 0.37-acre rectangular shaped lot, in an urbanized setting with other cemeteries as well as residential and commercial buildings (**Figure 6**). The cemetery grounds are bounded by Crawford Avenue Alley and dwellings to the north, Oak Ridge Cemetery to the southeast, S 10th Street and St Marys and St Johns Cemeteries to the southwest, and a commercial building (Vicki's Florist) and dwellings to the west. Eastern Lights Cemetery in a predominantly residential area of Altoona, Pennsylvania, a historically industrial city centered around the railroad. The city of Altoona sits in the northern portion of the Allegheny Mountains in central Pennsylvania.

The cemetery can be accessed from S 10th Street or Crawford Avenue Alley, but there is no vehicular or pedestrian path to navigate within the grounds. There is also a lack of designated parking for the cemetery. Eastern Lights is partially enclosed by a wooden picket fence, with an opening on the corner of S 10th Street and Crawford Avenue Alley, allowing for pedestrian entry. The cemetery grounds are currently maintained, and the burial markers range from fair to deteriorated condition, which will require different preservation treatments.



Figure 6. Different views of Eastern Lights Cemetery

Eastern Lights' landscape is relatively level, although the western portion is slightly more elevated. The cemetery grounds are grassed and well-maintained by cemetery stewards. The few trees that exist within the property are mature oak trees. Along the southeast boundary, adjacent to Oak Ridge Cemetery is a dense cluster of trees and shrubs, creating a natural division between the cemeteries.

Overall, the placement of marked graves appear to exhibit uniformity, running from a generally north to south direction, and headstones oriented to the east, which is common in the Christian tradition. Some burial markers do, however, appear to be "random" as they are not aligned with the majority of marked graves. The majority of burial markers are of comparable size and height, although there are

some taller monument and shorter, flat headstones. The northern portion of the grounds appear to be less concentrated with grave stones.

Built Environment

Eastern Lights Cemetery is a modest cemetery with a few mature trees and monuments scattered throughout the grounds. Of the gravestones that remain, there is a small variety of marker types and materials. A family plot with a concrete surround that appears to once have a fence attached is located in the southeastern section (shown in **Figure 7**). Stones may have been lost over time, and many markers would have been wood, given the time of development. Wood markers do not stand the test of time.



Figure 7. General landscape of Eastern Lights Cemetery

Grave Marker Types & Materials

There are a variety of markers included in the Cemetery, primarily constructed of marble, granite, and concrete. Grave markers include but are not limited to headstones, vertical stones, pillows, crosses, and vernacular stones. Eastern Lights is rather discrete compared to the neighboring cemeteries of Oak Ridge and St. Johns. The size and ornamentation of the monuments are less imposing.

Granite

A material that became extremely popular for grave markers in the 19th century, granite is an igneous rock that is extremely hard and resistant to weathering. It is made up of medium to coarse grained

quartz, mica, and feldspar crystals. Granite is almost exclusively used for markers now and is an indicator of later burials in any cemetery (**Figure 8**).



Figure 8. Example of a granite headstone

Marble

Marble is a metamorphic limestone that has a wide variation in quality – the grade of stone is determined by the amount of calcite or dolomite in its composition. High grade marbles, such as Carrara marble are primarily calcite, while on the other end of the scale, poor quality marbles are composed mainly of dolomite. Dolomite contains magnesium which contributes to the breakdown of stone through weathering processes. The quality of marble, or “white stone” as it was sometimes called, also determines price, which in turn, usually denotes the socioeconomic status of the deceased. Marble for the colonies was quarried first in Europe and then, as early as the mid-1700s, in the New England region (**Figure 9**).



Figure 9. Example of a marble headstone

Concrete

Concrete is a man-made stone-like material composed of fine and coarse aggregates, cement, historically lime, and water which is poured or cast while wet and allowed to cure. It is generally identifiable by its material uniformity and typically has visible inclusions (including but not limited to sand, gravel, rock, smoothed stone, pebble, shell, or other crushed aggregate). Concrete ranges in color

depending on the materials used in the mix but typically is a gray-white or gray-tan color. It also ranges in strength and porosity based on the reinforcing members and mixture of materials.

Vernacular grave markers made of cast concrete were identified in the Cemetery. Repair or construction of cast concrete markers can usually be achieved by present-day masons who are familiar with the construction methods of the diverse types of grave coverings. As with any other marker restoration, reconstructed markers must be made as close to the original as possible, including size, shape and scale, materials, ornamental detailing, etc. If reconstruction is done for markers requiring armature, it is highly recommended that stainless steel is used in place of iron or other easily weathered metals that will eventually cause the same deterioration problems (316 Stainless Steel Alloy is marine grade alloy and holds up well). However, vernacular markers hold significance beyond historical reference to the burial; many vernacular markers hold cultural significance as well and simply refashioning a new marker with like material will not have the same significance as a historic marker.

Sandstone

One of the earliest materials used as burial markers for early settlers in the region included sandstone. Depending on the region, the rock exists in a variety of colors and textures. Sandstone is attractive to use for burial markers, in that the rock can be cut easily into a flat, muted surface that is ideal for inscription. Native red sandstone was predominantly used for gravestones in the Pennsylvania region during the 18th century, eventually becoming less used as marble and granite became the prevalent materials. Sandstone was hand quarried, shaped into the desired style, and incised with the interred's relevant information and sometimes decorative detailing. The incisions were hand carved using hammers and chisels, making it a relatively expensive commodity.²⁵

Enclosures

Only one family plot, with one extant burial marker (John Ferguson) has an extant concrete plot enclosure (**Figure 10**). Evident by the corners of the surround and mentioned in the 1997 survey of Eastern Lights, a fence was once attached to the enclosure.



Figure 10. The Paine enclosure

Fencing

The perimeter of Eastern Lights is partially fenced. Apart from the wide entry way in the southeast corner, a wooden picket fence painted white lines the south and west boundaries of 10th Street and Crawford Avenue Alley. A six foot tall wood panel fence is along the northern boundary, appearing to belong to the adjacent residential property. The south remaining southeast boundary is not fenced, but a natural barrier of trees and shrubs line the perimeter.

²⁵ Lancaster Farming, Dec 1, 2022

General Cemetery Information

Local Setting

Eastern Lights Cemetery is located on the corner of S 10th Street and Crawford Avenue Alley in an urbanized landscape, edged by Oak Ridge Cemetery and residential structures.

Zoning & Future Land Use

Eastern Lights, along with its neighboring cemeteries, are in a R-SH: Single-Household Residential zoning district. The buildings to the north and west of Eastern Lights Cemetery are zoned R-M-H: Multiple-Household. The purpose of the R-SH Single-Household Residential Zone is to “provide areas within the City for the development of medium, low density, primarily residential-single household detached homes, and to protect areas presently developed in this manner.”²⁶ The zone permits both residential and nonresidential uses. It would be beneficial for the City to designate specific zoning for the site and cemeteries in general, so that the zoning is conducive to cemetery preservation.

City/County Plans, Ordinances, Resolutions, Etc.

The City of Altoona’s Comprehensive Plan, *Positively Altoona*, was adopted by Altoona City Council in 2013. Although historic preservation of the City is mentioned in several key elements of the Comprehensive Plan, Eastern Lights Cemetery is not mentioned. Cemeteries are not included at all in the plan. The historic elements of the plan focus more on historic buildings and districts. Although the City does not own Eastern Lights Cemetery, it would be beneficial to have the Comprehensive Plan address these unique historic resources. Similar to Altoona, Blair County’s Comprehensive Plan (*Alleghenies Ahead: Shared Strategies for a Stronger Region*) has historic preservation elements, but does not mention cemeteries specifically.

State Statutes

Statutory references related to cemeteries include:

- Cemeteries and Graveyards Protected Act of April 5, 1849 (P.L. 397, No. 296)
- Concerning Removal of Dead Bodies from Burial Grounds Act of June 16, 1891 (P.L. 310, No. 238)
- Burial Grounds Conveyance Act of June 25, 1913 (P.L. 551, No. 354)
- Burial Grounds, Municipal Control Act of May 10, 1923 (P.L. 198, No. 144)
- Supplementing County Water Supply Authority Act of July 18, 1957 (P.L. 1006, No. 446)
- Historic Burial Places Preservation Act of April 29, 1994 (P.L. 141, No. 22)

²⁶ City of Altoona, PA Municipal Code – Chapter 800. Zoning, Article V. District Provisions, Section 800-48. R-SH Single-Household Residential Zone. [Amended 7-12-2017 by Ord. No. 5706]

Documentation

There are few original documents such as burial records and plat maps related to Eastern Lights Cemetery. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission serves as the primary repository, although some documentation related to the interred are in other locations.

Infrastructure

Eastern Lights is a small, discrete cemetery and does not have any internal infrastructure. No roadways, irrigation, or other modern infrastructure exists within the burial ground. The Cemetery is, however, adjacent to paved roadways that experience a steady amount of traffic.

Security

Eastern Lights Cemetery is subject to vandalism and poor maintenance. Although the grounds have a fence around the perimeter, a portion of the enclosure is open and can be accessed freely. The 1997 survey of Eastern Lights mentions the presence of graffiti on burial markers.

Development

The Cemetery sits in an urbanized area of Altoona, next to other historic-age cemeteries and buildings. Although it is unlikely the parcel would be identified for development, it is not unheard of for cemeteries to be developed and remains relocated. Properly aligning the land use and zoning with the cemetery use would help ensure long-term preservation.

Disaster Preparedness & Resiliency

Cemeteries present unique problems in disaster preparation. The city should undertake a disaster preparedness plan for Eastern Lights Cemetery and ensure the cemetery is included in any post-disaster planning. Resources like "Cemetery Disaster Planning" from the Chicora Foundation could be used in preparing a disaster preparation plan for Eastern Lights Cemetery and other cemeteries under the city's care. The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) also has resources for preparing and responding to disasters in relation to cemeteries.

Cultural Landscape Information

Past Survey Efforts

In 1995, Eastern Lights Cemetery was surveyed by Stewart Bruce of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, as part of a larger project (African American Project, Southwestern Pennsylvania). The resource survey form was recorded as indicating Eastern Lights is potentially eligible for individual National Register listing and contributes to a potential district.

Overall Assessment and Preservation Concerns

Several preservation concerns of Eastern Lights Cemetery were identified by the consultant following site visits and discussions with cemetery stewards. The preservation concerns affect the longevity of the cemetery and its individual markers, accessibility, and safety. Resolution of these concerns would ensure the continued maintenance of the cemetery, rectify current issues in condition, and allow ancestors of the interred to access the area more easily.

Signage

The original sign, which was gifted from the NAACP, but was stolen from the property just after it was announced that the cemetery would be receiving funding to aid in preservation efforts.²⁷

Eastern Lights Cemetery lacks signage (directional/wayfinding) along the main road, S 10th Street. Furthermore, the cemetery is located next to and across from much larger burial grounds, lacking the distinction of the local landmark. Continuous visitation fosters knowledge of the resource and in-turn preserves its permanence and importance for future generations.

Pedestrian path

Although Eastern Lights is a relatively small cemetery, there is no clear pedestrian path within the grounds that is marked, if at all, and is unrecognizable to the visitor. Potential graves and grave markers have identified throughout the cemetery and are in danger of damage due to an unknown pedestrian path or equipment. This effort could be accomplished by designated path. Any activity should be monitored, and Terracon recommends using weight distribution pads such as



Figure 11. Broken grave stone in Eastern Lights Cemetery

²⁷ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023.

DuraDeck Ground Protection Mats when using heavy machinery.

Accessibility

Currently, the cemetery is not ADA accessible with no clear handicapped parking provided. The inclusion of handicapped parking with appropriate signage would aid in accessibility.

Fallen, leaning, or sunken grave markers

Many markers that were fallen, leaning, or sunken in the soil were identified within the Cemetery. These markers are in danger of being lost as a resource as they are unidentifiable unless found by special probing or other more technical investigative practice.

Broken markers

Broken markers such as headstones and bases are in danger of being removed from the site altogether if they are visible on the surface. They can also pose a significant safety hazard as well as deterioration of the resource (Error! Reference source not found.).

Natural Environment

Water and Stormwater

At approximately 1,300 feet ground elevation, the burial ground sits in a valley at the eastern slope of the Allegheny Front. These mountains west of Altoona have an elevation at approximately 2,400 feet. While there is an elevated flood risk threat less than 0.5 miles away to the east (along Brush Run) Eastern Lights is in Flood Zone X, which poses minimal flood hazard (**Figure 12**). According to FEMA, areas in Zone X outside of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) and are higher than the elevation of the 0.2-percent-annual-chance flood.



Figure 12. PA Flood Risk - Flood Hazard Map of Eastern Lights Cemetery

Trees & Landscape

An oak tree in the cemetery, estimated to be between 100 and 150 years old (**Figure 13**), was struck by lightning sometime in 2019 and the damaged portions had to be cut down and the limbs removed, although the remains of the tree are now thriving.²⁸

A few mature trees, mostly oak, make up the bulk of trees in the Cemetery. Because of the tree canopy is mostly comprised of oaks, the coverage is vulnerable to pests or disease. There is also the consideration of diversification by age: to maintain canopy coverage, it is important to have an age variety so as old trees die there are mature and young trees to take their place. Determining where to plant new trees will be a challenge, as the older trees often conflict with stones and markers. It would not be recommended to simply replace an existing tree in the same location in these cases.

The rule of thumb for diversity is 10/20/30. No more than 10% of the forest should be composed of one species, no more than 20% of one genus and no more than 30% of one family. Future plantings should be selected to increase diversity. With a varied tree cover, the canopy and feel can remain intact even if an entire species is wiped out.

A third consideration is the use of native plants. There is a growing movement to use native plants in design. They help maintain the integrity of local ecosystems and are well adapted to the environment. They are also critical habitat for fauna, as many creatures have developed relationships with specific species. Natives should require no irrigation beyond establishment.

Stewards of the cemetery should consider environmental, cultural, and economic impacts when replanting and maintaining trees and these aspects should be a part of any landscape planning. In the Cemetery, it is essential to be mindful of what grows, how root systems expand, and the impact this may have on stones. A landscape professional should assist with a tree and landscape plan for the Cemetery, which will serve as an important planning step for the future. It is also worth consulting the Washington County – Penn State Extension Office, who can provide tips on planting and landscape care.



Figure 13. Oak tree struck by lightning in Eastern Lights Cemetery

²⁸ From personal phone call with Harriet Gaston and Andraé M. Holsey, September 20, 2023; Google Street View, Aug 2019



Figure 14. Tree canopy at Eastern Lights Cemetery

General tree recommendations include:

- Failing trees or limbs should be thinned and removed as possible
- Replacement trees should be native and slow growing
- New trees should not be planted in the same spot as the old ones but placed in nearby more open areas and be no larger than 4" in diameter breast height
- Planting a variety of species, as well as species with good groundcover is encouraged
- Non-hardwood trees, such as crepe myrtle or bottlebrush

Wildlife

There is a trend in cemetery management to recognize and embrace wildlife. There are opportunities for birds and other pollinators like bees to thrive in cemeteries and help plant life. As an example, the Dorset Wildlife Trust in the UK has a "Living Churchyards" program that encourages the planting of natural plants to attract pollinators, and the use of bird houses and bat boxes to support wildlife. Cemeteries can provide a relatively natural

area that can also serve as wildlife corridors. Bird watchers and outdoor photographers can visit cemeteries to glimpse area wildlife.

Groundhogs are prevalent in this part of Pennsylvania and frequently dig tunnels in and around cemeteries that are not frequented with visitors. While some environments surrounding cemeteries are conducive to enjoying wildlife; some wildlife can be a nuisance to the landscape and cause safety issues for visitors. Preservation Plans should consider these issues and address them properly insuring all local and state regulation. The presence of groundhogs was not detected during the site visit. A simple checklist confirming sightings of nuisance wildlife can be created and performed during routine maintenance visits.

Iconography of Existing Markers

The Eastern Lights Cemetery is home to varied stones, where they still exist, and some stones display traditional cemetery symbolism and iconography. *Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography* by Douglas Keister is a valuable resource in discerning historic tombstone images (information in this section is derived from *Stories in Stone*).

Plant iconography is quite common on tombstones. Plants represent and remind the living of the beauty and brevity of life and are symbols of remembrance. Flower symbolism is prevalent on historic tombstones, especially during the Victorian era, and usually the flowers chosen were intended to represent a virtue or attribute.

Headstones containing hand iconography are commonly found in cemeteries, in a variety of ways. A hand with its index finger pointing upward (shown in **Figure 15**) signifies the hand of God and the reward of the righteous, confirmation of life after death. Hands in the praying position signify devotion and handshake symbols can signify a farewell to life on earth or may be used to for a couple to be reunited in death.²⁹



Figure 15. Example of hand gravestone symbolism in Eastern Lights Cemetery

The United States Colored troops who are interred at Eastern Lights contain both a headstone and a GAR burial marker (**Figure 16**). The Grand Army of the Republic



Figure 16. Example of a Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) burial marker at Eastern Lights Cemetery

(GAR) stands for the patriotic organization of American Civil War veterans who served in the Union forces.³⁰

²⁹ Association for Gravestone Studies, *Symbolism on Gravestones*

³⁰ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Grand Army of the Republic"

Management & Operations

Cemetery Funding and Existing Maintenance

Andraé Holsey with the NAACP; has organized supplies, volunteers, and security for the past thirty years; graciously fending for volunteers to do maintenance at Eastern Lights Cemetery. In 2009, Harriet Gaston with Penn State (Altoona Campus) prepped to celebrate African American troops who fought in the Civil War. Currently, there is no ongoing funding provided for the cemetery for basic maintenance such as mowing and vegetation removal. There is, however, basic groundskeeping maintenance being done by members of the local NAACP.

In 2023, Eastern Lights, along with twelve additional sites, received funding through grants issued from Preservation Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds to aid in preservation efforts as part of the African American Cemetery Stewardship Program. This funding is from the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund which comes from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with support from the JPB Foundation and The 1772 Foundation.³¹

Markers & Monument Preservation

At Eastern Lights Cemetery, there are a handful of burial markers that have fallen into a state of disrepair. A general lack of proper headstone conservation has led to tilted, broken, and damaged headstones. All care should be taken to prevent the deterioration and destruction of funeral markers, but if they are damaged, it is important to clear the ground of hazards. This may include putting stakes and tape around the gravesite to warn visitors of the danger.

Notes on repairing and caring for markers and monuments:

- Stabilize structures first for safety – consider “topple test” to determine stability (*this is a debatable practice*)
- Prioritize rankings based on the following:
- Safety – Can this structure hurt someone? Is the site visited frequently?
- Stability – Is the structure at risk of being lost or damaged without immediate attention?
- Aesthetics – What is the appearance of the stone and marker?
(See Preservation Brief #48 in Additional Resources)

General notes on marker and monument conservation follow, but it is strongly *advised* to have a professional undertake stone and marker restoration. (See Preservation Briefs #2, #36, #48 in Additional Resources)

- Leaning stones – lift from ground; stabilize the ground under the stone to avoid the stones from breaking or loss then, replace stone
 - May also benefit from probing for missing pieces of broken headstones to keep these from total loss.

³¹ Walt Frank, “Revitalizing history—Historic Black cemetery to receive state funds,” *Altoona Mirror*, July 5, 2023, <https://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2023/07/revitalizing-history-historic-black-cemetery-to-receive-state-grant/>.

- Broken stones – Route out to provide smooth surface, measure for rods, drill, and insert rods (if needed), epoxy and let set then, use material sensitive mortar to fill gaps and avoid further weathering or deterioration

Rubbing Stones

It is NOT recommended that rubbings be done on old headstones and markers. Rubbing can cause deterioration and harm a stone over time. Savannah, Georgia municipal code disallows headstone rubbing in its historic cemeteries. This is something the stewards of the cemetery may also wish to consider.

Cleaning Stones

Stewards of the cemetery should consider participating in a training workshop similar to Florida's Cemetery Resource Protection Training (CRPT) Part of the CRPT training is a hands-on workshop to teach the proper method for cleaning stones, as follows:

- Utilize a soft brush to wipe the stone to loosen dirt and debris.
- Use a spray bottle with water to clean the stone. This may be enough, and no further cleaning warranted.
(See Preservation Briefs #6 and #48 in Additional Resources)
- For tougher cases, use diluted D2 Solution in a spray bottle and a soft brush; it can be left for some time or immediately washed off with water (it will both clean and prevent future bio-growth on the marker).

For additional information, see **Additional Resources** for the National Park Service Technical Preservation Briefs.

Recommendations & Implementation

To restore and preserve Eastern Lights Cemetery the consultant recommends several actions be taken. Nonaction will result in continued degradation of the Cemetery and consequently the loss of burial markers and the cultural information contained therein. It is of utmost importance that action be taken to restore the cemetery's monuments and grounds.

Terracon's initial contacts were/are Harriet Gaston from Penn State, Altoona, and Andraé M. Holsey president of NAACP Branch #2252. Meetings and calls took place between Ms. Gaston, Mr. Holsey, and Terracon consultants in early September of 2023, to discuss their association with Eastern Lights Cemetery, their expectations and needs they would like to be addressed, the current state of the cemetery, and the history behind its founding.

Recommendations are consistent with practices outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Documentation, and the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

It is recommended that this cemetery plan be re-evaluated at least every five years. A Historic Cemetery Plot and Marker Survey Form is provided in **Appendix A**. Additionally, it is also suggested the recommendations be prioritized (1-2 years, 3-5 years, 5-7+ years) for projects and phasing, as well as identifying who the responsible entities are for carrying out the recommended actions.

Establish Cemetery Ownership

One of the biggest threats and obstacles Eastern Lights faces is the lack of legal ownership of the property. African American cemeteries that are not associated with churches or municipalities, often face ownership issues; like Green Lawn Cemetery in Aston, PA. Eastern Lights is currently a non-functioning, non-profit piece of land that is declared as not dissolved (no proof). Its orphan status causes legal concern, as ownership has not been established, which could affect the decimation of cultural information. Long-term care is threatened by its lack of ownership or establishment of ownership; however, research has been conducted into ways of resolving this issue through the court system.

The Cemetery's previous ownership, the African American Heritage Preservation Foundation (a recognized Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)3), should pursue the process of gaining back guardianship of Eastern Lights. To seek this process of legal ownership, the organization will need to go through Blair County's Orphans' Court within Pennsylvania Courts of Common Pleas. The organization will need to file a petition with the Office of the Clerk of Orphans' Court in Blair County to begin the steps to gain back ownership of Eastern Lights Cemetery.³² Having a 501(c)3 non-profit become the owner of Eastern Lights Cemetery would be ideal for future grant opportunities that could provide funding for preservation projects. Furthermore, pursuing ownership of Eastern Lights by non-profit status would allow the group the receive tax-deductible contributions. As part of the process in acquiring ownership, a professional survey of the property boundaries will need to be performed.

The eagerness of gaining back legal ownership of Eastern Lights by the previous non-profit has garnered local and state political support, including Senator Judy Ward and Representatives Jim Gregory, John

³² See Orphans' Court Forms in Additional Resources

Joyce, and Lou Schmitt. Schmitt has been incredibly involved with the community and is an advocate for preservation.

Improve Documentation

- Document the cemetery by provide an overall map with known headstone locations and potential unmarked graves.
- Have georeferenced coordinates for known plots/headstone and GPR anomalies incorporated into City/County GIS.
- Consider nomination to National Register of Historic Places.
- A *Historic Cemetery Plot and Marker Survey* form is located in **Appendix A**.
- Ensure the caretakes or stewards of the cemetery are aware of the presence of Civil War veteran monuments within the Cemetery; and to coordinate efforts to record veteran markers and submit those records to the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War National Grave Registration Database.³³

Coordinate with the City of Altoona

- Address cemeteries (or lack of) in City of Altoona’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Change future land use and zoning to better align with current and future use and preservation.
- Implement cemetery rules and regulations and include in City Code.
- Work with City of Altoona Police Department to ensure regular patrols.

Provide Better Information Management

- Identify any City resolutions and ordinances related to Eastern Lights Cemetery.
- Identify long-term document and record management strategy and who the formal record keeper will be.

Implement Operations/Maintenance & Preservation Plans

The maintenance program for an historic cemetery is much different than that for a modern cemetery. To avoid damaging funerary materials, a historic cemetery requires that much of the maintenance work done by hand. This, in turn, involves longer hours and higher costs. However, if proper maintenance of a cemetery is neglected, and the special requirements of funerary artifacts are disregarded, the time and money invested to restore the site will, essentially, have been wasted. Proper maintenance of historic cemeteries should be performed at best monthly; however, a quarterly schedule is acceptable. Routine maintenance allows for more projects during the year and cuts down on expenses.

- Implement preservation and cleaning techniques in accordance with The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC); a conservator governed by the AIC Code of Ethics and familiar with common cemetery and funerary materials.

³³ The Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) National Graves Registration Project was established in 1996. The volunteer project seeks to record, verify, research, and enter the final resting places of all Union Civil War veterans. Only four of the veterans interred at Eastern Lights are recorded in the SUVCW database.

- Focus on preservation/restoration of remaining stones.
- Possible reconstruction/restoration of cemetery fencing around boundary.
- Provide appropriate staffing levels to maintain the cemetery.
- Implement standard operating procedures for any maintenance conducted.
- Provide appropriate training for cemetery staff/volunteers.
- Prohibit gravestone rubbing.

Evaluate Funding

- Identify grant opportunities and/or potential funding sources for projects within the Cemetery.
- Consider annual fundraiser or other fundraising/capital campaigns for improvements.

Implement Wayfinding System

- Implement wayfinding signs pertaining to history of the cemetery, including number of burials
- Add plaques to the fence (may be Veteran focused)
- Look at other cemeteries for examples of signage and wayfinding.
- Create brochures with information on the interred and/or a walking tour (heritage trail, tree trail, etc.).
- Explore placement of kiosk near entry that helps explain how to navigate the Cemetery.

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey

It is generally assumed that there are multiple unmarked graves in Eastern Lights Cemetery. A Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey is a common way to identify possible historic graves, although it does not provide any information about who it may be. The survey area is divided into a grid and then scanned in approximate five-foot intervals in both north-south and east-west transects. Returning wave mark anomalies, which can be indicative of unmarked burials or excavated soil.

Involving local colleges or universities to conduct GPR services of the Cemetery would be a great resource to survey the grounds. The work could be performed as a workshop opportunity with future grant dollars. Schools nearby could include Penn State, Kutztown University, Juniata College (Cultural Resource Institute), and Dickinson College.

Security

- Consider installing trail cameras in the cemetery grounds to deter vandalism
- Install a new fence around the property boundaries (for aesthetics and protection)

Protect Landscaping, Tree Canopy, & the Environment

Mowing

Mowers to cut grass and trim around grave markers can cause a great deal of damage in a cemetery. Any mower, whether the hand-pushed or riding type, is difficult to control around grave markers. Gravestones are particularly vulnerable to damage. Once the face of a stone is scraped or chipped, moisture can move through its layers and eventually cause delamination of the marker. Scrapes and chips also weaken gravestones and can cause them to eventually break and fall. Riding mowers should not be used in small cemeteries, or in any area where markers and other funerary materials are spaced closely together.

Hand pushed mowers should be used in areas where there are markers and other items associated with graves; and should be equipped with rubber bumpers to prevent accidental damage of funerary items. Trimming around gravestones should be done with a hand-held trimmer that uses a monofilament line. The line should not have a wire core. If individual stones or bases are fragile, trimming should be done with a hand clipper.

Tree Trimming and Removal

Tree and shrub branches that might fall and damage gravestones and other materials should be trimmed. Periodic inspections should be made of the grounds, particularly after storms, to make sure that any threats are immediately removed. A tree health assessment should be performed at least every two years and local foresters, or a certified arborist should be employed to perform these tasks. Stewards of the Cemetery can source a certified arborist from the International Society of Arboriculture website, <https://www.isa-arbor.com/For-the-Public>. A quick records search on this site will provide a list of names, business, location, and credentials.

Groundcovers

To reduce maintenance and lower the risk to stone from mower damage, groundcovers other than grass should be considered. Groundcovers that are small-leaved and low-growing are an alternative to the labor-intensive care required by a grass lawn. Selected groundcovers should grow well without fertilizer because chemicals can be harmful to stones, especially marble, causing discoloration and streaking.

No Chemicals

Herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers should not be used near gravestones, nor should they be used near above-ground structures. Chemicals can cause discoloration of stone (especially marble) and masonry work and can also stain and discolor markers. The location of Eastern Lights may be prone to contact from salt used to melt ice on roadways. If road maintenance crews use salt on the streets lining the cemetery grounds, this could cause long term damage to stone from salt/snow drifts.

Maintenance Training

All persons involved with the maintenance of historic cemeteries, whether professional or volunteers, should be trained regarding the proper care of the markers and landscaping elements. If firms are hired to care for a historic cemetery site, specifications regarding both the routine cemetery maintenance and marker care should be included in contract requirements. Preservation does not happen in a vacuum – and dissemination information regarding proper care is highly recommended. Work that is performed in private without proper documentation for file retention is discouraged.

Historic Landscape Preservation

Retaining historical plantings is an integral part of cemetery preservation. Plant materials are sometimes the only markers that remain at a gravesite. Flowering bulbs and perennials, shrubs, and trees were often placed by grounds crews in response to landscape plans intended to beautify the cemetery. Many plants symbolize religious beliefs that are associated with death and resurrection. Future GPR survey would serve as a good foundation for future archaeological investigations; to provide data for potential landscape restoration projects if desired. However, evergreen, or common perennials can also be used to identify potential burials. These plantings can be useful during restoration and landscape improvement projects.

Grave Plot Plantings

All bushes and shrubs, perennial and bulb flowers, and trees that have been planted at grave plots should be retained. Each plant should be given the care it requires on a seasonal basis (such as trimming or cutting back during the appropriate time of growth cycle). Daylilies and Queen Anne's Lace planted to the south side are among the variety of grave plot plantings in Eastern Lights.

Retention Canopies

The Cemetery's tree canopy should be maintained and preserved for as long as possible, both because they are part of the funerary material of a specific burial site, and because they greatly contribute to the setting and character of the site.

Historical Vegetation vs. Grave Markers

The roots of trees and shrubs can greatly disturb gravestones. Whether to preserve the funerary artifact or the plant is something that must be decided on a case-by-case basis, particularly if the plant has some historical significance. However, the priority is to keep a grave marker in its original position. When possible, vegetation can be moved to a place where it will not interfere with funerary materials. Moving either plant or a marker involves evaluating the historical significance of both the vegetation and marker and determining how the landscape will look if physical changes are made to the grave plot.

Drainage

It is recommended that any cemetery that has been repeatedly impacted by highwater tables, and/or inundation of flood waters, should be investigated by a qualified Civil Engineer. Recommendations to improve drainage must comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards, have the least possible visual impact on the cemetery, and do no damage to historic features. It is also recommended that any drainage study be conducted and required changes to the subsurface of a cemetery be made, prior to any historic landscape restoration or other improvements being initiated.

- Have a landscape plan created for the entire Cemetery by a landscape professional
- Install measure to prevent further ponding and an improved stormwater system
- Create pre-disaster and post-disaster plan for the Cemetery
- Identify rising flood water mitigation options
- Establish partnerships with local environmental and tree advocacy groups

Create Programming & Outreach

- Increased community outreach through educational sessions
- Consider regularly scheduled events that help encourage community stewardship:
 - Memorial Day Workshop
 - Juneteenth Workshop

- United Way Day of Caring Workshop
- Earth Day
- Identify partnerships with community organizations for help in maintenance and care of the cemetery:
 - Boy Scouts Council
 - Veteran related groups (Team Rubicon)
- Consider establishment of volunteer/conservancy/friends group
 - Local 501(c)(3) cleanup groups
- Consider having a community survey in which respondents could indicate whether or not they have an interest in seeing unmarked graves be marked or remembered in some capacity. Different examples of markers could be utilized to remember those buried in Eastern Lights Cemetery. Two possibilities (as described in an Indiana Division of Natural Resource cemetery glossary) include:
 - **Cenotaph** – a grave where the body is not present; a memorial erected as over a grave, but at a place where the body has not been interred. A cenotaph may look exactly like any other grave in terms of marker and inscription. Cenotaphs often commemorate the deaths of those lost at sea, in war, or by some other means where recovery or transportation of a body would be difficult.
 - **Centerpiece** – a sculpture or other monument, usually in the middle of a cemetery, commemorating no one in particular, but for the benefit of all buried there. Centerpieces usually are religious and are quite prominent in many Catholic traditions, as with the ornate crucifixion scenes of French-Canadian cemeteries and the large crosses of Mexican cemeteries.
- Donations/fundraising – for example, a memorial bench or tree program
- Establish Day of Service and Memorial Day celebrations
- Explore partnerships with neighbors, master gardeners/naturalists, churches, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4H, local landscapers, etc.
- Implement an Adopt to Plot program
- Conduct oral histories
- Encourage use of the cemetery for passive activities like photography, bird watching, history or nature walks, etc. A watched cemetery is a protected cemetery!

Additional Resources

- Pennsylvania Cemeteries, Crematories and Funeral Homes Association
 - <https://pccfa.com/>
- Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds
 - <https://pahallowedgrounds.org/>
- Pennsylvania Cemetery Preservation and Recordation
 - <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/cemetery-preservation/documentation/index.html>
- How to Find a Conservator (American Institute for Conservation)
 - <https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/find-a-conservator>
- Pennsylvania Orphans' Court Forms
 - <https://www.pacourts.us/forms/for-the-public/orphans-court-forms>
- National Park Service - Preservation Briefs
 - <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/preservation-briefs.htm>
 - Please see:
 - *Brief #2: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings*
 - *Brief #6: Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings*
 - *Brief #36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes*
 - *Brief #48: Preserving Grave Markers in Historic Cemeteries*

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Appendices

Appendix A

Historic Cemetery Plot and Marker Survey

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

CEMETERY PLOT & MONUMENT FEATURE SURVEY

Site:	Surveyor(s):	Date:
Weather: Temperature:_____ Humidity:_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny <input type="checkbox"/> Rain/snow/fog <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny & windy <input type="checkbox"/> Rain/snow/fog & windy <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast & windy		

I. IDENTIFICATION (*Fill in blanks as instructed*)

CEM_ID:	Monument Plot ID#:
FeatureID: <input type="checkbox"/> Pri. Monument_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Base_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Footstone_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Fragments_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Enclosure_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture_____	
Associated Monument Plot ID#	Comment:
Representation: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Society <input type="checkbox"/> Undeterminable	
Name: (blank, hidden, illegible, inscription)	Footstone (blank, hidden, illegible, inscription) / Other:
First Death Date:	Last Death Date: No. of Insc:
Military Marker:	
Comments:	

II. ENVIRONMENT (*Check appropriate fields.*)

Orientation: <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SE <input type="checkbox"/> SW <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Context: <input type="checkbox"/> Isolated (4+ ft) <input type="checkbox"/> Contiguous (0-4 ft) Precinct: <input type="checkbox"/> Paved <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaved
Plot Placement: <input type="checkbox"/> In rows <input type="checkbox"/> By Topography <input type="checkbox"/> Along designed path <input type="checkbox"/> Random
Grade Slope: <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-slope <input type="checkbox"/> None
Exposure: <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Encroaching Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Overhang <input type="checkbox"/> EncVeg+TreeOH
Plot Accessories: <input type="checkbox"/> Bench <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/> Container/Vase <input type="checkbox"/> Plaque <input type="checkbox"/> Votives <input type="checkbox"/> None
Enclosure: <input type="checkbox"/> Curb <input type="checkbox"/> Wall <input type="checkbox"/> Railing <input type="checkbox"/> Chain/Pipe <input type="checkbox"/> Boundary Blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> None
Comments:

III. DESCRIPTION (*Check appropriate fields.*)

Primary Monument: <input type="checkbox"/> Complete >75% <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete <75% <input type="checkbox"/> Total Loss (broken at grade)	
Choose <u>one</u> type below to describe the mortuary feature. If Marker, indicate Form as well:	
Marker Type:	Marker Form: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Double <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple
	Simple: <input type="checkbox"/> Headstone w/o Footstone <input type="checkbox"/> Headstone with Footstone <input type="checkbox"/> Footstone only <input type="checkbox"/> Block <input type="checkbox"/> Stele <input type="checkbox"/> Slab over Crypt
	Compound: <input type="checkbox"/> Headstone/Base <input type="checkbox"/> Headstone/Base w/ Footstone <input type="checkbox"/> Stele/Base <input type="checkbox"/> Table <input type="checkbox"/> Block on Base <input type="checkbox"/> Platform <input type="checkbox"/> Bedstead <input type="checkbox"/> Pyramid <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestal <input type="checkbox"/> Ped w/Obelisk <input type="checkbox"/> Ped w/Column <input type="checkbox"/> Ped w/Cross <input type="checkbox"/> Ped w/Other <input type="checkbox"/> Obelisk on base <input type="checkbox"/> Column on base <input type="checkbox"/> Cross on base <input type="checkbox"/> Other on base
Cenotaph	<input type="checkbox"/> Simple <input type="checkbox"/> Compound Fragments: <input type="checkbox"/> Fragments Only
Tomb:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wall Vault <input type="checkbox"/> Mausoleum <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Shaping: <input type="checkbox"/> Shaped <input type="checkbox"/> Partly Shaped <input type="checkbox"/> Unshaped	Dressed: <input type="checkbox"/> Finished F/B <input type="checkbox"/> Finished F Only
Architect/Carver:	Info from: <input type="checkbox"/> Surveyed <input type="checkbox"/> Welch <input type="checkbox"/> G. Stone
Add'l Marks:	Primary: Width_____ Height_____ Depth_____
Comments:	Base: Width_____ Height_____ Depth_____
	Footstone: Width_____ Height_____ Depth_____
	Other:

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

IV. MATERIALS (*Check or circle appropriate fields.*)

	Primary Element	Base	Assoc. Footstone	Other	Ornament
MonID#					
Argillite					
Brick					
Bronze					
Cast Stone					
Concrete					
Fieldstone					
Granite-Black					
Granite-Gray					
Granite-Pink					
Greenstone					
Iron-Cast					
Iron-Galvanized					
Iron-Wrought/Rolled					
Lead					
Limestone					
Marble					
Sandstone-Blue/Gray					
Sandstone-Brown					
Sandstone-Red/Orange					
Sandstone-Tan					
Slate-Black					
Slate-Gray/Blue					
Slate-Green					
Slate-Purple/Red					
Wood					
Zinc					
Other					
Comments:					

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

V. CONDITION (Rate each occurrence 1 to 4, with 1 being just slightly evident, or 0 if not relevant or evident)

	Primary Element	Base	Assoc. Footstone	Other	Ornament
MonID#					
Bedding Cracks					
Biogrowth					
Bowed					
Buried/Sunken					
Corrosion (metal)					
Cracked					
Detachment					
Detachment-Loss					
Disaggregation					
Dissassembled					
Dissassembled-Loss					
Erosion					
Exposed Foundation					
Failed Repair					
Flaking					
Fragmentation – No Loss					
Fragmentation - Loss					
Graffiti					
Loose					
Mower Abrasion					
Open Joint					
Soiling/Staining					
Spalling					
Tilted/Fallen					
Vegetation					
Other					
Note: Mandatory to fill in Legibility					
Legibility-Design					
Legibility-Inscription					
Condition Comments:					

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

VI. Repairs (Check to indicate known or good evidence of existence)

	Primary Element	Base	Assoc. Footstone	Other	Ornament
MonID#					
Abrasive Cleaning					
Apparent Soft Cleaning					
Basal Resetting					
Coatings					
Dutchman					
Mortar Fills					
Pinning					
Recarving					
Repair – Adhesive, Epoxy					
Repair – Hard Cement					
Repair – Soft Lime Based					
Repointing					
Other					
Comments:					

VII. Alterations (Check to indicate known or good evidence of existence)

	Primary Element	Base	Assoc. Footstone	Other	Ornament
MonID#					
Alterations					
Replacement					
Enframements					
Mounting					
New Carving					
Relocation					
Shelters					
Removal					
Other					
Comments					

VIII. GENERAL COMMENTS (*Document inscription, add additional comments or sketches.*)

References:

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

COMPLEX GROUP & FAMILY PLOT SURVEY

Site:	Surveyor(s):	Date:
Weather: Temperature: _____ Humidity: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny <input type="checkbox"/> Rain/snow/fog <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast <input type="checkbox"/> Sunny & windy <input type="checkbox"/> Rain/snow/fog & windy <input type="checkbox"/> Overcast & windy		

I. IDENTIFICATION *(Fill in blanks as instructed)*

CEM_ID:	Group Plot ID#: GP_____ <i>(Incorporate predominant CemPlotID)</i>		
<i>(List all features in the group plot, using the numbers given to each as documented on their individual Survey Forms. A simple sketch will help you later identify the photographs.)</i>			
CemPlotID	Name	Death Date	Sketch
Associated Monument Plot ID#		Comment:	
Representation: <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Family <input type="checkbox"/> Society <input type="checkbox"/> Undeterminable			
First Death Year:		Last Death Year:	
Comments:			

II. ENVIRONMENT *(Check appropriate fields.)*

Orientation: <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> W <input type="checkbox"/> NE <input type="checkbox"/> NW <input type="checkbox"/> SE <input type="checkbox"/> SW <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown	
Context: <input type="checkbox"/> Isolated (3+ ft) <input type="checkbox"/> Contiguous (0-3 ft)	Precinct: <input type="checkbox"/> Paved <input type="checkbox"/> Unpaved
Plot Placement: <input type="checkbox"/> In rows <input type="checkbox"/> By Topography <input type="checkbox"/> Along designed path <input type="checkbox"/> Random	
Grade Slope: <input type="checkbox"/> Positive <input type="checkbox"/> Negative <input type="checkbox"/> Cross-slope <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> None	
Exposure: <input type="checkbox"/> Open <input type="checkbox"/> Encroaching Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Tree Overhang <input type="checkbox"/> EncVeg+TreeOH	
Plot Accessories: <input type="checkbox"/> Bench <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/> Container/Vase <input type="checkbox"/> Plaque <input type="checkbox"/> Votives <input type="checkbox"/> None	
Enclosure: <input type="checkbox"/> Curb <input type="checkbox"/> Wall <input type="checkbox"/> Railing <input type="checkbox"/> Chain/Pipe <input type="checkbox"/> Boundary Blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> None	
Enclosure Material: <i>(Choose from material list on the Plot Survey Form)</i> Material 1: _____ Material 2: _____	Enclosure Condition: <i>(Rate each occurrence 1 to 4, with 1 being just slightly evident, or 0 if not relevant or evident)</i> Rating: _____
Landscape Issues: <i>(Comment on landscape issues, overgrown trees, brush, ground erosion)</i>	
Comments:	

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

FRAGMENT AND REMOVAL SURVEY

Site:	Surveyor(s):	Date:

SURVEY DETAILS *(Fill in blanks as instructed)*

CEM_ID:	Monument Plot ID#:	Fragment ID#:
Fragment Origin:	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Monument	<input type="checkbox"/> Footstone <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
Origin Comments:		
Cause of detachment, if discernable:		
Dimension of fragment (inches):		
Material:	Conditions evident on the fragment:	
Visible Inscription:	Visible Design:	
Storage Box:	Storage Location:	
Comments:		

Sketch if appropriate:

HISTORIC CEMETERY PLOT AND MARKER SURVEY

FRAGMENT AND REMOVAL SURVEY

Site, Surveyor(s), CEM_ID, Monument Plot ID# and Grid:

Use the Definitions and Methods described in the Monument Survey Manual.

Fragment ID#:

Definition: A unique number that identifies each fragment associated with a Monument Plot ID#.

Method: Transfer the sequential numbers indicated on the Monument Plot Survey form.

Fragment origin:

Definition: The monument feature to which the fragment belongs, if discernable.

Method: Check those that apply:

Origin comments:

Definition: Further clarification of the origin of the fragment.

Method: Check which monument feature the fragment most likely came from, if discernable.

Cause of detachment, if discernible:

Definition: The known or attributed cause of damage.

Method: If discernible, note the cause.

Dimension of fragment (in):

Definition: The maximum height, width and depth of the fragment.

Method: Note the dimensions in inches.

Material and Conditions:

Use the definitions and methods from the Survey Manual. List major conditions only.

Visible Inscription:

Definition: Any original lettering still visible on the fragment.

Method: Note each letter (in the given language) visible on the fragment. Use brackets to indicate any letters that are not certain.

Visible Design:

Definition: Original decoration still visible on the fragment

Method: Briefly describe visible decoration.

Storage Box & Location:

Definition: Fragment storage boxes are usually lined with closed cell, inert polyethylene foam.

Method: Note the box number used for storage.

Method: Note the off-site location.

Comments:

Definition: Record comments regarding any condition or storage issues not otherwise accounted for within the survey. Provide a sketch if appropriate.

Method: Write concise and clear comments in recognized terminology for cemetery architecture and conditions. Use the space below for sketches, if appropriate.

Appendix B

Sample Cemetery Work Plan

Appendix C

Previous Resource Survey Form and Documentation

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORIC RESOURCE SURVEY FORM — PHOTO/SITE PLAN SHEET

89A

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Bureau of Historic Preservation

Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026

Survey Code/Tax Parcel/Other No.: _____ County: Blair

Municipality: Altoona Address: 110-18 South 10th Street

Historic Name/Other Name: Eastern Light Cemetery

SITE PLAN

PHOTO INFORMATION

Attach Photo Here

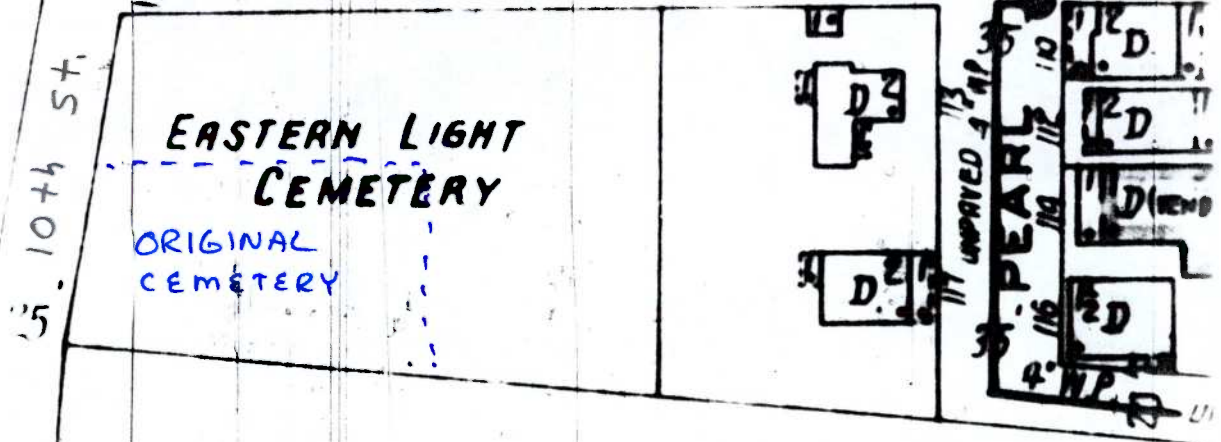
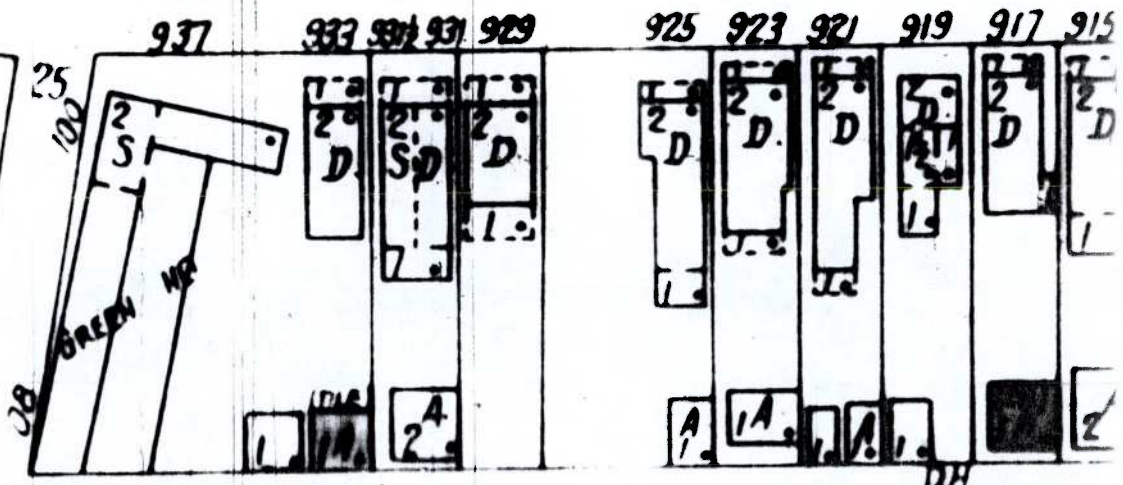
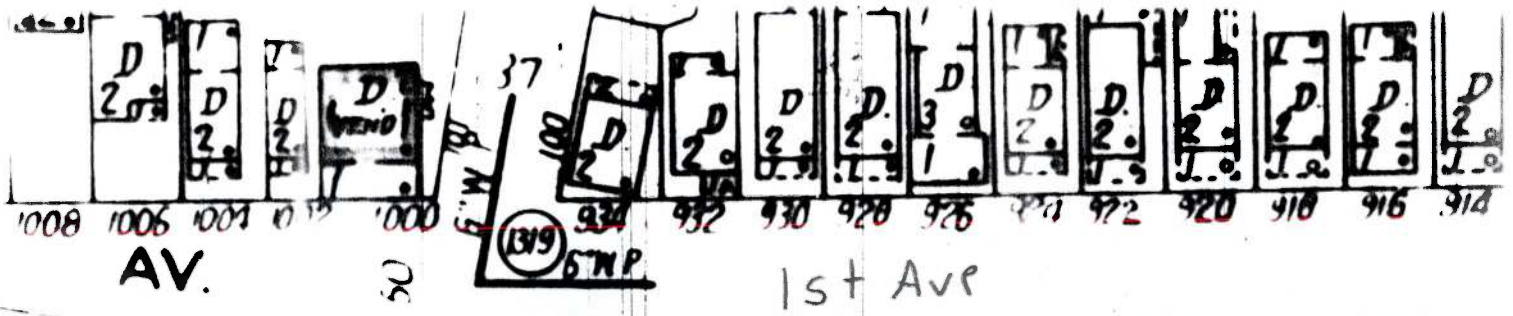
Roll 1, # 16

SEE ATTACHED

Number	Description of View	Direction of Camera
1	Overall view of cemetery	SW

Photographer Name: Stewart Bruce Date: 8/4/95
 Negative Location: PHMC

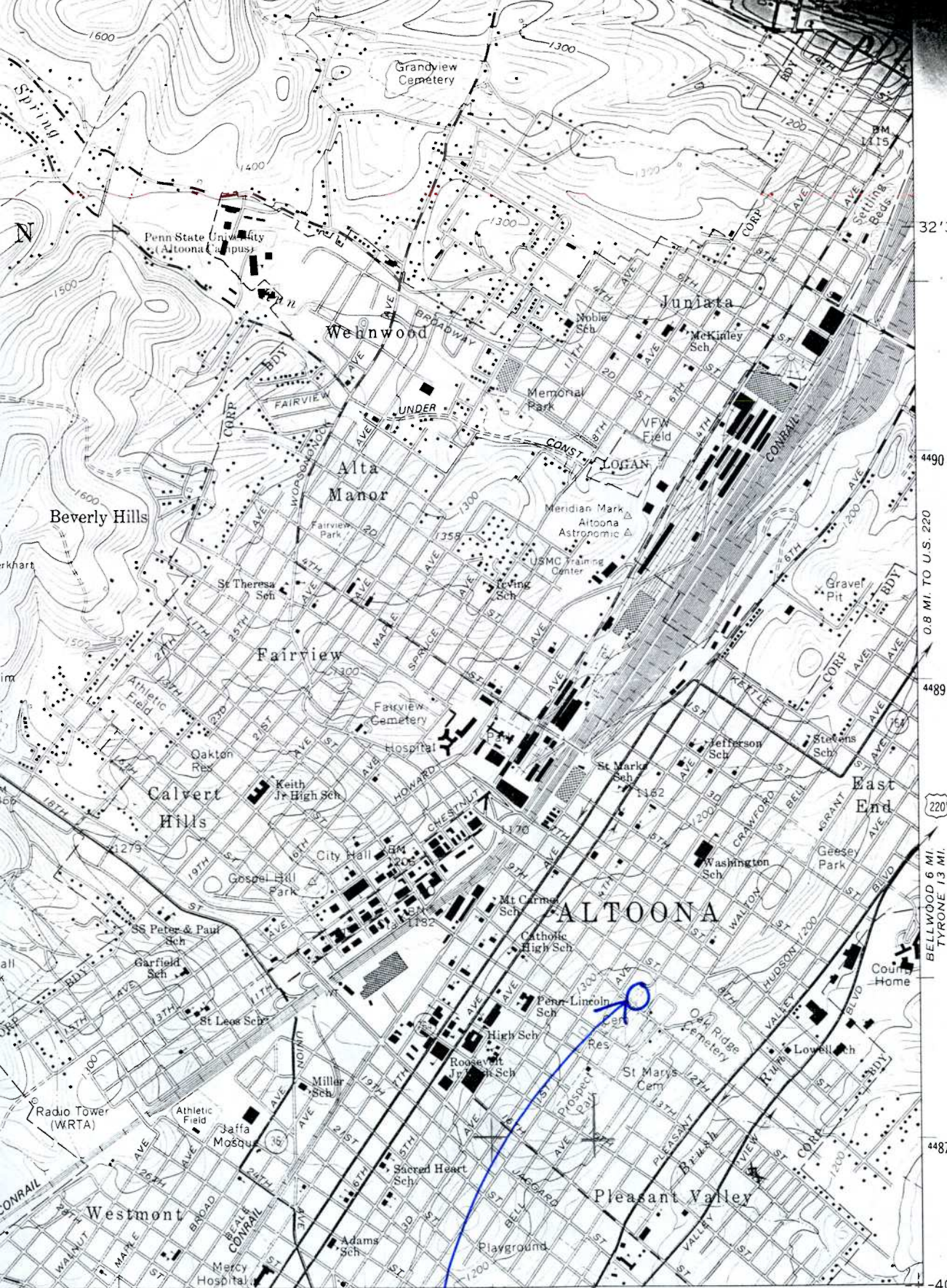
See reverse for additional instruction



SANBORN
ALTOONA
1932, sheet 43

Altoona sheet 43, 1932

E R Y



A000013828783

32'30"
4490
4489
4487000M
-40° 30'

25' 719

DUNCANSVILLE (U.S. 22 & 220) 6 MI.

● INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA—1982
HOLLIDAYSBURG 5 MI.
PA TURNPIKE 35 MI.

722000M E. 78° 22' 30"



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty —————
- Medium-duty ————
- Light-duty —————
- Unimproved dirt = = = = =

- U.S. Route (rectangle symbol)
- State Route (circle symbol)

**EASTERN
LIGHT
CEMETERY**

ALTOONA, PA.

(FRANKSTOWN)
5364 IV NE

IDENTIFICATION AND LOCATION

Survey Code: _____ Tax Parcel/Other No.: _____
County: 1. Blair 2.
Municipality: 1. Altoona 2.
Address: 110-18 South 10th Street
Historic Name: Eastern Light Cemetery
Other Name: _____
Owner Name/Address: _____
Owner Category Private Public-local Public-state Public-federal
Resource Category: Building District Site Structure Object
Number/Approximate Number of Resources Covered by This Form: _____
USGS Quad: 1. Altoona 2.
UTM A. 17-721220-4487640 C.
References: B. D.

HISTORIC AND CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Historic Function Category: _____ Subcategory: _____ Code: _____
A. Funerary Cemetery 07A
B.
C.
D.

Particular Type: A. Cemetery
B.
C.
D.

Current Function Category: _____ Subcategory: _____ Code: _____
A.
B.
C.
D.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: A.
B. C.
D. Other: _____
Exterior Materials: Foundation _____ Roof _____
Walls _____ Walls _____
Other _____ Other _____
Structural System: 1 _____ 2 _____
Width: _____ Depth: _____ Stories/Height: _____

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Year Built: 1865 Additions/Alterations: 1887

Basis for Dating: Documentary Physical
Explain: Oral History and deed information

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation: 1. African American.
Associated Individuals: 1. 2.
Associated Events: 1. 2.
Architects/Engineers: 1. 2.
Builders: 1. 2.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Transcript of speech given by Bob Resig at Eastern Light Cemetery, 1988.

PREVIOUS SURVEY, DETERMINATIONS

EVALUATION (Survey Director/Consultants Only)

Individual NR Potential: Yes No Context(s):

Contributes to Potential District Yes No District Name/Status:
New historic districts in Altoona.

Explain: Association with African American history.

THREATS

1. None 2. Public Development 3. Private Development 4. Neglect
 5. Other

Explain:

SURVEYOR INFORMATION

Surveyor Name/Title: Stewart Bruce Date: August 4, 1995
Project Name: African American Project, Southwestern Pennsylvania
Organization: P. H. M. C. Telephone: 814-539-2016
Street and No.: 319 Washington Street, Suite 370
City, State: Johnstown, PA
Zip Code: 15901
Additional Survey Documentation:

Associated Survey Codes:

Survey Code: Tax Parcel/Other No.:
County: Blair Municipality: Altoona
Address: 110-18 South 10th Street
Historic/Other Name: Eastern Light Cemetery

Physical Description:

This rectangular shaped property is bounded by Tenth Street and St Johns Cemetery to the southwest; Oak Ridge Cemetery to the southeast, and by alleys and residential housing to the northern sections. The area is about 146 feet by 108 feet. The original area of the oldest part was only 61 by 60 feet. The land is flat with some trees. The cemetery is maintained and most of the headstones are in good condition. Some of the older stones are suffering degradation as a result of weathering and a few stones are knocked over. In the southeastern section of the cemetery there is a family plot that is surrounded with a small concrete retaining wall that at one time had a fence attached to it. This wall had swastikas painted on it with spray paint. The entire cemetery is partially fenced with a recent wooden panel type fence.

Historical Narrative

This traditional cultural property derives its primary significance from its association with African American history in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This cemetery has considerable cultural significance for the Black community that traces descent from those interred there. Additionally, it derives importance due to its association with discrimination that occurred during the historical period. The local community could not inter those members who had passed on within local white cemeteries and were forced to have segregated cemeteries. These cemeteries also derive significance from the many war veterans that are buried there.

The Eastern Light Cemetery was established in 1865. It was for the sole use of Black residents of Altoona. In 1887 the cemetery was expanded and nearly tripled in size by the purchase of additional property surrounding the original cemetery in the southeastern part of the current cemetery. This land was purchased by a group of black citizens; John Ferguson, Geo. Hopper, Geo. Jackson, Henry Johnson, and John Russell from W. B. McCormick. These citizens may have represented the trustees of the cemetery. As the black population of Altoona grew the cemetery needed more space. These new immigrants came to Altoona to seek employment opportunities in the growing service industries of this industrial town. Employment by the railroad in the repair shops was not an option for the majority of blacks in Altoona.

There are 115 known burials here including six Civil War veterans. Some of these veterans served in the unit that was depicted in the movie Glory.

Grantor W. B. McCormick, Excr.
of R. H. McCormick

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

All that certain tract or piece of land situate in the City of Altoona, in the County of Blair and State of Pennsylvania, bounded and described as follows, to wit: Fronting ~~54~~ feet more or less on 10th Street; thence in a northeasterly direction along a 15 foot alley 146 feet more or less to another alley, thence in a northeastern direction along said alley 108 feet more or less to lands of Oak Ridge Cemetery; thence along said cemetery in a southwestern direction 33 feet more or less to property of colored cemetery; thence along said property in a northwestern direction 60 feet more or less to post; thence ^{containing} along said property in a southwestern direction 116 feet more or less to 10th Street and place of beginning.

Grantee John M. Ferguson ~~xxxx~~ Geo. G. Hooper, Geo. Jackson, Henry Johnson & John Russell

Date of Deed October 20th 1887

Consideration \$350.00

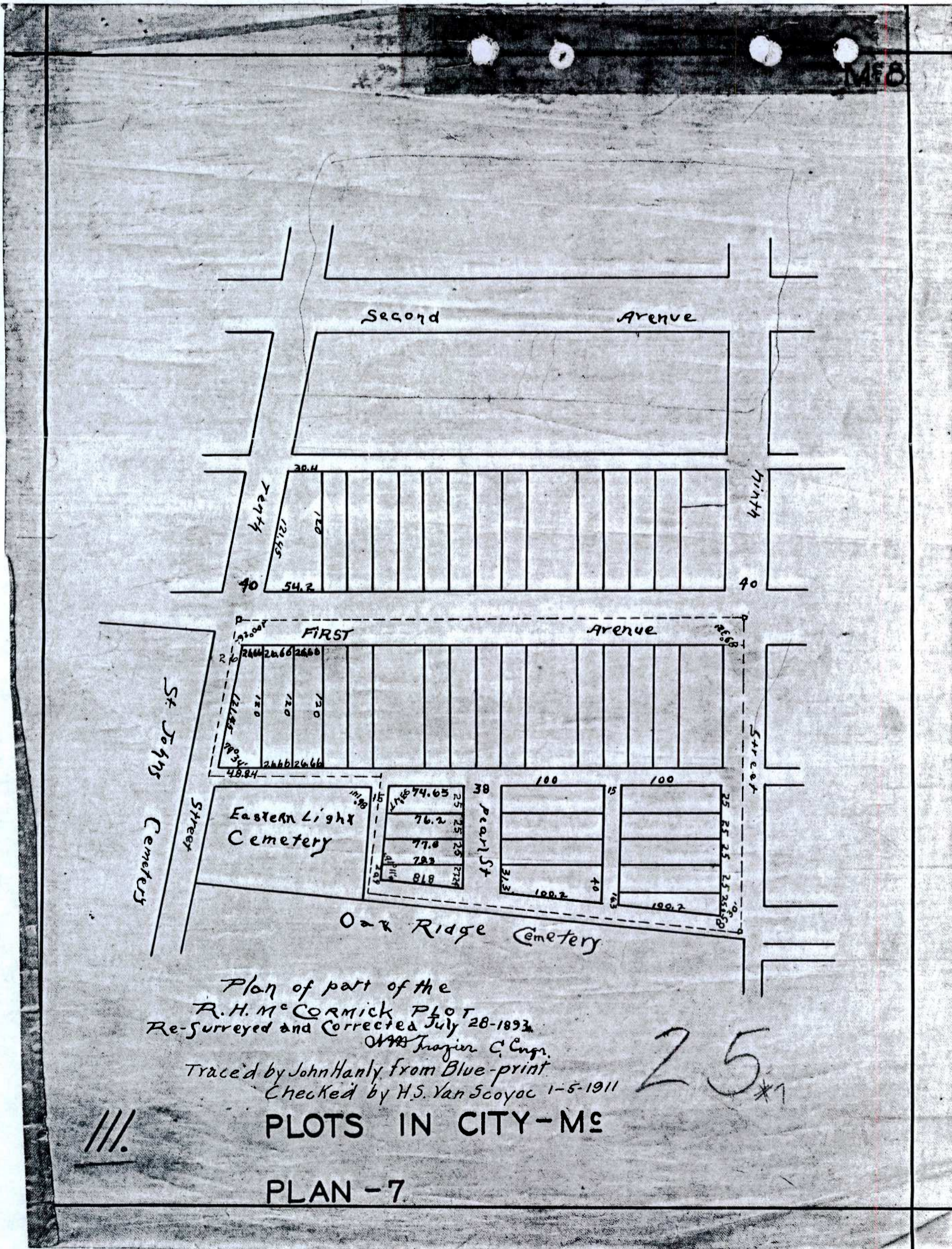
House No. (Colored Cemetery)

Block Crawford - 9
McCormick - 9

Recorded D. B. 65, Page 497
Reg. 9/23/15

Copy to City Assessor 9/25/15

(OVER)



Speech given by Bob Resig at Eastern
Lite Cemetery on Oct 15, 1988 at 1:00 P.M.

" Welcome to Eastern Lite Cemetery, this
cemetery was founded in ~~1857~~¹⁸⁶⁵ as Altoona's
first Black cemetery. There are approx-
imately 115 known burials here.
Many interesting people are buried here
possibly even the ancestors of some of you
people here today! You will meet some
of these people later on today.

We are here to dedicate 4 new
grave stones of men that fought in the
Civil War, and are buried here. These
stones are given free of charge by the
Federal Government, to a veteran of any
war. His grave must be either un-marked
or else need a new stone to replace an
old worn one.

We are members of Company M of
the re-created 62nd Pennsylvania Volunteer
Infantry. Originally our members were
from mainly Blair County, the Hollid-
aysburg, Altoona Area. Besides wearing
the uniform of a Civil War Soldier,
we have other projects. We check

Local Cemeteries and order stones from the Government for any veteran who needs one. Eastern Life Cemetery is only one of our projects. Presently, members of Co. M of the 62ND Pennsylvania are working in 7 other area cemeteries to get stones for the veterans buried there. We are dressed, and equipped, with authentic copies of the same clothing as the 6 Black Veterans of the Civil War who are buried here.

93,441 Black men served in combat units during the Civil War, there were 166 regiments raised. These men were from both Southern, and Northern States. In September of 1862, President Abraham Lincoln made his Emancipation Proclamation freeing all the slaves, and the official recruiting of Black Soldiers began.

In five Southern States recently freed Black men began to enlist in all Black Regiments, officially called United States Colored Infantry. Each Regiment was given a number.

Black Regiments raised in Pennsylvania.
On page 55 it mentions the color bearers,
and color guards for the 43RD regiment.
These men were hand-picked to carry
and guard the regiment's flag! It
was quite an honor to be chosen
as one of them. On that list you will
see CORPORAL WILLIAM N. MOLSON, the
same one buried in Eastern Lite.

His stone is the middle one of the
three . . . for the
ceremony. Hope this is some help
to you. Sincerely,

Bob Resig

The Northern States received Official permission in early 1863 to raise Black Regiments. Six hundred men promptly left Pennsylvania to enlist in Massachusetts. It was not until June of 1863 that Pennsylvania's Governor Andrew Curtin was ordered to begin raising Black Regiments.

Pennsylvania raised 8,612 men, the most of any Northern State. They made up 11 regiments who were numbered 3rd, 6th, 8th, 22nd, 24th, 25th, 32nd, 41st, 43rd, 45th and 127th regiments. An Eastern Lite Cemetery are 60 Black Veterans of the Civil War. They are:

1. Corporal Granville Hurley of the 8th Regiment U.S.C.T. The 8th was enlisted in the fall of 1863 and served in five battles. In one of them at Jacksonville Florida on Feb. 20, 1864 they lost 66 men killed, 262 wounded and 15 captured for a total loss of 343 men out of 565. The 8th Regiment lost more men than any other Black Regiment in the Civil War!

C. Private James Thomas 107 TH. U.S.C.T.

The 107 TH. Regiment was not raised in Pennsylvania, I can not find any history on him. If any of you people here today have information on any of these men buried here please let men know. If you have any questions on the clothing, or equipment, don't be afraid to ask us. We will be happy to talk with you.

Rev. Bertha,

Here is the copy of the speech I gave at Eastern Hill Cemetery. There is a good book called ADVANCE THE COLORS in the Altoona Library. It is about all the regiments, including the Black ones (U.S.C.T.) raised in Pennsylvania during the Civil War. It shows the flags carried by each regiment, and a short history of each. From page 40 to page 57 is on the

had advanced in the morning, arriving at a little after midnight, having in the meantime, marched forty miles, and fought a severe battle. After a few hours rest, the retreat was renewed, and continued to Jacksonville, where breast-works were thrown up, and preparations made for holding the place, the enemy having followed closely, and threatening an attack. On the 17th of April, the Eighth, now under command of Captain Bailey, was ordered to St. John's Bluff, and was set to fortifying that point, and guarding the stream to prevent the enemy from planting torpedoes. In June, Major Mayer, of the Seventh Colored, was temporarily assigned to the command of the regiment, and under him, participated in numerous raids into the surrounding country, destroying a portion of the Cedar Keys Railroad, and taking some of the enemy's ammunition.

On the 4th of August, General William Birney's Brigade, to which the Eighth now belonged, was ordered to Virginia, and joined General Butler's forces at Deep Bottom on the 12th. As the regiment went into position, the enemy opened upon it from his heavy guns at Fort Darling, wounding eight or ten men. On the 25th, it crossed the James, and went into position upon the Petersburg front, where it was kept on active duty. On the 9th of September, Major Burritt, who was still suffering from the wound received at Olustee, returned and assumed command, and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, in place of Lieutenant Colonel Bartram, who had been chosen Colonel of the Twentieth Colored, Major Mayer returning to his place in the Seventh, and Captain Wagner being promoted to Major. After a few weeks' duty, Colonel Burritt's wound again opening, he was sent to the hospital, and was subsequently, by order of the War Department, put in command of the recruiting rendezvous at Newport News, the command devolving on Major Wagner.

Towards the close of September, the Tenth Corps, to which the regiment belonged, crossed the James, and in connection with the Eighteenth Corps, advanced upon the enemy's works at Chapin's Farm, and the New Market Road. An attack was made early on the morning of the 29th, by the Eighteenth Corps, supported by the Tenth, and a long line of works was carried, and sixteen pieces of artillery and three hundred and fifty prisoners were captured. On the afternoon of this day, General Birney determined to carry a bastioned fort in his front, and selected for the desperate work, a brigade consisting of the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Colored. The Ninth was first led to the charge, and after a resolute movement was forced to retire, having suffered severely. The Eighth was next put in. It numbered only about two hundred men; but deploying eight companies as skirmishers, Major Wagner promptly moved to the assault, and gained a position within one hundred yards of the enemy's works, where the men commenced pouring in a steady fire, effectually driving the rebel gunners from their pieces. For several hours, and until the troops on its left were withdrawn, this position was held, the regiment not being in sufficient strength to carry the fort. Seeing the flank of the regiment exposed, the enemy immediately charged; but Major Wagner delivered a counter charge, breaking the hostile line, and thus saving his entire regiment from capture. At dark, it was relieved, and with the division fell back to the line of works captured in the morning. The loss in this engagement was twelve killed and sixty-one wounded. Captains Cooper and Richardson, and Lieutenants Seth Lewis and Charles C. Couse, were among the severely wounded, the latter mortally. On the following day, while the troops were busy re-

versing the breast-works, the enemy attacked. The Eighth was hurried to the threatened point, and assisted in repulsing the enemy, sustaining some loss.

On the morning of the 13th of October, the division was ordered out for an offensive movement. The Eighth was put upon the front as skirmishers, and led on through a dense wood, on the Darbytown Road. The enemy's skirmishers were encountered, and after sharp fighting were driven from three successive lines where they had taken shelter back to their main line. Late in the afternoon, the regiment was relieved by fresh troops. It entered this engagement with one hundred and fifty men, and lost seven killed, thirty wounded and one missing. Captains Alexander G. Dickey, Elijah Lewis, and ~~James A. Pratt~~, were among the severely wounded, Captain Dickey mortally, and Captain Pratt with the loss of an arm. At the beginning of November, Major Wagner was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel of the Ninth Regiment, and Lieutenant Colonel Barritt, owing to his wounds, being still unfit for duty in the field, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel C. Armstrong, of the Ninth, was placed in command of the Eighth, and promoted to Colonel. Soon afterwards, a number of recruits were sent to it from Camp William Penn, largely increasing its strength. When the spring campaign opened, the regiment crossed the James, and participated in the operations which resulted in the fall of Petersburg, and was among the foremost to enter the city. Soon after the surrender of Lee, it returned to Petersburg, and thence proceeded by sea to Texas. Upon its arrival there, it was stationed at Ringgold Barracks, on the Rio Grande, and beyond the usual camp duty, and an occasional expedition to settle Indian troubles, was little employed. The Mexican (Liberal) troops were quartered on the opposite side of the river, and between the officers of the two encampments, an intimacy sprang up, which resulted in a free interchange of social hospitalities. On the 10th of October, the regiment started on the homeward march, and proceeding via Santiago, New Orleans, and New York, arrived at Philadelphia on the 3d of December, and on the 12th, was mustered out of service. It is worthy of note, that of all the colored regiments in the United States service, this one, as shown by the official army register, lost in battle, more officers and men than any other.

FIELD AND STAFF OFFICERS.

NAME	RANK	DATE OF SERVICE INTO SERVICE	REMARKS
Charles W. Fribley	Colonel	Oct. 9, '61	Pr. from Capt. Co. 2, 8th reg. P. V., Nov. 21, 1861—killed at Olustee, Florida, February 21, 1862.
Saml C. Armstrong	do	Nov. 2, '64	Promoted from Lieutenant Colonel, 2d reg. United States Colored Troops, Nov. 2, 1862—det. Brigadier General, March 13, 1863—mustered out with regiment, November 10, 1863.
Nelson B. Bartram	Lt. Col.	Oct. 31, '63	Promoted to Colonel 23d reg. U. S. C. T., Jan. 23, 1864—mustered out, October 7, 1863.
Lozen Burritt	do	Mar. 7, '62	Promoted from 1st Lieutenant company K, 58th regiment P. V., to Major, Nov. 7, 1861—mustered at Olustee, Fla., Feb. 2, 1862—co. 2d Lt. Co. June 1, 1864—mustered out with reg., Nov. 24, 1863.

CORPORAL GRANVILLE HURLEY
WAS IN THIS ONE

EIGHTH UNITED STATES COLORED
REGIMENT.

RECRUITING for this regiment was commenced in September, 1863, the men rendezvousing at Camp William Penn, near Philadelphia, where a regimental organization was effected with the following field officers: Charles W. Fribley, Colonel; Nelson B. Bartram, Lieutenant Colonel; Loren Burritt, Major. Colonel Fribley had served as Captain in the Eighty-fourth Pennsylvania, Lieutenant Colonel Bartram in the Seventieth New York, and Major Burritt in the Fifty-sixth Pennsylvania. The camp was under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Louis Wagner of the Eighty-eighth, and as two other Pennsylvania Colored regiments had been formed here, the routine of duty was well established. In December, Major Burritt, with three companies A, F, and D, proceeded to the State of Delaware, for the purpose of obtaining recruits. At Wilmington and Seaford, these troops were handsomely received by the citizens, and a number of recruits were obtained.

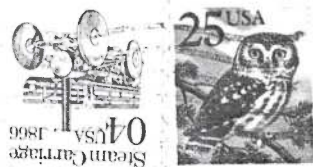
On the 16th of January, 1864, the regiment left camp, and proceeding to New York, embarked upon two transports, the Prometheus and the City of Bath, bound for Hilton Head, to which point the command had been ordered. The City of Bath made a speedy passage, but the Prometheus was tossed about by adverse weather, and was compelled to put in at Fortress Monroe, delaying its arrival at its destination for two days. The regiment was assigned to Howitzers Brigade of Seymour's Division. On the 4th of February, the division was reviewed by General Gilmore, in command of the Department, the regiment eliciting much commendation by its good soldierly appearance.

On the 5th of February, the regiment, in conjunction with a force of about seven thousand men, all under command of General Truman Seymour, embarked for a campaign in Florida, and on the evening of the 7th, landed at Jacksonville, on the St. John's River. At sunset on the following day, the march began. Eight miles out, the advance came upon an encampment of rebels from which they had just fled, abandoning, in their haste, a quantity of stores and several pieces of artillery. Early on the following morning, three companies of the Eighth, under command of Captain Wagner, made a descent on Finnegan's Depot, on the Tallahassee Railroad, capturing a quantity of stores, and one prisoner. For a short time, the regiment was detached from the brigade, and placed on duty guarding and repairing railroad bridges, and was successively stationed at Finnegan's, Picket House, Baldwin, and Barbour's. On the 19th of February, a change in organization was made, whereby the Seventh Connecticut, the Seventh New Hampshire, and Eighth Colored, were united in a brigade, to the command of which Colonel Hawley, of the

Seventh Connecticut, was assigned. The enemy was known to be posted at Lake City, under General Finnegan, and against this post General Seymour determined to lead so much of his force as could be spared from garrison duty in his rear. Finnegan, discovering a disposition of the Union commander to advance upon him, determined not to await an attack at Lake City, but to advance some fifteen miles to meet it at a point near Olustee, where he took a strong position, with his forces formed on a swamp extending southward from Ocala Pond, his centre protected by the swamp, his right resting on an earth-work shielded by rifle-pits, and his left posted on a slight elevation, sheltered by trees and guarded by cavalry. Unaware of this advance and new disposition of the enemy's troops, Seymour, who was at Barbour's early on the morning of the 20th, began to move. A march of a few hours, brought the column to Samason's, a distance of twelve miles. After a brief rest, the march was resumed, and at two P. M., a body of the enemy's cavalry was encountered, whose quick advance gave way. The artillery moved upon the road, and was flanked upon each side by a column of infantry. When nearing Olustee, and while proceeding quietly along without any expectation of meeting the foe, the head of the column was suddenly fired into by the enemy, from his strong lines in his well chosen position. The cavalry, and the Seventh Connecticut, which was armed with Spencer rifles, were thrown forward as skirmishers, but soon found that they could make little impression. Hawley's Brigade was in advance, Barton's and Montgomery's following at short intervals. Hamilton's Battery was quickly brought into position, but in that dead level could get no commanding ground. Without awaiting the arrival of the rest of his force, Seymour posted the Seventh New Hampshire in position on the right of the road, and the Eighth Colored upon the left, and pushed them at once into action. The Eighth, though scarcely a month from camp, and with hardly any skill in handling a musket, boldly advanced in face of a withering fire from the enemy's strong and well chosen lines. Hamilton's guns thundered in its rear, adding to the terrors, and in some instances to the dangers of its position: but still it stood firm. For three-quarters of an hour, the action raged with unmitigated fury, these raw troops maintaining their ground without the least swerve, with a courage worthy of veterans. Several color-bearers were shot down, but many officers fell; but it preserved an undimmed front. At this juncture, the enemy, whose lines greatly overreached the Union front, charged and the unprotected left flank of the Eighth, threatening its capture. Seeing that the ground could be no longer held, General Seymour ordered the regiment to retire. It was executed in good order, the men firing heavily as they went. Barton's and Montgomery's brigades rapidly came up and took the places of the troops withdrawn, and were in a similar manner beaten in detail. Seymour being finally compelled to retire rapidly, with a loss of a part of his artillery. The loss in the Eighth was very severe. Two officers and forty-one men were killed, nine officers and one hundred and eighty men were wounded, and six were missing, all of whom, it was subsequently ascertained, were wounded and left on the field. Colonel Fribley and Lieutenant Thomas J. Goldsborough were killed; Major Burritt, Captain Wagner, and Lieutenants Seth Lewis and George Warrington, were among the officers wounded. The color company went into action with forty-eight enlisted men, and lost in killed and wounded all but six.

The retreat was continued to Barbour's, the point from which the command

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