



## **The African-American Burial Grounds Network Act**

### **Background**

Cemeteries and burial sites are places of tribute and memory, connecting communities with their past. Unfortunately, many African-American burial grounds from both before and after the Civil War are in a state of disrepair or inaccessibility due to overgrowth of vegetation, crumbling structures, and other challenges.

There is no official national record or database for African-American burial ground locations, and the location of many sites is unknown. As a result, the family members and descendants of those interred there are unable to visit these sites to honor and remember their ancestors. Too often, abandoned burial grounds and cemeteries are discovered when construction projects inadvertently disturb human remains, slowing or halting completion of those projects and creating distress and heartache within the local community.

The presence and location of historic African-American burial grounds should be chronicled, and there should be coordinated national, state, and local efforts to preserve and restore these sites for future generations. African-American burial grounds are an integral component of the heritage of the United States. Creating and maintaining a network of African-American burial grounds will help communities preserve local history while better informing development decisions and community planning.

### **The African American Burial Grounds Network Act**

The Adams-McEachin African American Burial Grounds Network Act creates a voluntary national network of historic African-American burial grounds. This legislation also establishes a National Park Service program, in coordination with state, local, private, and non-profit groups, to educate the public and provide technical assistance for community members and organizations to research, record, and preserve burial sites and cemeteries within the Network.

- Creates a voluntary, nation-wide database of historic burial grounds, with the consent of the property owner, that relate to the historic African-American experience.
- Provides technical assistance to local public, private, state and local partners to research, survey, identify, record, preserve, evaluate, and interpret these burial grounds.
- Establishes educational materials for community members, local groups, and schools about African-American burial grounds.
- Makes available grants for local groups to research, survey, identify, record, and aid in the preservation of sites within the Network.

### **Endorsements**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Coalition for American Heritage, Society for American Archaeology, Society for Historical Archaeology, American Anthropological Association, Association of Black Anthropologists, the Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society Inc., Association for the Study of African American Life and History, Preservation of African American Cemeteries Inc., American Cultural Resources Association, United States Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites, Save Our Heritage Organization, Preservation North Carolina, Preservation Virginia, Enrichmond Foundation, Florida Public Archaeology Network, Preservation Maryland, Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology, Illinois Archaeological Survey, the Wake Forest Historical Museum, the Virginia Outdoors Foundation, Virginia Humanities, the Council of Virginia Archaeologists, Black Genealogy Research Group of Oklahoma, River Road African American Museum, River Road African Burial Grounds Coalition, Shadow Lawn Memorial Gardens Maintenance & Perpetual Care Association, Preserve Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas African American Heritage Association, Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, Archaeology Podcast Network, the Coltrane Group, Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network, and Howard University.

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