



# STONE MOUNTAIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Greetings!

Last weekend we had a good crowd in for our Annual Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast. For many of us, it was time to catch up. The Wells Brown House was appropriately decorated, the food was great, but the patriotic music was missing! We missed Frank Luton who always peps things up for us and the community and wish him well as he recuperates at home from his illness. We also send out our regards to Georgeanne Hoffman and hope she gets back walking again soon. We learned last week that Bob Cowhig has passed away. Bob was a good friend to the Society and the community, always working to strengthen the partnership between the park and the village. I was fortunate to work with him and always enjoyed his clear vision and sense of humor. We also proudly announce our first international partaker of Rusty Hamby's pancakes, Mari Jo Ford's grandson

**IN THIS ISSUE: Our City Cemetery, What Happens to Our Banners?, and Butter Pecan Cake!**



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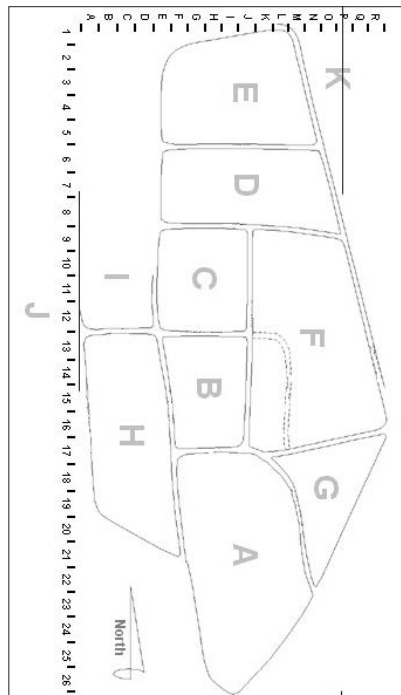
and head of the Foreign Languages Department at the University of Toulouse, France was visiting his family and made a point of stopping by. It was great to meet him and see his interest in the history of the village.

Mark your calendars for our next fundraiser. We are planning a BBQ on Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup> with pulled pork donated by the Sneads, coleslaw and banana pudding made by Anne Hamby, Brunswick stew by the Masons, beverages donated by New South and more. Plan on coming, we got a table waiting for you!

We received a marvelous collection of memorabilia associated with the Annual Stone Mountain Fourth of July Parade that started in 1983 and continued for decades. The event was meticulously organized and involved the whole community as well as surrounding areas. It was the place to be! The collection was donated by Dr. George Coletti who played an integral role in staging the event that involved honorees, Grand Masters, floats, school groups, dancing groups, sports teams and more. It includes brochures, photographs, and videos. The historic photos show it all but the photos of the Bike Brigade with children on their decorated bikes are a treasure that tell a story about small town life. I am sure George and others went home tired and happy after each parade day.

## Our City Cemetery

Flat out, our community's most important historic site is our municipal cemetery. It is a well preserved example of small town municipal cemetery, a significant resource type in the State



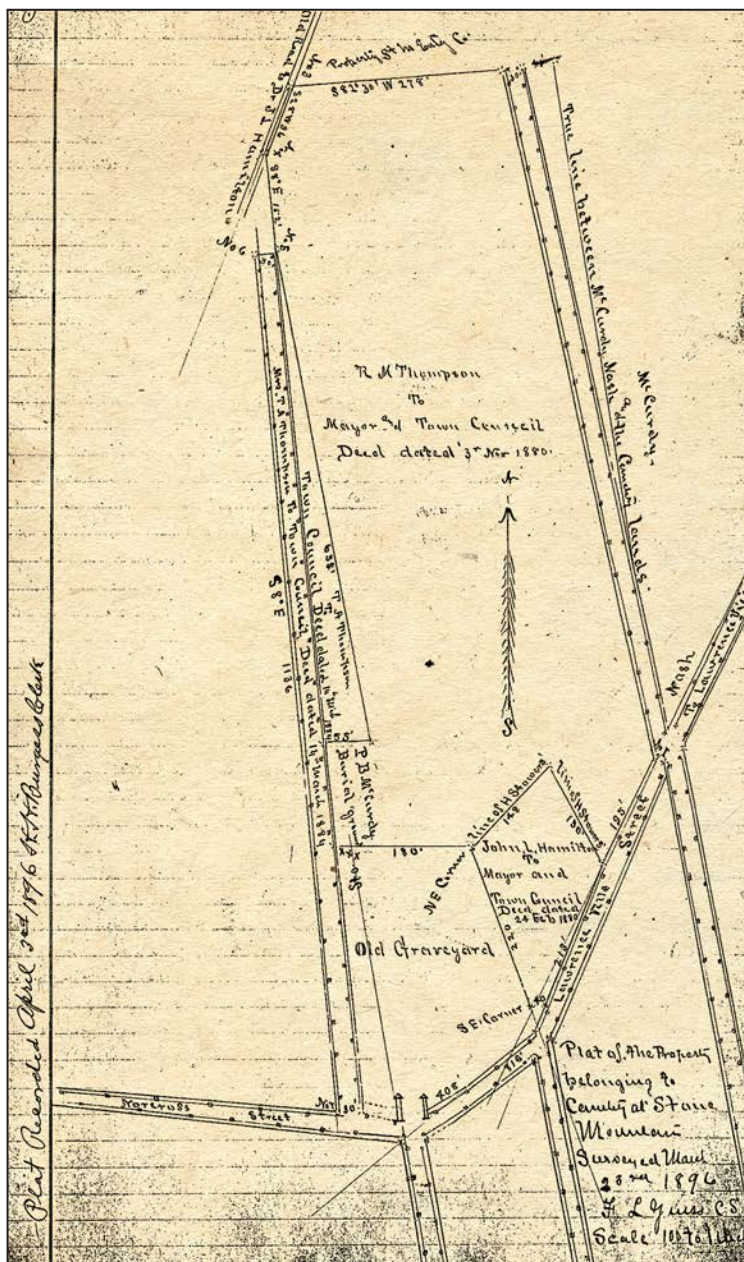
of Georgia. Set on a rise at the northern end of Main Street, it was purposely established on the outskirts of the village circa 1850. It has been used continuously since that time and it contains burials and markers that tell the story of our village and its people regardless of their nativity, religion, race or economic status. With its immigrant burials, its historic Black section used during segregation, stone cutters burials, graves of Veterans from all wars including two trench burials from the Civil War era, infants and children's graves as well as those of the city leaders and general populace, it offers one of the best history lessons about our past.

The oldest part of the cemetery is Section A which is closest to Main Street and features two granite piers and a knee wall (**Diagram of City Layout, Left**). A survey completed in 2012 notes a "Little" Lois Wells, possibly buried in 1829, and a Carolyn Wooten in 1841, suggesting that the cemetery



maybe older than 1850, however, by 1850, Stone Mountain citizens were definitely choosing the cemetery for family burials. Visual inspection of Section A suggests the potential for unmarked burials.

Stone Mountain was the scene of skirmishes and more in 1864 as our village became a war zone during the Civil War. The Hamilton House on Ponce De Leon, no longer extant, would have a cannonball lodged in its walls, large homes in town were converted into hospitals, and burial space was needed for those who were killed in battle or died from illness. Tradition holds that the trench burials were dug on the west side of the cemetery and Federal markers number of bodies were interred in trenches. The exact trench locations would be lost over time.



The first identified plat map showing the cemetery was recorded in 1896 showing its expansion in 1880. The streets shown as Norcross and Lawrenceville streets are Ponce De Leon Avenue and Silver Hill today, respectively. "A" section is shown as the "Old Graveyard" and its piers are drawn. **(1896 Plat, Left)** It is notable that it was considered "old" in 1880! About 408 feet on its front edge and 180 feet on its back line, the old graveyard was expanded greatly in 1880 first by a gift from John L. Hamilton then three gifts of land from the Thompson family. The first was substantial given by Ransom Thompson, a mayor and Civil War Veteran, in 1880, and the other two were simply provided access and enough land for a road in 1884. In time, the Ransom Thompson gift likely yielded Cemetery Sections B, C, F, D and E. Stone Mountain had grown and was entering the Victorian Age and its granite quarries were in full production mode. One burial at the back of

Section A tells the story of a young Scottish immigrant who lost his life while quarrying. His coworkers beautifully carved his marker and note his homeplace in Scotland showing their care and sense of fraternity.



(Left) Mr. James E. Greene  
(Below) Chief James B. Rivers



The cemetery continued expanding through the twentieth century to accommodate local need. Section F was set aside for burials within the Black community and the number of its family plots grew. With the end of segregation and as the cemetery continued to expand, many Black families may have elected to bury their loved ones in other sections. James E. Greene was born in Shermantown in 1911 and started his baseball career as a first baseman with the Atlanta Black crackers of the Negro Southern League in 1931. Considered by many to be the best catcher in the Negro Leagues, he was drafted during WWII. He served with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Division in Algiers and Italy and spent months on the frontlines and was present at the fall of Mussolini. After the war he went back to baseball developing his career and would later retire to Shermantown. Mr. Greene is just one of the many distinguished burials in the City Cemetery along with Chief James B. Rivers, our first Black Police Chief.

Walking through Sections H and I which would be conveyed by the Goldsmith Family to the city, burial dates indicate they mostly served mid twentieth-century Stone Mountain residents. **(Walter Ogletree Funeral, Opposite)** The funeral procession of the first village World War II soldier Walter Ogletree to die in action in 1944 shows the solemn procession leading to those sections, a monument firm adjacent to the cemetery, and the gas station at the five-point intersection. Our cemetery holds scores of veteran burials; many are marked showing the contribution our citizens have made to our country.

The act of memorialization, particularly in association with the Civil War, also caught hold of the village and the area known for the Civil War trench burials became the Unknown Confederate Dead Section. The United Daughters of the Confederacy placed small stone markers set in long rows in the 1930s to indicate the number of those who had died probably





using 150 burials as the number of stones to lay. A Georgia Historical Marker was procured and put in place. The small markers suggested individual burials but, in reality, they were simply symbolic and were likely meant to honor the war dead despite their placement in trench burials. The markers were removed to reduce maintenance in the 1980s much to everybody's dismay except the Sexton and the City's Public Works staff. Soundings had not indicated any burial activity in the section beyond the trench burials, suggesting that the open space could be considered for new uses. Despite this knowledge, they were put back in place due to public demand and would be replaced with 117 markers with CSA imprinted on them by the Sons of the Confederacy circa 2014-2016. The Stone Mountain Historical Society received one of the original markers as a gift. Five Federal markers provide the number of those buried in the trenches as 117.

The cemetery was inventoried first by Pat Drozak circa 2000 and a map resulted from that effort. That map is on file at the Stone Mountain Historical Society Archives and it shows family plot locations. An inventory was completed by New South Associates in 2011 - 2012 and the database and photographs were provided to the city and uploaded to Find-a-Grave to allow others to research their ancestors. Over 2,000 markers, not burials, were recorded and photographed; unmarked graves were not recorded.

New South Associates, Inc. conducted a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey over the marked Confederate section of the cemetery in the Stone Mountain City Cemetery in



December of 2015 **(Above)**. As noted, when markers were placed in the Confederate Section of the cemetery, they were laid out for visual effect and were likely not placed on individual burials. The GPR survey was positioned to cover the extent of the monuments, to determine the burial location of the Stone Mountain casualties of war.

The interpreted survey data indicated that there have been two possible trenches excavated in the area **(Left)**. One of the trenches has a large metal object in it, possibly a coffin or casket. Both trenches are the result of excavation of the typical soils. It is impossible to say with certainty that these trenches represent burials. There are historic records that indicate trenches were commonly used for war casualties. Three individual possible



grave anomalies were identified aside from the trenches. The GPR study does show a large area within the Unknown Confederate Dead Section as unused despite its aboveground appearance.

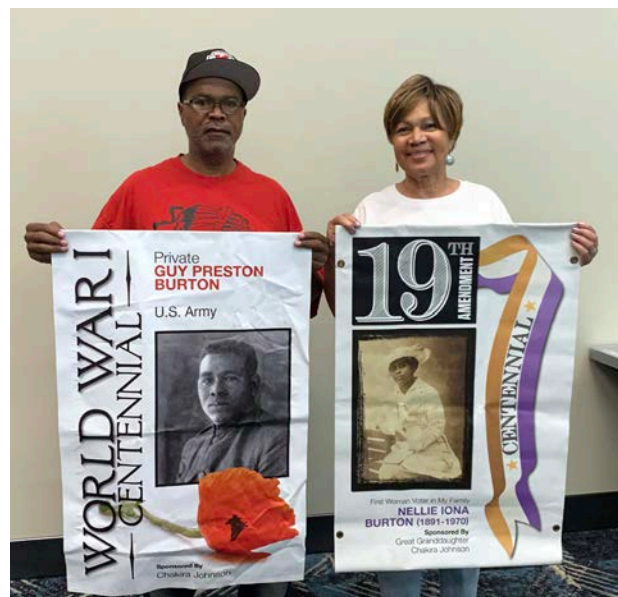


Historic graves from the Civil War era can be difficult to identify in GPR results due to their decomposition over time and the ephemeral nature of burials placed in pine boxes or burial shrouds. GPR results are dependent on contrast and lack of contrast can mean burials are difficult to map. It is impossible to conclusively determine that we have identified burial trenches and individual graves. However, there is evidence in the GPR that these trenches were used for burials.

**(Left)** Having a city cemetery is a gift and an obligation. It is our most important historic resource and needs to be cared for properly so it can continue to tell the story of our past.

# What Happens to Our Banners?

Well, we learned last weekend that some go home. Board member Chakira Johnson has sponsored banners in each of our campaigns and she took them home to show at a family reunion in Oklahoma where they were well received by equally history-minded family members. **Thanks for sharing, Chakira!**





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# ANNUAL BACKYARD

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# B-B-Q

**STONE MOUNTAIN  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

1036 Ridge Avenue • Stone Mountain GA

**WELLS BROWN HOUSE**

(additional parking on adjacent lot next door)

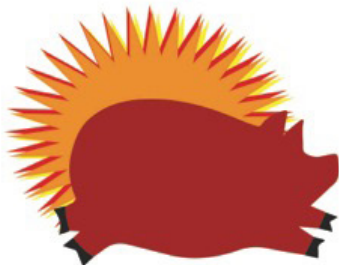
**SATURDAY  
AUGUST 20TH  
6-8pm**

**Tickets at Door**

**Adults \$20**

**Children \$10**

**Join  
Us!**



**BBQ Plate- Meat,  
Brunswick Stew,  
Pickles, Bread,  
Cole Slaw, Banana  
Pudding, and Beverages**

**Where There's  
SMOKE, There's  
Tasty BBQ!**

## Recipe Submitted by Lorene McCall (Compliments of Teresa Crowe)

*This is my sister's recipe. She recently made this cake for my daughter, who lives in Florida. My daughter was really astonished – she said she couldn't believe her aunt had made it because she thought her aunt had never used her oven!*

*While baking this cake your house will smell wonderful. It's a little expensive to make but well worth it- it's simply delicious!*



### Butter Pecan Cake

1 box (Betty Crocker)  
Butter Pecan Cake Mix

4 eggs

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup of oil

1 cup water

1 can (Duncan Hines)  
coconut and pecan  
frosting mix

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped pecans

Powdered sugar

- Mix together all ingredients with the exception of powdered sugar – DO NOT BEAT
- Grease bundt pan, sprinkle with powdered sugar, sprinkle with more pecan bits. Pour batter into pan
- Bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes
- Cool 20-30 minutes
- Ice and serve

## ENJOY!