

African Cemetery No. 2

One of Lexington's most significant post-civil war sites

by Yvonne Giles

African Cemetery No.2, Inc. Board Member

African Cemetery No. 2 is one of the most significant post-civil war sites in Lexington. In 1869 and 1875 an African American group, Union Benevolent Society No.2, purchased this eight-acre site to form the cemetery. In 1870 the group received a Charter to operate a cemetery and the site became known as "Cemetery No.2."

Over the years the name in the city directory changed from Cemetery No.2, to Colored Cemetery, to African Cemetery, and finally in 1981, to African Cemetery No.2. Archival documentation of burials indicates that there are over 7,000 burials. A survey of the remaining 1053 gravestones reveal that 1167 individuals are commemorated.

Documentation of the history of the cemetery and the contributions of African Americans to the city of Lexington and the state of Kentucky were accepted by the Kentucky Historical Society in May 2002. A highway Marker will be placed in the cemetery on June 19th, known in history as "Juneteenth," the day in which slaves in Texas were finally told that they had been freed.

The site holds 80 known individuals who were instrumental in the development of the horse racing industry, 75 known veterans from the Civil War to World War II, as well as, founders and officers of the Agricultural and Mechanical Fair of Colored People (1869), The Colored Orphan Industrial Home (1892), the first public school (1865) and members of Benevolent Society #2 (1852) and Ladies Auxiliary No. 2 (1887). Also found on site are a number of African Americans who, free prior to 1865, influenced and forged the economic, social, political and educational progress and development that occurred in the years following the Civil War.



Endangered Property For Sale

The Robert Langston House in Bourbon County, which appeared on the 2001 Eleven Endangered List, continues to be endangered by encroaching development. Because the property is suffering from vandalism, the owner is willing to sell the 1810 Federal house for the value of the land (1 to 2 acres) at a price of \$75,000. For information, call the Trust office at 859/253-0362.



The Rosenwald School, listed on the 2002 Eleven Endangered List, has been purchased by the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government. The property, located in the Cadentown neighborhood of Fayette County, is the recipient of a Transportation Enhancement Fund grant for an adaptive reuse project. Efforts are currently underway to raise the required matching funds for the grant. For information on making a donation, please contact the Trust office at 859/253-0362.

CHRIS HENKEL

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