

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Rosewood Cemetery

Other name/site number: GV-C037

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

2. LocationStreet & number: 2825 63rd Street

City or town: Galveston

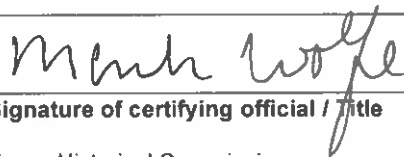
State: Texas

County: Galveston

Not for publication: ☐Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
(☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my
opinion, the property (☒ meets ☐ does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:

☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ localApplicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

State Historic Preservation Officer

12/27/23
Date

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal Agency / Bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register☐ determined eligible for the National Register☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.☐ removed from the National Register☐ other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public - Local |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Public - Federal |

Category of Property

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 0 | 0 | buildings |
| 1 | 0 | sites |
| 0 | 0 | structures |
| 0 | 0 | objects |
| 1 | 0 | total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: FUNERARY / Cemetery

Current Functions: FUNERARY / Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: Cemetery

Principal Exterior Materials: Concrete, Brick, Stone (marble, limestone, and granite)

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 6 through 11)

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations: D (Cemetery)

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage: Black; Social History (both at the local level)

Period of Significance: 1911-1944

Significant Dates: 1911, 1944

Significant Person: N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 12 through 28)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheets 29 through 35)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. Part 1 approved on (date)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☒ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other -- Specify Repository: (*Galveston Historical Foundation, Galveston*)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): GV-C037

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 1.08 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. 29.268171° -94.829617°
2. 29.267448° -94.829241°
3. 29.267255° -94.829729°
4. 29.267970° -94.830111°

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot 2, Judy Saracco Special Subdivision

The entire parcel of Galveston County Appraisal District Parcel #377113 encompassing the current boundary of Rosewood Cemetery. The property is on the west side of 63rd Street near its terminus, approximately 0.2 miles northwest of Seawall Boulevard. The cemetery occupies a rectangular parcel which runs approximately 200 feet along 63rd Street and has a depth of approximately 180 feet.

Boundary Justification: The boundary is defined by the existing parcel boundary, which includes all the property currently maintained as the cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Adrienne Vaughan Campbell, Senior Architectural Historian, and
Mitch S. Ford, Architectural Historian

Organization: Cox McLain Environmental Consulting, Inc., now Stantec

Street & number: 8401 Shoal Creek Boulevard, Suite 100

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Telephone: 832-664-9700

Date: July 7, 2023

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheets 36-39)

Additional items (see continuation sheets 40-49)

Photographs (see continuation sheets 50-66)

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photograph Log

Rosewood Cemetery
2825 63rd Street
Galveston, Galveston County, Texas
Photographed by Adrienne Vaughan Campbell, August 25, 2022

All photos reflect current condition of the nominated property.

Photo 1

Cemetery site, view facing northwest.

Photo 2

Cemetery site, view facing northwest.

Photo 3

Cemetery site, view facing south.

Photo 4

Cemetery site, view facing northwest.

Photo 5

Grave marker for Ernest McDay, view facing west.

Photo 6

Grave marker for William Mills.

Photo 7

Vaulted crypt of William D. and Lucinda Lewis, view facing north/northwest.

Photo 8

Vaulted crypt of William D. and Lucinda Lewis, view facing east.

Photo 9

Grave markers for T. C. and Sarah Shenall, view facing west/southwest.

Photo 10

Grave marker for T. C. Shenall, view facing west.

Photo 11

Grave marker for Clara Jones, view facing west.

Photo 12

Grave marker for Joseph Scott, view facing west.

Photo 13

Grave marker for Tony Smith at left, view facing northwest.

Photo 14

Grave marker for Tony Smith at center, view facing east.

Photo 15

Grave marker for William Lewis.

Photo 16

Unmarked grave marker.

Photo 17

Grave marker for Miranda Moffett.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

This project was funded through an Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund grant from the National Park Service that addresses damage inflicted by Hurricane Harvey. In January 2020, NPS staff concurred that this property is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Description

Rosewood Cemetery (GV-C037) is a 1.08-acre cemetery site on a rectangular parcel of the same acreage in Galveston, Galveston County, Texas. No longer an active burial ground, the cemetery is composed of subterranean burials. Vegetation is comprised of grass and a few clusters of palm trees. No buildings or structures are present. Although it contains the remains of at least 440 individuals, only 16 grave markers or crypts are visible above ground.¹ There are three other small objects at the cemetery: a sign podium, a historical marker, and a temporary wooden NPS sign, none of which are counted separately from the site of which they are a part. Most of the existing grave markers are constructed of stone and concrete, although a few are decorated with brickwork, tile, and/or seashells. Many are damaged, weathered, or are missing elements. Current cemetery boundaries are demarcated by wooden fences along the north, west, and south property lines, and by the curb of 63rd Street to the east. The parcels surrounding the cemetery have been developed for hotels and multi-family residences and are elevated on several feet of fill with paved surface parking lots. As a result, the ground surface of the cemetery lies a few feet below the surrounding properties, creating a bowl effect. This has exacerbated the site's vulnerability to flooding, since water from these properties washes into the cemetery from the impervious, paved surfaces of these lots and collects there. The ground is uneven in many places, which may be partially due to the presence of unmarked burials but is most likely the result of construction equipment being driven onto the site in the early 2000s and subsequent soil disturbance due to the frequent flooding. Its abandonment, vandalism, flooding, and surrounding urbanization has resulted in the loss of some physical integrity, but most of this degradation was caused by policies and decisions that led to the cemetery's neglect through the early 21st century. The cemetery derives its significance related to ethnic heritage and social history and retains integrity of association to a very high degree. It was designated a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) in 2004.² The property has been owned by the Galveston Historical Foundation (GHF) since 2006. In 2010, the cemetery was bestowed an Official Texas Historical Marker (OTHM # 16369).³

Location and Setting

Rosewood Cemetery is on the west side of 63rd Street north of Seawall Boulevard in west Galveston on Galveston Island (Maps 1-2). At approximately 900 feet northwest of the Galveston Seawall, the 1.08-acre cemetery is completely surrounded by late twentieth and twenty-first-century development.⁴ The parcel's dimensions are approximately 290 feet by 180 feet and the beachfront along the Gulf of Mexico is a little over 1,000 feet southeast of the site. To the north, east, south, and west of the burial ground are hotels and motels. The cemetery is accessed by 63rd Street, which connects to Seawall Boulevard to the south and a shopping center along Central City Blvd. to the north.

Throughout its period of use, Rosewood Cemetery was outside of the city limits in a relatively remote and undeveloped part of Galveston Island. In 1911 when the cemetery was founded, the core of Galveston's residential and commercial growth was on the east end of the island and most development stopped at 45th Street, more than one mile east of the cemetery site.⁵ Development continued and expanded westward over the next few decades, particularly with

¹ Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659; *African-American News & Issues*, "History of Rosewood," August 3, 2000. Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659; *African-American News & Issues*, "History of Rosewood."

² Texas Historical Commission, Rosewood Cemetery, Atlas Number 7167003705, 2004, Historic Texas Cemetery.

³ Texas Historical Commission, Rosewood Cemetery Atlas Number 5507016369, 2010, Official Texas Historical Marker.

⁴ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

⁵ Sanborn Map Company, *Galveston, Galveston County, Texas*, 1912, Fire Insurance Map.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

the construction of the causeway over Offatts Bayou, but it was mostly limited to low-density residential, funerary (Calvary, Beth Jacob, Serbian Orthodox, Municipal, and Memorial Cemeteries), and military uses.⁶ The main base of Fort Crockett was a few miles east in the town proper, and the fort's flying field was across Greens Bayou to the west of the cemetery.⁷ When the last burial in Rosewood Cemetery took place in 1944, most development was still east of 57th Street, which was also the approximate western city boundary at that time.⁸ During the 1950s, a line of tract housing ran along the beach to the southeast of the cemetery.⁹ To the south and southwest, the Galveston Country Club occupied the waterfront and fields to the west.¹⁰

Development grew up around the cemetery in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. When Rosewood Cemetery Association purchased the property, the parcel was half of the 13.6-acre Lot 60 of Section 1 of the Trimble & Lindsey Survey.¹¹ The association used the northern part of the parcel for burials, and it was accessed from 59th Street (renamed 61st Street by 1933) via an unpaved private road that curved around the cemetery to provide access to the beach owned by the Galveston Country Club.¹² The southern portion was leased for commercial use.¹³ In 1951, the County of Galveston acquired 1.144 acres of the cemetery property for the extension of the Galveston Seawall.¹⁴ The extension of the seawall facilitated new development in West Beach, including a golf course south of the cemetery property and the c.1955-63 extension of Seawall Boulevard.¹⁵ After the construction of Central City Boulevard in the early 1980s, the cemetery was accessed by a driveway from 61st Street.¹⁶ By 1982, land reclamation activities had reduced the marshlands of Greens Bayou to create room for the Central City shopping center.¹⁷ Hotels, apartments, and commercial buildings built between 1982 and 2020 now encircle the site.¹⁸ The 2005 construction of 63rd Street and its 2008 extension provided the cemetery's current frontage and eastern boundary.¹⁹ Rosewood Cemetery remains one of the few greenspaces left in West Beach.

Cemetery Plan and Landscape

The cemetery has no official pathways, monuments, or other components of a designed landscape. Vegetation includes random sabal palms, grasses, and wildflowers.²⁰ A cluster of palms is present at the northwest corner near the highest concentration of marked graves. The ground is uneven, with various instances of mounds in the middle and south ends of the property. A six-foot tall wooden fence runs the perimeter of the property, except for its 63rd Street frontage. A

⁶ U.S. Geological Survey, *Galveston, Texas, Quadrangle*, 1933, Topographic Map.

⁷ U.S. Geological Survey, *Galveston, Texas, Quadrangle*, 1933.

⁸ Sanborn Map Company, *Galveston, Galveston County, Texas*, 1947, Fire Insurance Map.

⁹ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

¹⁰ Sanborn Map Company, *Galveston, Galveston County, Texas*, 1947.

¹¹ R.C. Trimble and William Lindsey, "Richardson's Map of Galveston City and Island." New Orleans, LA: Pessou & Simons, 1867. Although secondary sources indicate the parcel was 8 to 8.5 acres, primary resources did not confirm the total original acreage and it was likely approximately 6.8 acres.

¹² Sanborn Map Company, *Galveston, Galveston County, Texas*, 1947.

¹³ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record AGA309:293, Galveston, June 15, 1951.

¹⁴ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record AGA309:293; Galveston County Clerk, Lease Transfer 898:696, Galveston, May 29, 1951; Paul D. Hutchinson, "Galveston Seawall, Galveston, Galveston County" (Texas Historical Commission, 1976), National Register of Historic Places Designation.

¹⁵ U.S. Geological Survey, *Galveston, Texas, Quadrangle*, 1969, Topographic Map.

¹⁶ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 1982), Aerial Image.

¹⁷ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County."

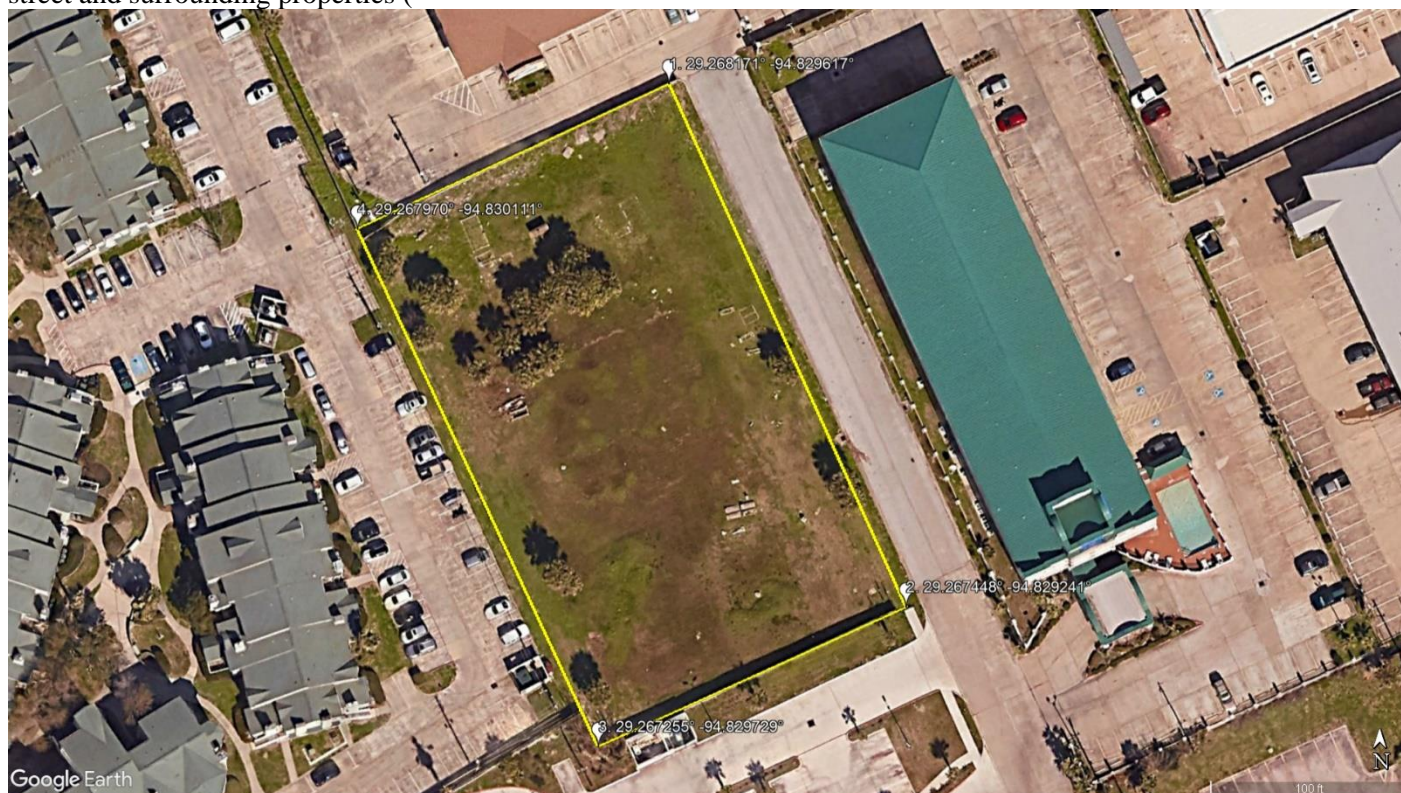
¹⁸ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County"; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2020), Aerial Image.

¹⁹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2008), Aerial Image; Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

²⁰ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 1995), Aerial Image.

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concrete curb and one damaged stormwater drain run along the street boundary. The entire cemetery sits lower than the street and surrounding properties (



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Map 3). At the southeast corner is a 2010 Texas Historical Commission marker and concrete podium with a metal plaque (**Figure 1**) reading:

ROSEWOOD CEMETERY
GALVESTON'S FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERY
1911–1944
SITE DONATED TO GALVESTON HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
BY JOHN AND JUDY SARACCO, 2006
LISTED AS A HISTORIC BURIAL GROUND
BY THE TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The historic plan of Rosewood Cemetery was informal, with a looped driveway, graves aligned north–south, and no distinct formal plantings (**Figure 6**). Carriages and automobiles could access the driveway from the north end of the parcel.²¹ The driveway may have predated 1915 but was paved with shell that year, prior to the 1915 hurricane.²² There was also a fence around the north half of the property which was lost during the 1915 storm. It was replaced within a year and a tool shed was constructed.²³ The association required curbing around graves in 1915; by 1950, graves were uniformly aligned along the north side of the cemetery in between the parcel line and the driveway.²⁴

Although the parcel purchased by the Rosewood Cemetery Association was half of a 13.6-acre lot, the cemetery was at its northern end, from the northern boundary of the parcel to 270.6 feet south of the northern boundary, encompassing approximately 1.025 acres. The southern portion was historically leased for commercial use and was mostly wooded with brush or small trees, while the northern portion was treeless among neighboring fields and marshes. Headstones were interspersed throughout the cemetery, with a cluster present at the northwest corner.

Alterations

Abandonment, neglect, construction surrounding the site, and flooding damage have fundamentally changed the site. By 1970, the cemetery was abandoned and both it and the driveway were overgrown with weeds. Standing water and sinkholes were interspersed with headstones, one vault, and an uneven surface reflecting unmarked graves.²⁵ As developers built hotels and multifamily residential housing around the cemetery, the surrounding built-up parcels turned the cemetery into a bowl, funneling water to the site during rain events. Adjacent construction in 2000 occurred without protection of the site, with resulting damage to tombstones and the soil surface from construction equipment driven onto the cemetery. The construction of 63rd Street in 2006 to 2008 replaced the former access drive; a stormwater drain under the street discharges into the cemetery. No archeological survey was conducted around the perimeter of the cemetery to identify a potential for unmarked graves in the proposed new right-of-way prior to the construction of 63rd Street; although it was constructed on an adjacent parcel outside of the cemetery parcel boundary.²⁶ Water erosion and vandalism have damaged markers, shifted the soil, and obscured the formerly organized

²¹ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d; U.S. Geological Survey, *Galveston, Texas, Quadrangle*, 1943, Topographic Map; U.S. Geological Survey, *Galveston, Texas, Quadrangle*, 1954, Topographic Map.

²² W. F. Whitfield, Letter to Reverend J. O. Williams, Box 1, Folder 1, Rosewood Cemetery Association Records, MS88-0008, Rosenberg Library, Galveston, January 14, 1915.

²³ *The City Times*, “President C. S. Willis’ Address,” November 11, 1916, 4 (Newspaper Archive).

²⁴ *The City Times*, “Rosewood Cemetery Lots for Sale,” July 17, 1915, 4 (Newspaper Archive).

²⁵ Grace Mullins, “Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism,” *Newspaper*, April 5, 1970, 10B, Rosenberg Library: Rosewood Cemetery.

²⁶ In 2009, the Texas Health and Safety Code was amended to restrict the owner of any property with an abandoned cemetery from

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grid arrangement. Only 16 marked graves are still visible above the surface of more than 440 burials.²⁷

Integrity

Rosewood Cemetery retains integrity aspects of location and association. Although the parcel is smaller than the original tract purchased by the cemetery association, the 1.025-acre northern portion of the parcel historically used as a cemetery has been retained. As a result, the cemetery retains its original location. Its extant visible markers retain association with its historic use as a place of memorialization. However, the alterations listed above detract from integrity of setting, feeling, materials, design, and workmanship. Surrounding development, which has contributed to storm damage, has diminished the integrity of setting and feeling. Adjacent development is only obscured by a six-foot fence and consists of a multistory hotel, a motel, and apartment buildings; a significant change from the historic setting of undeveloped land and the former adjacent country club (**Figures 2-4**). The loss of markers, historic fencing, and the looped driveway detract from integrity of design. Loss of integrity of materials and workmanship is the result of storm damage, neglect, construction equipment, and vandalism. Of the 16 marked burials, many of the headstones are weathered and damaged. Other markings have been removed or are buried. Homeless encampments on the property contribute to loss of integrity of materials and workmanship, with campfire rings constructed of brick robbed from grave sites. Dumping and littering caused additional damage to the site. The current owner, GHF, has worked to clean up the site, maintains the cemetery, and has an NPS grant to reduce stormwater drainage onto the property and halt further damage.

Historic properties can be listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A if they have an important association with significant historic events, a pattern of events, or trends, and if they retain physical and historical integrity to convey that significance. Integrity of setting, and the distinctive feeling of a place, communicate an eligible resource's salient features, despite certain alterations, such that community members would recognize the site to its period of significance. Resources eligible under Criterion A will have some intact historic-period physical characteristics with certain acceptable modifications that reflect improvement trends. Nevertheless, the original design intent should be evident with the presence of character-defining features. For cemeteries, character-defining features include headstones, crypts, burial plots, and site layout details that embrace the intended design. Historic-period materials may be visible or hidden. Alterations and additions that obscure historic-period stylistic influences, materials, or workmanship may be acceptable since they are often connected to infrastructure expansion in an urban environment—in this case the removed driveway. Most original materials should be present; exceptions are weathered materials affected by natural disasters.

Although this site is substantially altered from its period of use, the cemetery is able to convey its history as a burial ground established by African Americans for the African American community in Galveston.²⁸ Archival deeds, newspapers, death certificates, cemetery records, and other primary sources establish the associative qualities for the resource eligible under Criterion A. As the only cemetery of this kind in Galveston, its association with the historical segregationist practices in Galveston and the United States during the early to mid-twentieth century is significant. Its creation, management, and use as a funerary property by the African American community of Galveston is supported

constructing improvements on the property until human remains are first removed. Notice must be given to the Texas Historical Commission and the County Historical Commission. The Texas Historical Commission may investigate the cemetery or refer to owner to a qualified professional, such as a coroner or professional archeologist. Prior to 2009, there was no such requirement. (Title 8, Texas Health and Safety Code, Subtitle C, Chapter 711).

²⁷ A total of 440 known burials was determined using Find A Grave, but it is likely this number is higher to account for missing data and unmarked burials. Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659.

²⁸ The term "African American" is used consistently in this nomination, rather than other terms, such as "Black." Although the term African American is not always considered inclusive of all Black populations, the number of Afro-Caribbean or African immigrants associated with Galveston during the period of significance appears to be small.

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through these primary sources that detail its need and provide information on how those who are interred within its grounds lived. Furthermore, African American cemeteries and historic sites throughout the United States commonly exhibit severe loss of historic integrity as African Americans were marginalized and disenfranchised from participation in civic discourse related to decision-making related to issues of public concern. As a result, lowered integrity is in itself often a defining characteristic of some historic properties associated with African American communities.

Marked graves as of 2023 are noted in **Table 1**.²⁹ A site plan detailing these grave locations is included in the additional documentation section. Photographs of these marked graves are also included in additional documentation.

Table 1: Extant grave markers at date of nomination.

| Name | Design | Material | Inscription (Excluding Names/Dates) |
|---|---|--|--|
| Joseph Brown and Otha Beulah Britt Bradley (1914–1918; 1897–1920) | Grass marker headstone | Concrete | “Silently we laid with them” |
| Morris Bowers (1877–1921) | Grass marker headstone | Marble | “Silver Leaf Chamber/4770 Hitchcock, Tex” |
| Howard Hill (1863–1915) | Monument headstone | Concrete | Name only |
| Clara Jones (1875–1914) | Slant marker headstone with geometric shape and leaf decoration at top, walled plot | Marble (headstone) Concrete and brick (walls) | “[Born in] Sandy Point, Brazoria Co./ [Died in] Denver Colorado/Climb on dear Clara in the [illegible] Master’s Field” |
| William D. and Lucinda Lewis (1870–1915; –1932) | Vaulted crypt with curved roof | Concrete exterior, brick inner wall | None |
| William Lewis (1840–1913) | Grass marker with geometric border | Limestone | Name and dates only |
| Ernest McDay (1897–1931) | Slant marker headstone with base | Concrete with limestone insert | “In memory of my loving / at rest” |
| William Mills (1875/1887–1918) | Grass marker headstone | Concrete | Name and dates only |
| Miranda Moffett (1838–1914) | Slant marker headstone with base | Concrete and brick base with marble insert | “Dear Grandmother” |
| Cora Freeman (Winters) | Slant marker headstone with base | Concrete base with marble insert | Name and dates only |
| Eleanor Scott (1900–1918) | Grass marker headstone | Concrete | “Sleep in Jesus” |
| Ben Leonard Scott (1896–1937) | Grass marker headstone with Latin cross | Limestone | “Massachusetts PVT 302 Stev. Regt.” |
| Joseph Scott (1853–1915) | Walled crypt with stone insert on face | Marble (headstone) Concrete and brick (crypt) | “In memory of our beloved Husband and Father/Gone but not forgotten” |
| Thomas Charles Shenall (1853–1926) | Irregular shaped monument headstone with hand carved lettering | Concrete | Name and dates only |
| Sarah Johnson Shenall (1865–1920) | Monument headstone with beveled edges | Concrete | On top: “Mother” Face: “Gone but not forgotten” |
| Tony Adam Smith (1873–1914) | Monument headstone with smooth face and rusticated base; bordered plot | Granite (headstone); concrete corners and marble header (plot) | Plot: “T. A. Smith” |

²⁹ Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659.

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| Name | Design | Material | Inscription (Excluding Names/Dates) |
|---|------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Winnie Anderson Williams (1850–1915) | Slant marker headstone | Concrete headstone with marble insert | Name and dates only |

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Statement of Significance

Established in 1911, Rosewood Cemetery is significant as a segregated African American cemetery in Galveston that was created by leaders of the city's African American community to serve African American Galvestonians during the Jim Crow era of racial apartheid in America.³⁰ Its creation coincided with a time of pandemics, government disregard, and segregation. Prior to the establishment of Rosewood Cemetery, Black Galvestonians were able to either purchase a limited number of plots in segregated areas of existing cemeteries or were buried in the city's potter's fields.³¹ Although later factors complicated its success, it was the first cemetery created specifically for African Americans in Galveston and is representative of the upward mobility and success for the African American community of Galveston. In addition to locally notable individuals interred within the cemetery, those buried in the cemetery contributed to the local African American community in various ways, as well as the economic growth of the Port of Galveston, and includes the graves of lawyers, merchants, longshoremen, manicurists, seamstresses, and many others. Like many historic African American cemeteries, the property has been vulnerable to neglect, vandalism, and encroaching development, often exacerbated by discriminatory policies. Galveston's history of hurricanes has also impacted the cemetery, inflicting damage to headstones, burial arrangements, and the landscape. However, the cemetery retains integrity sufficient to represent the historical development of Galveston's African American community during the early twentieth century.

Criterion A

Rosewood Cemetery is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A under Ethnic Heritage/Black and Social History at the local level. Cemeteries are generally not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places unless they meet Criteria Consideration D, which requires significance as the burial place of persons who were particularly important or influential in local, state, or national history; or by being particularly old within the context of an area or culture; or by being associated with either specific historic events or historic patterns. A cemetery associated with an ethnic or cultural group is not eligible under this criteria consideration if there are better extant historic properties that convey association with the group. This property meets Criteria Consideration D for its social history of segregated burial practices, which persisted for the entirety of its period of significance (1911 to 1944).

Area of Significance: Ethnic Heritage/Black

Rosewood Cemetery is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Black at the local level for being the first and only cemetery designated only for African American burials on Galveston Island. The creation of the Rosewood Cemetery Association enabled the establishment of the cemetery through a private cost-sharing organization. The period of significance for Ethnic Heritage/Black is 1911 to 1944, the date of the final interment in the cemetery.

Area of Significance: Social History

Rosewood Cemetery is significant in the area of Social History at the local level, for its association with cemetery segregation in Galveston during the early twentieth century. The Rosewood Cemetery Association worked together to secure funds to create the cemetery in a time when purchasing land was a costly effort for the African American Galveston community after suffering losses, financially and politically, from the 1900 hurricane. The funerals were

³⁰ National Park Service, Rosewood Cemetery, Hurricane Harvey Emergency Supplemental Grant Application, 2020.

³¹ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d; Junius W. Smith, Letter to Mr. Robert M. Williams, D.D., Asbury Methodist Church, 11th & K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C. (September 30, 1943), Box 1, Folder 1, MS 87-0033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library.

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often directed by African American funeral businesses. After its establishment, the association continued to manage the property through community maintenance and meetings. The period of significance for Social History is 1911 to 1944, the date of the final interment in the cemetery.

Cemeteries in Galveston

Galveston has several established cemeteries, most of which are still active and maintained. The oldest are part of a larger cemetery complex, bound by Broadway Boulevard, Avenue L, 40th Street, and 43rd Street. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places as the Broadway Cemetery Historic District, this complex includes the Old City Cemetery, the old potter's field (later Oleander Cemetery), Episcopal Cemetery, Old Catholic Cemetery, Old Cahill Cemetery, the Hebrew Benevolent Society Cemetery, New Cahill Cemetery (later Evergreen Cemetery), and New City Cemetery. The oldest cemeteries, Old City Cemetery and the original potter's field, were founded in 1840 on land donated by the Galveston City Company, which developed the City of Galveston. The Galveston City Company also donated adjacent blocks to the Episcopal and Catholic churches and the associated congregations founded those cemeteries soon after. The Old Cahill Cemetery was added to the city cemetery in 1867, when thousands of Galvestonians died in a Yellow Fever outbreak. Although an earlier Jewish section of burials dating to the 1850s was located in a corner of the potter's field, the Hebrew Benevolent Society founded a new cemetery was also founded shortly after the Civil War. New City Cemetery and New Cahill Cemetery were both established after the 1900 Storm. With the probable exception of the old potter's field, since it was set aside for the burial of the poor, all of the Broadway cemeteries were laid out on a grid pattern with concrete sidewalks and concrete curbing around each plot. When the City of Galveston constructed the Seawall and began to raise the grade of the entire city, the grade within the Broadway cemeteries was also raised. Some grave markers were elevated by family members, others buried with the grade raising. The potter's field was buried in fill and a new cemetery, named Oleander, was laid out over it, and dedicated in 1939 with new plots for sale. That cemetery's layout was also established in a grid pattern.³²

Table 2: Cemeteries that make up the Broadway Cemeteries Historic District

| Name | Designated | Association |
|------------------------------|------------|---|
| Old City | 1840 | |
| Old potter's field/ Oleander | 1840, 1939 | Originally for burial of the poor, but was replatted after the grade raising and new plots sold |
| Episcopal Cemetery | 1844 | Episcopal (Trinity and Grace Episcopal Churches) |
| Old Catholic | Ca. 1844 | Catholic (St. Joseph's, St. Mary Cathedral, St. Patrick, Sacred Heart) |
| Old Cahill | Ca. 1867 | Yellow Fever outbreak of 1867 |
| Hebrew Benevolent Society | Ca. 1868 | Jewish (B'Nai Israel, Young Men's Hebrew Association, Hebrew Orthodox Benevolent Association, Beth Jacob) |
| New Cahill/ Evergreen | Ca. 1900 | Originally a private cemetery, New Cahill became a city-owned cemetery and was renamed Evergreen Cemetery in 1923 |
| New City | Ca. 1900 | |

After the Civil War, the city began to plan a new cemetery, outside of the growing city boundary. The concept of the rural cemetery was popular in the late nineteenth century, and cemeteries were considered unsanitary in the vicinity of residential development. Before the city selected a new location, a private organization named the Magnolia Grove Association created a new cemetery in an undeveloped part of the island near the present location of Galveston's Scholes Airport. Dedicated in 1871, the Magnolia Grove Cemetery was badly damaged by a hurricane in 1875 and the

³² Valenzuela SE, Valenzuela DR. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Broadway Cemetery Historic District, Galveston, Galveston County, Texas. In: Interior Dot, editor. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2013.

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association went bankrupt shortly thereafter. Some graves were exhumed and relocated, but the cemetery remained active until 1922; however, the city purchased the site in 1941 to develop the airport and exhumed and relocated the graves to other cemeteries. In 1887, the city purchased an additional 7.5 acres of land and established a new potter's field and Lakeview Cemetery. Like the Magnolia Grove Cemetery, Lakeview's design concept was that of the rural cemetery movement and included a small lake. Other private cemeteries, many related to church congregations, were established and developed in Galveston from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. A few historic family farms or ranches on the western part of the island also have small family cemeteries.

Table 3: Other cemeteries in Galveston³³

| Name | Location | Designated | Association |
|-------------------------------|---|------------|---|
| Ursuline Cemetery | Ursuline and Rosenberg Streets | Ca. 1850 | Ursuline convent, for order members |
| Calvary Catholic | Between 61 st and 65 th Streets | 1862 | Catholic (St. Joseph's, St. Mary Cathedral, St. Patrick, Sacred Heart) |
| Magnolia Grove | 2115 Terminal Road | 1870 | Many graves were washed away in the 1900 storm; reportedly all remaining graves were exhumed and reburied in other cemeteries by 1941 |
| Lakeview | 57 th Street and Avenue T ½ | 1887 | Contains the graves of notable Galvestonians, including Norris Wright Cuney |
| Boehl Family | FM 3005 and 13 Mile Road | 1887 | Interments exhumed and moved to Lakeview Cemetery in 1989 |
| Beth Jacob | 2110 61 st Street | 1900 | Jewish (Orthodox, later Conservative, Congregation Beth Jacob) |
| Memorial | Avenue T ½ and 59 th Street | 1900 | |
| New Potter's Field/ Municipal | Adjacent to Memorial | Ca. 1887 | An unknown number of 1900 Storm victims are buried here; this was later renamed Municipal Cemetery |
| Greek Orthodox | 61 st Street and Avenue T | 1914 | Associated with Assumption of the Virgin Mary Greek Orthodox Church |
| Rosewood | 63 rd Street | 1911 | |
| Wern | Windlass Court (West End) | 1918 | Thirteen burials associated with the Wern family, who owned a farm in this part of Galveston Island |
| Serbian Orthodox | 3014 61 st Street | 1920 | Saints Constantine and Helen Serbian Orthodox Church |
| Stewart Ranch | El Lago Road (West End) | 1950 | Three burials associated with the Maco Stewart family and their ranch. |
| B'Nai Israel Congregation | Adjacent to Beth Jacob on 61 st Street | 1992 | Jewish (Reformed Congregation B'Nai Israel) |

Research did not identify records noting the location of African Americans prior to and during the Civil War or during Reconstruction in Galveston. It is likely that enslaved African Americans were buried in the potter's field. During Reconstruction, successful African Americans may have been able to purchase plots in other cemeteries. After the end

³³ Findagrave.com, 2023; Texas Historical Commission, *Texas Historic Sites Atlas*, 2020. Valenzuela SE, Valenzuela DR. National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Broadway Cemetery Historic District, Galveston, Galveston County, Texas. In: Interior Dot, editor. Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2013.

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of the Reconstruction Period and before the establishment of Rosewood Cemetery, much of Galveston's African American populace was generally restricted to burial within the City's potter's fields. However, successful or prominent African American citizens, such as Norris Wright Cuney (politician, 1846–1898), Dr. Josiah Haynes Armstrong (politician and bishop, 1842–1898), Revered Israel Sidney Campbell (pastor of Ave L Baptist Church, 1818–1898), and Reverend E.M. Wright (pastor of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 1856–1906) were buried in other cemeteries, particularly Lakeview, which had a segregated section for African American graves.³⁴

Galveston During the Jim Crow Era

At the time of the establishment of Rosewood Cemetery, Galvestonians were still rebuilding their community after the Great Storm of 1900 that took approximately 8,000 lives and decimated the island landscape and infrastructure. In 1910, Galveston's population, at 36,981, was almost restored to its 1900 population of 37,780.³⁵ Of that population, 8,036 were identified in the census as "Negro," 4,725 as "Black," and 3,811 as "Mulatto." Totalling 16,572, about 40 percent of the population, African Americans had the added burden of the racist policies of "Jim Crow," a collective term for state and local laws that arose in the late nineteenth century in the United States, that created and enforced a system of racial apartheid. This occurred particularly in the South, as an effort by white Southerners to regain and maintain economic and political power after Reconstruction. Although African American Galvestonians had some political influence in the late nineteenth century, thanks in large part to prominent African American state representative and Texas Republican party chairman Norris Wright Cuney, increasingly oppressive laws were passed after the end of Reconstruction.³⁶ The Republican Party, once allied with African Americans, was taken over by politicians who actively excluded African American citizens from representation. Physical violence was enacted on African American community members who worked for suffrage or equal treatment under the law, often by self-appointed mobs. This was sometimes exercised against individuals and sometimes against whole communities. The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre is one of the most well-known examples of this but there were many others. Supreme Court decisions like *Plessy v. Ferguson* in 1896 upheld racial segregation and disenfranchisement of African Americans through the mid-twentieth century. This impacted everyday life, including where they could live, shop, go to school, do business, and even where they could be buried. As a result, it also limited upward mobility of African Americans, who received less funding for public education in their schools and were excluded from higher-paying jobs.

Despite challenges of the Jim Crow South, many African American communities developed their own economies, with local and national businesses (such as life insurance companies) that exclusively served African American community members, including educators, doctors, dentists, funeral directors, among others. African Americans also formed their own fraternities, sororities, and chapters of social organizations. In Galveston, African American members of the community diligently worked to create separate spaces to pursue education, receive care, gain economic success, and buy goods and services. Professions represented by the African American population included grocers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, barbers, a shoemaker, a druggist, contractors and builders, wood dealers, tailors, furniture dealers, blacksmiths, customs workers, postal workers, doctors, lawyers, and a nurse and midwife. These businesses served the Black population and these professions represented continuing upward mobility within the community despite Jim Crow policies. There were also professional associations and social organizations that were specific to the African American community or were African American chapters of national organizations, including the No. 2 Cotton Screwman and Longshoremen's Association, the Local Negro Business League No. 81, and The Grand Lodge (also known as the Wright Cuney Lodge) of the Colored Knights of Pythias. Also, two newspapers served the African

³⁴ Boudreaux TD, Gatson AM. African Americans of Galveston. Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing; 2013; Findagrave.com, 2023.

³⁵ U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States: Volume 1, Population* (1913).

³⁶ Rick Cousins, "Rosewood Cemetery Marks Significant Location of Black History," *Galveston Daily News*, September 16, 2021.

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American community: *The New Idea* and *The City Times*.³⁷ The economic success of the community at this time is evidenced by the 1908 construction of a headquarters building for the Knights of Pythias and the 1909 construction of a \$9,000 pavilion for the No. 2 Cotton Screwmen Association (a labor organization in the cotton industry) at 38th Street and Avenue S.³⁸

Beginnings of Rosewood Cemetery

Segregation even impacted where Black Galvestonians could be buried, and in 1911, Rosewood Cemetery was established as the first African American cemetery in the city. Although cemeteries like Lakeview and some of the Broadway cemeteries included segregated sections for African American community members, many were buried in the city's potter's fields due to cost and/or space limitations in the other cemeteries.³⁹ In 1911, a group of African American Galvestonians created an independent cemetery. Rosewood Cemetery was founded on January 30, 1911, with the express purpose "to provide a burial ground for Negroes other than the New Potters Field."⁴⁰ The first meeting established a series of committees and subcommittees, which led to the creation of the organization's share system, as well as association rules, regulations, and bylaws.⁴¹ The next month, the Rosewood Cemetery Association was officially formed. A Board of Directors was established, with Reverend J. O. Williams of Wesley United Methodist Church serving as chairman with the exclusive right of selling shares. Columbus S. Willis (ca. 1882–1918), a notable African American undertaker at the time, was the first president of the association. Compared to public cemeteries or those associated with a church, the share system provided individuals and organizations the opportunity for an investment and to support the African American community. The share purchase provided the association with funds, and interments would yield profits to the shareholder.

Although a nondenominational organization, the support of Galveston's Black churches was key to the early success of the cemetery. There were 15 African American Christian Churches in Galveston in 1911, with denominations including Baptist, Episcopal, Methodist, Catholic, and nondenominational.⁴² These churches were important centers of Galveston's African American community during the early to mid- twentieth century. Meetings, including the first meeting founding the association, were held at the Wesley Tabernacle Church at Avenue I and 28th Street.⁴³ The church's pastor, Reverend J.O. Williams, one of the original shareholders, purchased 13 shares of the cemetery.⁴⁴ Ministers of Galveston's African American churches, including Wesley Tabernacle Methodist Church, the Avenue L Missionary Baptist Church, and First Union Baptist Church, officiated services for members of their congregations interred at Rosewood.⁴⁵

The association quickly began searching for a new cemetery site, with Wesley Church's Reverend W. Scott Chinn leading the search effort.⁴⁶ In April 1911, the association purchased the eastern half of Lot 60, Section 1 of the Trimble & Lindsey Survey west of the city for a sum of \$1,000 from French immigrant Joseph M. Levy (1844–1922), his

³⁷ *The City Times*, "Various Businesses, Professions, Etc., of the Race in Galveston and Total Value," May 1, 1909, 4 (Newspaper Archive).

³⁸ *The City Times*, "\$9,000 Pavilion for Negroes," May 1, 1909, 1 (Newspaper Archive).

³⁹ Smith, Letter to Mr. Robert M. Williams, D.D., Asbury Methodist Church, 11th & K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

⁴⁰ Smith, Letter to Mr. Robert M. Williams, D.D., Asbury Methodist Church, 11th & K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

⁴¹ Rosenberg Library, Rosewood Cemetery Timeline, n.d.

⁴² Morrison & Fourmy. *Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Galveston: 1911-1912*. Houston, Texas: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Rosenberg Library.

⁴³ Rosenberg Library, Rosewood Cemetery Timeline; Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d; *Galveston Daily News*, "Pair Gets 30, 5 Year Terms," March 11, 1954, 1 (Newspapers.com).

⁴⁴ Smith, Letter to Mr. Robert M. Williams, D.D., Asbury Methodist Church, 11th & K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

⁴⁵ Bert Artstead, Bert Carson Armstead Jr. Papers, Rosenberg Library, n.d.

⁴⁶ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

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children, and the widow of his late brother and business partner Bernard (Ben).⁴⁷ Joseph and Ben Levy, who invested in real estate throughout the island, were prominent Jewish businessmen and leaders in Galveston, and also the owners of the J. Levy and Bros. Funeral Directors and Embalmers. Because African Americans faced obstacles in buying property during much of the twentieth century, the property transaction is an important component of the cemetery's history. Through a deed of trust with the Levy family, the cemetery property was financed with a down payment of \$250, with subsequent payments each year with an 8 percent interest rate.⁴⁸ This deed of trust made it possible for the association to finance the land purchase for the cemetery. Jewish people and organizations often worked with African American communities in the early twentieth century to address inequity and the sale by the Levys may be an indication of this kind of cooperation in Galveston. However, research did not identify a relationship between the Levy family and the African American community in Galveston beyond the sale of the property and providing services for a small number of individuals buried in Rosewood Cemetery.

In order to finance the land purchase and the cemetery development, 40 association members each pledged \$30.⁴⁹ Between 1911 and 1913, a total of 86 shares were purchased through the organization at \$10 per share (for a total value of \$860) and were divided among 25 original shareholders.⁵⁰ These shareholders, identified in Table 4, included one African American fraternal organization and 24 individuals, some of whom may have been leaders or representatives of other African American associations or churches.⁵¹ The Wright Cuney Lodge of the Knights of Pythias purchased 19 of the 86 shares. This lodge held considerable prominence in the city's African American community.⁵² The Lodge also had an established relationship with Wesley Tabernacle Methodist Church for much of its existence.⁵³ With its purchase of 19 shares, the Cuney Lodge No. 63 was instrumental in the establishment of the cemetery.⁵⁴ Other shareholders were individuals who had a role in creating the association, including C.H. Smith, W.K. Hebert, and Reverend J.O. Williams.⁵⁵

Table 4: Original Shareholders of Rosewood Cemetery Association

| Name | Number of Shares |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Wright Cuney Lodge Knights of Pythias | 19 |
| Junius Wellington Smith | 4 |
| Theodore Williams Patrick | 3 |
| Mrs. Alice Marshall | 2 |
| Mrs. Louis Grant | 1 |
| Council H. Smith | 3 |

⁴⁷ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 247:694, Galveston, April 12, 1911; Stanley E. Babb, "Looking Backward," *Newspaper*, n.d., Rosenberg Library; Find A Grave, Joseph M. Levy, Memorial 40148634.

⁴⁸ Galveston County Clerk, Deed of Trust 247:648, Galveston, April 13, 1911.

⁴⁹ Thelma T. Bailey et al., Letter to the Members of the Rosewood Cemetery Association (October 9, 1950), Box 1, Folder 1, MS87-033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library.

⁵⁰ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

⁵¹ Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

⁵² The Galveston Daily News, "The City," The Galveston Daily News (Galveston, TX), September 30, 1883; <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph460990/m1/4/?q=%22colored+knights+of+pythias%22>. Galveston Tribune, "Pythian Home," Galveston Tribune (Galveston, TX), 10/17/1908 1908, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph1346054/m1/8/zoom/?q=%22colored%20knights%20of%20pythias%22&resolution=2&lat=1076.9999999999955&lon=5284>

⁵³ Knights of Pythias, A Record of Progress and Prosperity, 1952, Galveston, TX.

⁵⁴ Galveston Tribune, "Pythian Home."

⁵⁵ Smith.

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| Name | Number of Shares |
|--|------------------|
| Miss Hettie Trahan | 2 |
| William Green | 1 |
| John Green, Jr. | 1 |
| John Green, Sr. | 2 |
| Mrs. S. G. Bailey | 1 |
| W.S. Webb | 2 |
| Mary O. Smith | 3 |
| Mrs. S. E. Mitchell | 1 |
| William Kendall Hebert (funeral director and undertaker) | 3 |
| Rev. James O. Williams (pastor of Wesley Tabernacle) | 13 |
| Perry Jasper | 7 |
| W. H. Young | 2 |
| Malinda Green | 2 |
| Mrs. Rosa Simpson | 2 |
| Peter Antonie | 4 |
| Mrs. Mike Williams | 2 |
| Mrs. H. E. Freeman | 2 |
| Mrs. Mary G. Williams | 2 |

Once the land was secured, the association's supervisory board managed the cemetery, its business affairs, and burials and plot purchases, selling graves for \$10 a plot plus an additional \$2 for digging and capping.⁵⁶ In 1911, sites for children under 12 years old were sold for \$6.50 plus the \$2 interment fee.⁵⁷ Plot costs did not include a headstone, which fell on the family to provide.⁵⁸

Between 1911 and 1915, community members began to purchase cemetery plots to bury their dead. The first burial in the cemetery was of Mary Davis, a 43-year-old woman, on August 28, 1911, and the burial service was provided by Hall and Willis.⁵⁹ Mary Davis was the only 1911 burial recorded in Rosewood Cemetery in Galveston County death certificates. Her name is not included in a 1956 list of burials in Rosewood. In that document, the earliest burial listed is that of Robert Bailey, an infant who died 14 days after his birth in February 1912.⁶⁰ Including him, thirteen individuals were interred in the cemetery in 1912, 68 in 1913, and 69 in 1914 (**Figure 10**).

The 1915 hurricane significantly impacted the growing cemetery, which had 190 burials at the time of the storm.⁶¹ In his 1916 address to stockholders, President Willis announced that "everything was washed away, even some of the

⁵⁶ Mullins, "Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism."

⁵⁷ Mullins, "Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism."

⁵⁸ Cousins, "Rosewood Cemetery Marks Significant Location of Black History."

⁵⁹ Texas Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Mary Davis, Find A Grave, August 21, 1911, Death Certificate.

⁶⁰ W. K. Hebert, Letter to Mr. Fine G. Bedford, National Hotel Building, Galveston, Texas (November 12, 1956), Box 1, Folder 1, MS88-0008, Rosewood Cemetery Association Records, Rosenberg Library.

⁶¹ Brian Davis, "The Buried Past: Historic Cemetery Gets Marker and Gives Up Secrets," *Newspaper*, April 15, 2011, 1B, Rosenberg Library.

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corpses.”⁶² Following the storm, the association invested in the cemetery by making several improvements, including a new fence along the northern property boundary and a toolshed, neither of which are extant.⁶³

The damage from the 1915 storm was not the only difficulty the association would have to overcome. Willis’ address cited the problem presented by the cemetery’s remote location on the far west side of the city and distance from the endpoint of the Fort Crockett streetcar, several miles to the east.⁶⁴ Where other transportation was not available, many people had to walk to the cemetery to attend funerals or visit the resting place of their loved ones. As a result, some African American families buried their dead in the city’s new potter’s field, a cemetery that replaced the old potter’s field when it reached capacity in 1887.⁶⁵ The new potter’s field was closer to the city and provided residents a free place to bury their dead. Other African American Galvestonians would continue to be interred in segregated sections at other Galveston cemeteries.⁶⁶ Willis lamented this barrier, explaining the need for African American Galvestonians to unite to utilize, promote, and upkeep Rosewood Cemetery in order for it to be successful.⁶⁷ To ensure proper upkeep, the association also held cleanup and beautification activities, including a Decoration Day in 1916.⁶⁸

After 1917 the number of interments began to decrease, and this trend continued through the following decade. In 1917, when the number of annual burials was less than half that of 1913 and 1914, prices for child burials were reduced to \$3.50 per site and the additional fee for digging the grave was decreased from \$2.00 to \$1.50, suggesting the need for additional business.⁶⁹ By the early 1920s, the annual number of burials in the cemetery had decreased substantially to a just few each year. In 1922, a petition to extend city water service to the cemetery was granted, but lines were still not constructed by 1923.⁷⁰ By that time, other cemeteries were being used by African American Galvestonians to inter their dead, and in greater numbers than at Rosewood. The Galveston cemeteries on Broadway were elevated along with the rest of the island in 1918 and 1925 and subdivided again to provide additional interment space.⁷¹ By the late 1930s, the New Potter’s Field was renamed Municipal Cemetery and was “used exclusively for negroes and paupers.” *Galveston Daily News* referred to Municipal as the “colored” or “negro” cemetery in the 1940s and 1950s.⁷² Burials of African American Galvestonians continued in other cemeteries on the island and on the mainland, especially in Memorial Cemetery in Hitchcock.⁷³

Later Years, 1930 to 1944

Rosewood Cemetery was not immune from financial impacts of the Great Depression. The cemetery lost about \$100 when Ed McCarthy Bank closed in 1931.⁷⁴ Fewer burials resulted in fewer cash dividends to shareholders. Alternative uses for the land were sought to increase usage of the parcel. In 1934, in an effort to seek a profit from the property, the association leased a 170-foot strip of land along the Gulf of Mexico for \$125 to Council H. Smith, one of the

⁶² *The City Times*, “President C. S. Willis’ Address.”

⁶³ *The City Times*, “President C. S. Willis’ Address.”

⁶⁴ Mullins, “Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism”; *The City Times*, “President C. S. Willis’ Address”; E. A. Hensoldt, *Map of the City of Galveston, Texas* (Library of Congress), 1890.

⁶⁵ Find A Grave, Potter’s Field Cemetery, Cemetery 2500449; Davis, “The Buried Past: Historic Cemetery Gets Marker and Gives Up Secrets.”

⁶⁶ Artstead, Bert Carson Armstead Jr. Papers.

⁶⁷ *The City Times*, “President C. S. Willis’ Address.”

⁶⁸ *The City Times*, “Notice to Public,” May 30, 1916.

⁶⁹ Mullins, “Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism.”

⁷⁰ *Galveston Daily News*, “Notice,” June 16, 1922, 3.

⁷¹ Artstead, Bert Carson Armstead Jr. Papers.

⁷² *Galveston Daily News*, “At Pistol Point,” March 11, 1954, 1 (Newspapers.com).

⁷³ Artstead, Bert Carson Armstead Jr. Papers.

⁷⁴ Mullins, “Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism.”

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original shareholders and later association president of the association, “for camping purposes.”⁷⁵ This lease was for a portion of the land owned by the association that was not being used as a cemetery; a 1983 deed describes the cemetery as occupying the north 286 feet of the parcel “being the only part thereof previously utilized for cemetery purposes.”⁷⁶

Changes in the 1940s and 1950s would result in the eventual closure and sale of Rosewood Cemetery. The last known burial in the cemetery was likely Edna Sanford on June 22, 1944.⁷⁷ In July, a meeting of the 25 active shareholders discussed the use of the beachfront area as a recreational area for the African American population, especially young adults and children, as an effort to reduce delinquency.⁷⁸ The association voted in agreement to lease the waterfront for one year to Reverend Bright-Davies of Saint Augustine Episcopal Church as a “Recreational Center for Members of Negro Race.”⁷⁹ In 1945, the lease was renewed for five years at a rent of \$50 per year.⁸⁰ However, by the fall, the association began discussing the sale of either all or a portion of Rosewood Cemetery.⁸¹ Hebert and J.W. Patrick each offered \$1,500 for the waterfront portion of the property that was currently being leased by Saint Augustine church.⁸² The association agreed on the concept of selling the cemetery, contingent upon the property being sold to a person of “Negro race and African extraction.”⁸³ At this time, cash in the general fund amounted to just over \$542.⁸⁴ Although the association had cash on hand, the sale of the property was likely a sign of financial difficulties.

These financial and management woes appeared to have continued. In 1946, delinquent taxes amounted to more than \$300, possibly due to the association not being legally incorporated.⁸⁵ The association itself only had a balance of \$167.83.⁸⁶ Subsequently, the association secured an 8% interest loan from Hebert for \$200 in order to liquidate the outstanding delinquent tax balance.⁸⁷ Each shareholder paid \$4 per share to help pay Hebert’s loan.⁸⁸ Tracking shareholders became difficult because many of the original members died leaving no beneficiary. The number of association shareholders decreased to 17 and the number of shares to 70.⁸⁹ The association reorganized with the goal to equitably distribute shares between board members and common members.⁹⁰ That same year, Thomas Deboy Armstrong (1907–1972) became the primary shareholder after securing the Cuney Lodge holdings.⁹¹ He later acquired

⁷⁵ C. H. Smith owned and operated a Smith’s Grocery Store at 2811 Avenue F and was a member of the Wesley Tabernacle Church and the Colored Knights of Pythias, as well as other organizations. Galveston County Clerk, Lease Record 498:363, Galveston, August 8, 1934. Research did not identify what is meant by “camping purposes” in the lease agreement.

⁷⁶ Galveston County Clerk. Deed Record 002-57-1945. Galveston, 1983.

⁷⁷ Although secondary sources identify the last burial as Frank Boyer, a white man, on June 29, 1944, this is likely an error as Findagrave.com includes a photo of his grave marker at the Rosewood Funeral Home and Cemetery in Humble, Harris County.

⁷⁸ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes, Rosenberg Library, July 18, 1944; Smith, Letter to Mr. Robert M. Williams, D.D., Asbury Methodist Church, 11th & K Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

⁷⁹ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸⁰ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes, Rosenberg Library, August 15, 1945.

⁸¹ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸² Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸³ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸⁴ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸⁵ W. K. Hebert, Letter to C. N. Oliver, Box 1, Folder 1, MS87-0033, W. K. Hebert and Company Records, Rosenberg Library, November 15, 1946; Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes, Rosenberg Library, March 13, 1949.

⁸⁶ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes, Rosenberg Library, February 27, 1946.

⁸⁷ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁸⁸ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes; Hebert, Letter to C. N. Oliver. The Hebert loan was back in 1947.

⁸⁹ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁹⁰ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes.

⁹¹ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Meeting Minutes; *Galveston News-Tribune*, “Thomas Deboy Armstrong,” August 23, 1964, 5 (Newspapers.com).

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the shares of Reverend Williams and Hebert.⁹²

By 1948, the waterfront was divided in half and leased to King Akino and Roy A. Yancy.⁹³ B.A.&P. Realty managed the leases until 1951 when the County of Galveston acquired 1.144-acres for the extension of the Galveston Seawall (NR 1977).⁹⁴ The seawall was built by 1963, but the portion of land acquired from the cemetery was never used by the county, returning the property to a later heir to the cemetery property in 1982.⁹⁵ The ca. 1955-63 extension of the seawall and Seawall Boulevard ended any recreational use of the area since the beachfront became a part of public property.⁹⁶

Meeting notes from October 1950 and August 1951, indicate a disagreement regarding distribution of funds among shareholders.⁹⁷ In August 1951, Armstrong issued a damages and partition suit against the association in for failing to pay his equal share after becoming primary shareholder.⁹⁸ At a special meeting called on October 24, 1951, the board appointed a committee to formulate a plan to pay Armstrong his portion and came to an agreement with him in December, after which the case was dismissed.⁹⁹ By 1955, the association prepared for the sale of the cemetery, possibly due to the unresolved organizational issues.¹⁰⁰ Mack H. Hannah Jr. of Port Arthur submitted a bid for \$4,100, which the association rejected, and no sale ever took place.¹⁰¹

Abandonment, Neglect, and Surrounding Development in the Mid- to Late-Twentieth Century

There are few association records in the late 1950s through the 1960s, but by 1970, Armstrong and Nando Hebert of Hebert's Funeral Home owned 90% of the shares, with Armstrong holding the majority between the two. Since burials ceased in 1944 the goal of share acquisition was likely the ownership of the undeveloped portion of the parcels surrounding the cemetery. Since the majority of shareholders were deceased or unreachable, the 1975 case of *Thomas D. Armstrong vs. Nando J. Hebert et al.* was ruled in Armstrong's favor.¹⁰² Armstrong died two years later, leaving his shares (worth a total of \$21,500) to his wife, Marguerite, and their children, Thelma D. Armstrong Hannah and

⁹² T. D. Armstrong v. Rosewood Cemetery Association; Bailey, Rosewood Cemetery Association Meeting Minutes; Thelma T. Bailey, Committee Report (December 11, 1951), Box 1, Folder 7, MS87-0033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library; Bailey, Committee Report. Armstrong was a member of Wesley Tabernacle Church and a successful businessman and owner of B A & P real estate company, an insurance agency; Little Shamrock Motel; Armstrong Drug Store; and Strode Funeral Hom. In 1962, he became the first African American city councilman for the City of Galveston. *Galveston Daily News*, "T. Armstrong is Candidate for Council," January 25, 1961, 1 (Newspapers.com).

⁹³ B. A. & P. Realty, Settlement Report 1, Box 1, Folder 7, W.K. Hebert and Company Records, MS87-0033, Rosenberg Library, June 30, 1948.

⁹⁴ Galveston County Clerk, Lease Transfer 898:696.

⁹⁵ Hutchinson, "Galveston Seawall, Galveston, Galveston County"; Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 1166:1, Galveston, 1982; Galveston History Center, "Seawall," 2022.

⁹⁶ Hutchinson, "Galveston Seawall, Galveston, Galveston County."

⁹⁷ Thelma T. Bailey, Rosewood Cemetery Association Meeting Minutes (October 11, 1950), Box 1, Folder 5, MS87-0033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library; Thelma T. Bailey, Rosewood Cemetery Association Meeting Minutes (October 24, 1951), Box 1, Folder 5, MS87-0033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library.

⁹⁸ Thomas D. Armstrong v. Rosewood Cemetery Association, Docket Number 77,834 (December 21, 1951).

⁹⁹ T. D. Armstrong v. Rosewood Cemetery Association; Bailey, Rosewood Cemetery Association Meeting Minutes; Thelma T. Bailey, Committee Report (December 11, 1951), Box 1, Folder 7, MS87-0033, W. K. Hebert & Company Records, Rosenberg Library; Bailey, Committee Report.

¹⁰⁰ Hebert, Letter to Mr. Fine G. Bedford, National Hotel Building, Galveston, Texas.

¹⁰¹ Rosewood Cemetery Association, Memorandum (June 3, 1955), Rosenberg Library.

¹⁰² Thomas D. Armstrong vs. Nando J. Herbert et al., 2567:598, (District Court of Galveston County, Texas, 122nd Judicial District, April 24, 1975); Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 2567:598, Galveston, April 24, 1975.

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Thomas D. Armstrong II.¹⁰³

The extension of the Galveston Seawall during the 1950s and 1960s initiated a deleterious landscape change around the cemetery, beginning with the embankment of Seawall Boulevard that limited water drainage to the south of the cemetery. Greens Bayou to the west of the property became a lake rather than a lagoon, changing the hydrology of the adjacent marshland. Development occurred first across from Greens Bayou along Steward Road during the 1960s, and later along Seawall Boulevard by 1982.¹⁰⁴ These changes combined with the inactivity of the association or private owners, led the property to fall into disrepair and suffer from neglect by the late 1970s.

Amid the preservation movement of the 1970s, the cemetery was covered in the local media as a site of neglect. *The Galveston Daily News* published an in-depth report on the cemetery's history and derelict state.¹⁰⁵ However, the article did not suggest preservation efforts or a need for further investigation at the time. Although the cemetery was still under association ownership by Armstrong (90% shareholder) and Hebert (10% shareholder), maintenance was not regularly completed based on the news coverage.¹⁰⁶

After the cemetery was acquired by developers in the late twentieth century it experienced its greatest period of neglect and vandalism. In 1983, Marguerite Armstrong and her children sold the cemetery to Lee Otis Zapp, Jr., who a month later sold the property to Leon S. Hirsch, a Houston-based businessman who converted his ownership into the 6300 Corporation.¹⁰⁷ In each of the three deeds, a clause notes the conveyance is subject to "any right, title and interest together with the legal implications of access and disinterment applicable to the North 296 feet of said tract, being the only part thereof previously utilized for cemetery purposes."¹⁰⁸ From 1995 to the 2010s, all of the adjacent parcels were developed.¹⁰⁹ The remaining portions of the original cemetery property were sold by 1997.¹¹⁰ By the new millennium, the cemetery once again gained attention by newspapers as a neglected site of African American history. In addition to overgrowth from vegetation, the cemetery itself showed signs of stress. In one instance, children found a human skull while playing near the site in 2000.¹¹¹ The African American Chamber of Commerce of Galveston County requested that the Galveston City Council complete restoration activities, a rededication, cleanup, and improved cemetery access.¹¹² A task force was created to address the concerns, and historic preservation activists worked together to clean the site. In 2001, bulldozers from a construction site on the parcel to the north drove through the cemetery and caused further damage to the site.¹¹³ In 2006, the cemetery was donated to Galveston Historical

¹⁰³ Rochard Scorza, "Gone But Not Forgotten?" *Newspaper*, February 28, 1977, Rosenberg Library; Galveston County, Estate of Thomas D. Armstrong, Probate Case 0037315: Inventory, Appraisalment, and List of Claims, Galveston, April 15, 1977.

¹⁰⁴ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, Galveston County (1972), Aerial Image.

¹⁰⁵ Mullins, "Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism"; Galveston Historical Foundation, Rosewood Cemetery, n.d.

¹⁰⁶ Mullins, "Rosewood Cemetery Victim of Time, Elements, Vandalism."

¹⁰⁷ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 2-65:256, Galveston, November 10, 1983; Ancestry Contributor, "Leon Samuel Hirsch Family Tree," 2023.

¹⁰⁸ Galveston County Clerk. Deed Records 002-57-1945, 002-65-0262, 002-65-0260. Galveston, 1983.

¹⁰⁹ Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2010), Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2014), Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2016), Aerial Image; Nationwide Environmental Title Research, "Galveston County" (Historic Aerials by NETROnline, 2018), Aerial Image.

¹¹⁰ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 248:11, Galveston, 1997.

¹¹¹ Charlotte Smith, "Digging up the Past: Historical Activists Claim Volunteers Damaged Rosewood Cemetery," *Newspaper*, August 23, 2000, 1A, Congregation Beth Jacob Records.

¹¹² *African-American News & Issues*, "History of Rosewood."

¹¹³ Massey, Richard. "Historic Cemetery Bulldozed by Developers," *The Daily News* (Galveston, Texas), May 23, 2001, 1.

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Foundation by John and Judy Saracco, the owners of 6300 Corporation after the death of Hirsch.¹¹⁴ In 2007, the present-day 1.08-acre Rosewood Cemetery was formally dedicated for cemetery purposes and designated a Historic Texas Cemetery. A plaque erected at the cemetery was donated to GHF by the Saraccos. An Official Texas Historical Marker was erected in 2010. The severe hurricanes of the 2000s and 2010s had a substantial impact on the site, making cleanup and restoration efforts challenging and time-consuming. The grant from the National Park Service's Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund, which was used to fund this nomination, will also be used for the design and construction of engineering controls to improve the site's drainage to minimize flooding.

Notable Interments

As Galveston's first private African American cemetery, Rosewood Cemetery has numerous notable individuals interred within. While many of the buried individuals were common residents who did not often make the news, several locally significant individuals are discussed below.

Rev. Benjamin J. Hall (ca. 1851–1914)

Benjamin J. (B.J.) Hall was instrumental in the leadership of Galveston's First Union Baptist Church at Avenue K and 11th Street, serving as pastor from 1878 to 1892, and again from 1896 until his death in 1914.¹¹⁵ Hall led efforts to rebuild the church sanctuary following the 1900 hurricane and led the church to be the "mother church" of the state at the 1904 national convention of Union Free Mission Baptist churches in Austin.¹¹⁶ The Mount Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church on Broadway also benefited from Hall's leadership.¹¹⁷

First Lt. Charles Lemons (1874–1916)

Charles Lemons was a delegate for Theodore Roosevelt to a state or national Republican convention in 1912.¹¹⁸ Lemons was also a merchant, policeman, and member of the Texas National Guard.¹¹⁹

Charles McBeth (1874–1914)

Charles D. McBeth was a lawyer who represented numerous Galvestonians in District Court. McBeth participated in the Galveston Republican Party as a delegate and secretary for the political organization.¹²⁰

S.H. Shelton (1879–1918)

S.H. Shelton was a news reporter who founded the Night Hawk newspaper in 1916, one of the two newspapers for the African American community.¹²¹ On the 31st anniversary of Juneteenth, a holiday commemorating the June 19, 1865, announcement of emancipation by Major General Gordon Granger in Galveston at the end of the Civil War, Shelton

¹¹⁴ Davis, "The Buried Past: Historic Cemetery Gets Marker and Gives Up Secrets"; Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 2-65:260, Galveston, 1983; Ancestry Contributor, "Leon Samuel Hirsch Family Tree."

¹¹⁵ Waymarking Contributor, "First Union Baptist Church, Galveston," 2018.

¹¹⁶ Waymarking Contributor, "First Union Baptist Church, Galveston"; *Galveston Tribune*, "Colored Baptists," October 17, 1904, 8 (University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History).

¹¹⁷ Maggie Williams, *Galveston's African American Historic Places & Pioneers: A Guidebook* (Old Central Cultural Center and the Galveston Historical Foundation African American Heritage Committee, 2015).

¹¹⁸ *Galveston Daily News*, "Bolting Faction Splits Republican Convention," May 8, 1912, 12 (Newspapers.com).

¹¹⁹ Texas Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Charles Lemons, Find A Grave, May 21, 1916, Death Certificate; *Galveston Daily News*, "The Texas National Guard," March 7, 1904, 6 (Newspapers.com).

¹²⁰ *Galveston Tribune*, "Galveston Republicans," September 3, 1900, 1 (University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History).

¹²¹ *The City Times*, "The Death Toll," January 26, 1918, 4 (Newspapers.com).

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recited the Emancipation Proclamation to crowds gathered in Douglass Park to celebrate the occasion.¹²²

Tony A. Smith (1873–1914)

A longshoreman, Tony A. Smith was active in the Order of Odd Fellows, the Colored Knights of Pythias, and the Colored Screwman.¹²³ Smith was a sexton for the Rosewood Cemetery Association who looked after the grounds.¹²⁴

Analysis of Interments

Only 16 grave markers are above ground and visible in the cemetery, but records estimate the total number of interments is 440.¹²⁵ This number is based on research of death certificates, and it is possible that this number may be higher due to numerous pandemics and storm events that have impacted Galveston throughout the early twentieth century. The 1915 hurricane was known to have washed away corpses, and it is possible that this also occurred with subsequent storms over the past century. Archaeological investigation tactics, including ground penetrating radar technologies, have proven ineffective because of the sandy soils of the site, which is only 900 feet from the beach. A Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) study of the site in 2021 depicted numerous sunken areas where no headstones are present, indicating soil disturbance and the probable existence of burials in these unmarked areas (**Figures 5-7**).¹²⁶ Research did not identify the extent or location of all the burials at the cemetery. It is possible that the historic boundary of the cemetery exceeds its current boundaries, though no documentation clearly indicates this.

An analysis of 440 recorded burials provided some insight on correlations of the interred population.¹²⁷ All records recorded on the *Find A Grave* website database for Rosewood Cemetery were included, in addition to two headstones that were not included in the database but were documented in situ during a site visit.¹²⁸ Death certificates showed burial activity began soon after the procurement of the site in 1911. The year with the most burials was 1914, then the number of burials each year decreased steadily until about 1924. After 1924, interment activity ranged from 1 to 15 each year until the last burial in 1944. Based on these interments, the leading cause of death was pneumonia. Tuberculosis, a pandemic with a high mortality rate in the United States into the early-twentieth century was the second-most common cause, and nephritis of the kidneys was the third. The influenza pandemic of 1918–1919 was the recorded cause of death of one individual, but it is possible others were inflicted with the disease and were diagnosed with other respiratory illnesses.¹²⁹ In 1920, an outbreak of the bubonic plague impacted Galveston among other port cities along the Gulf coast.¹³⁰ The outbreak killed 12 Galvestonians, one of whom is buried in this cemetery.¹³¹

The average age at death was 39, due to the high number of interred infants under the age of one (n=52). Many of their deaths were caused by malnutrition, pneumonia, and premature and stillborn birth. Middle-aged adults (41-65) was the

¹²² Juneteenth or Emancipation Day is the anniversary of the delivery of General Order No. 3 given by General Gordon Granger in Galveston on June 19, 1865; formally ending enslavement of people in the Southern U.S., even though President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation two years prior. *Galveston Daily News*, “Emancipation Day,” June 14, 1896, 8 (Newspapers.com).

¹²³ *Galveston Tribune*, “Tony A. Smith Dies,” November 16, 1914, 7 (University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History).

¹²⁴ *Galveston Tribune*, “Tony A. Smith Dies.”

¹²⁵ Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659; *African-American News & Issues*, “History of Rosewood.” Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659; *African-American News & Issues*, “History of Rosewood.”

¹²⁶ Ben Ritt, Rosewood Cemetery LIDAR Imagery (2021), Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) Imagery.

¹²⁷ Find A Grave, Rosewood Cemetery, Cemetery 2340659.

¹²⁸ The Find A Grave website includes primary source data, primarily death certificates.

¹²⁹ Chester R. Burns, “Epidemic Diseases,” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

¹³⁰ Paul Summerly, “Bubonic Plague, Galveston (1920),” in *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2020.

¹³¹ Summerly, “Bubonic Plague, Galveston (1920).”

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largest group of interments at thirty-eight percent (n=169). Young adults were the second largest group of interments at twenty-seven percent (n=116). One hundred twenty-one (27.3%) individuals were born in or before 1865 prior to emancipation, indicating the likely interment of a number of persons born into enslavement. Birth dates ranged from 1815 to 1938, with several unknown (n=24). Not many older adults within the records were buried in the cemetery, suggesting that even in the twentieth century the common mortality age was much younger, and the mortality rate possibly higher in African American communities when compared to their white counterparts due to high levels of stress, taxing labor conditions, and poorer health care. In 1910, the average life expectancy for African American men and women was 40 years old.¹³² This statistic increased gradually to 45 years old in 1920 and 48.5 in 1930.¹³³ Therefore, the average lifespan within this population is in line with mortality statistics at the time.

The most common occupations of the buried individuals were laborers for men and domestic roles (maid, cook, housewife) for women. Additional occupations found in the sample included bricklayers, chauffeurs, draymen, farmers, gardeners, longshoremen, police officers, sailors, cotton screwmen, truck drivers, and waiters. General labor was the most common occupational field (n=97), followed by domestic service (n=74), and homemaker roles (n=52). Many of the laborers worked in the Port of Galveston at the shipping docks for various industries. Seaboard Lumber and Milling Company at Church and 27th Streets employed at least a dozen men. Domestic workers likely worked for private residences, although many of the death certificates did not specify locations of employment. The analysis did not include the high number of infants and children who were too young to work or be in school at the time of their death (n=64). This assessment also does not include forty-five unknown records, where information was unavailable. This analysis of all known burials in the cemetery also provided an overview of life in Galveston at the time of the cemetery's active state.

In the late nineteenth century, as African American communities gained independence and developed wealth, they represented a new and lucrative market for the newly emerging American funerary industry. Some African American entrepreneurs built their wealth as undertakers serving the local African American community, which could not always receive service from white-owned businesses.¹³⁴ When Rosewood Cemetery was founded in 1911, three undertakers were listed in the city directory: J. Levy & Brother, F.P. Malloy, and Columbus S. Willis.¹³⁵ At Rosewood, the most common undertakers used for funeral services for Rosewood interments were African American undertakers Columbus S. Willis and William Kendall (W.K.) Hebert (1888–1958). Willis operated an independent business but partnered with Hebert around 1916.¹³⁶ Willis was also active in the association from its early beginnings. Undertaker Thomas E. Hall, also African American, was often hired for funeral preparations at Rosewood. White-owned funeral business F.P. Malloy & Son was also frequently hired for Rosewood funerals. To a lesser extent, Estelle Undertakers, Strode Funeral Home, Inc., and West End Undertakers were used by some families, mostly in the 1920s and 1930s. The Jewish family-owned J. Levy and Brothers was the undertaking business for six Rosewood interments.

Those who were interred in Rosewood Cemetery predominantly lived on Galveston Island. While Galveston did not have the same pattern of residential segregation of other southern towns, residential segregation did exist. Home addresses of the interred were mapped to better understand their geography upon death (**Figures 8-9**). Results found the individuals to be dispersed in the center and port side of the city, with some areas where residences of the interred were clustered together. The largest cluster was in central Galveston between Harborside Drive (formerly Avenue A) to the north, 25th Street to the east, Avenue O to the south, and 33rd Street to the west. Within this area, small African American enclaves included Winnie Street in downtown Galveston and Avenues L and M near Kempner Park. Smaller

¹³² Douglas C. Ewbank, "History of Black Mortality and Health before 1940," *The Milbank Quarterly*, Volume 65, No. 1 (1987).

¹³³ Ewbank, "History of Black Mortality and Health before 1940."

¹³⁴ Keith Eggener, "Building on Burial Ground," 2010.

¹³⁵ Morrison & Fourmy. *Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Galveston: 1911-1912*. Houston, Texas: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Rosenberg Library.

¹³⁶ Find A Grave, William Kendall Hebert, Memorial 120588879.

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clusters with less density were found on the east side of the city (Broadway [formerly Avenue J] to the north, 11th Street to the east, Seawall Boulevard to the south, and 16th Street to the west), and the port area surrounding Sealy Hospital (now the University of Texas Medical Branch). These boundaries roughly correlate to redline maps of the era, depicting areas north of Broadway along the harbor and areas along the Seawall as “hazardous”, due in part to “undesirable population.”¹³⁷ There was also some dispersal of individuals living in the West End, but at a much lower density. The broad dispersal of other addresses may be connected to Galveston’s history of back houses along the alley, providing ancillary housing behind the main house. In many of the death certificates, individuals have a rear address signifying a back or alley house. Individuals with domestic-related occupations may have lived in the rear houses associated with the main houses of their employers.

Comparison to Other Jim Crow-Era Cemeteries

Despite the few extant graves, some patterns of cemetery design related to the southeastern United States and African American cemeteries is evident. Rosewood Cemetery’s burials and development pattern appear to have followed the typical practices of late nineteenth and early twentieth folk cemeteries of the southern United States, practices shared in common by Anglo and African American groups:¹³⁸

- Graves facing east—most extant graves appear to be oriented facing east. Although many of the stones are broken and displaced, those with extant false or half crypts and curbing are clearly oriented in this direction. This is both a European and African tradition and has been attributed to Judeo-Christian as well as various other belief systems.¹³⁹
- Simple markers of wood, fieldstone, brick, and concrete—extant Rosewood headstones are marble, concrete, plain brick, glazed brick, or a combination of these materials. Due to lack of funding for cemeteries and plots, it is common for Jim Crow-era African American cemeteries to lack decorative architecture, elaborate sculptures, and ornamental plantings that would be common in older white cemeteries, such as the cemeteries on Broadway Avenue.
- Inscriptions on stones are often minimal and those on wood or concrete markers are sometimes written by hand—of the few extant Rosewood markers, one concrete headstone has a hand-written inscription with the name “T. C. Shenall” and “Died 1926 At Rest.” Although commercial gravestones were available by the late nineteenth century, the use of vernacular markers continued into the twentieth century and were especially common for the graves of African American individuals.¹⁴⁰
- Graves may be decorated with grave offerings, including objects the deceased owned in their life, including dishes lamps, snuff bottles, and medicine bottles, but often broken to break the cycle of death. Other decorative grave offerings may include shells, glass, or small gifts—one extant Rosewood marker has a seashell concreted onto it.¹⁴¹
- The presence of half or false crypts or burial vaults (there is one extant vaulted half crypt and one walled crypt)
- Curbed or fenced family plots—the Rosewood Cemetery Association advertised that curbing around graves was required.¹⁴²
- Celebration of “Decoration Day” (traditionally a day set aside in May to tend to the graves and clean the

¹³⁷ Redlining was the twentieth-century practice completed by mortgage underwriting companies to dictate risk assessment for real estate. The practice was rooted in racism and discrimination and continues to shape how communities look today. E. G. Cain, Blue Print Company, Visitors Guide: City of Galveston, Texas, Mapping Inequality: Redlining in New Deal America, 1929, Map.

¹³⁸ Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (University of Texas Press, 1982).

¹³⁹ Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*.

¹⁴⁰ Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*. John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1990).

¹⁴¹ Ross W. Jamieson, “Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices.” *Historical Archaeology* 29, no. 4 (1995): 20. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25616423>; Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy*. Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*.

¹⁴² *The City Times*, “Rosewood Cemetery Lots for Sale.”

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cemetery)—newspaper ads placed in the *City Times*, the newspaper for African American Galvestonians, advertised Decoration Day events at Rosewood.¹⁴³

- Plantings, particularly flowers like lilies and roses—due to periods of major ground disturbance, little evidence of historic plantings are evident. Palm trees grow in a few locations in the cemetery and most of the ground cover is grasses; however, there have been remnant lily of the valley volunteers.¹⁴⁴ The current landscape design is not original, but descriptions from residents of the era noted the cool temperatures of the site, likely due to the presence of shade plants and the ocean breeze.¹⁴⁵

There is insufficient design and materials integrity to confirm the following African American and/or southern cemetery traditions at Rosewood Cemetery:

- Scraped earth, with raised mounds (a West African tradition)
- Graves decorated with shells, glass, medicine bottles and snuff bottles, broken pottery, or broken lamps
- Informal, organic development
- Wives buried to left (north) of husbands
- Gravehouses, fences, or lichgates

The most notable characteristic of the cemetery is its loss of material and design due to decades of damage by weather events and vandalism and exacerbated by surrounding development. While neglect, abandonment, and vandalism are a concern for cemeteries regardless of their populations, a study of Texas cemeteries show that African American and Hispanic cemeteries are significantly more susceptible to destruction. The study also points to examples from other states, indicating that this is an issue across the United States for cemeteries and other types of historic resources associated with historically marginalized communities.¹⁴⁶ Marginalization, gentrification, civic exclusion, divestment, and other aspects of institutional racism are often the root causes, rather than indifference of the local African American communities.

In acknowledgment of the ongoing threat to African American Cemeteries, Senator Brown Sherrod of Ohio introduced Senate Bill 3667 in 2002, to establish the African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Act, which will create a preservation program administered by the National Park Service, with grant funding for the identification, documentation, preservation, and interpretation of African-American burial grounds.¹⁴⁷ A similar bill was introduced in Congress in 2019 by Representative Alma S. Adams of North Carolina. The Act states that because of the practices of American slavery and Jim Crow, funereal history in the United States is characterized by the segregation of African American populations in separate cemeteries or sections of cemeteries that were in remote or marginal areas that were not well-documented. As a result, African American burial grounds are often found after construction projects are well-underway and remains are disturbed. These bills are intended to preserve and protect cemeteries like Rosewood, despite the loss of integrity that has already occurred.

Period of Significance Justification

¹⁴³ *The City Times*, "Decoration Day," May 19, 1917, 4 (Newspaper Archive).

¹⁴⁴ Galveston Historical Foundation, Lily of the Valley at Rosewood Cemetery, Box 1, Folder 1, MS88-0008, Rosewood Cemetery Association Records, Rosenberg Library, 2007, Photograph.

¹⁴⁵ Scorza, "Gone But Not Forgotten?"

¹⁴⁶ Ashley Lemke, "'Missing Cemeteries' and Structural Racism: Historical Maps and Endangered African/African American and Hispanic Mortuary Customs in Texas," *Historical Archaeology*, Volume 54 (September, 2020).

¹⁴⁷ Sherrod Brown, *S.3667 African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Act*, Energy and Natural Resources Committee (U.S. Senate), February 16, 2022, Senate Bill.

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The period of significance for this property is 1911 to 1944, a timespan of 33 years. This period represents the active period of the Rosewood Cemetery, including its inception and establishment by the Rosewood Cemetery Association in early 1911, and ending with the final burial in 1944. This period of significance was previously determined by the National Park Service in its Determination of Eligibility for the property.¹⁴⁸

The cemetery's most active years of interment were 1913 to 1916. Subsequently, burial activity decreased substantially, possibly due to its remote location from the rest of the city. After the final burial in 1944, the cemetery suffered from the growing pains of Galveston, specifically tied to the Galveston Seawall expansion in 1950, which spurred development westward. The association ceased to own the property in 1975, changing the ownership from a shared system to a single-owner operation.

¹⁴⁸ National Park Service, Rosewood Cemetery, Hurricane Harvey Emergency Supplemental Grant Application, 2020.

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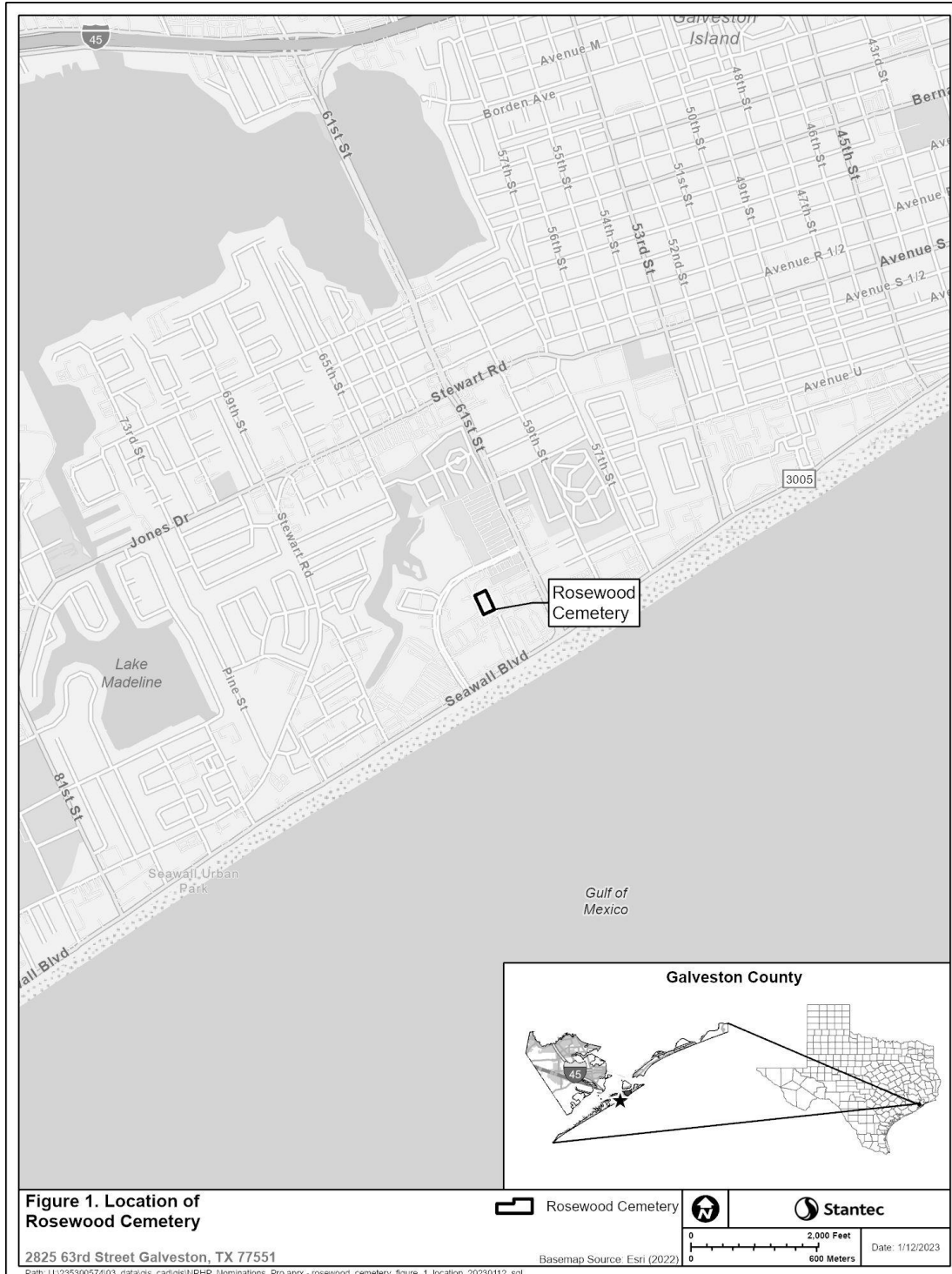
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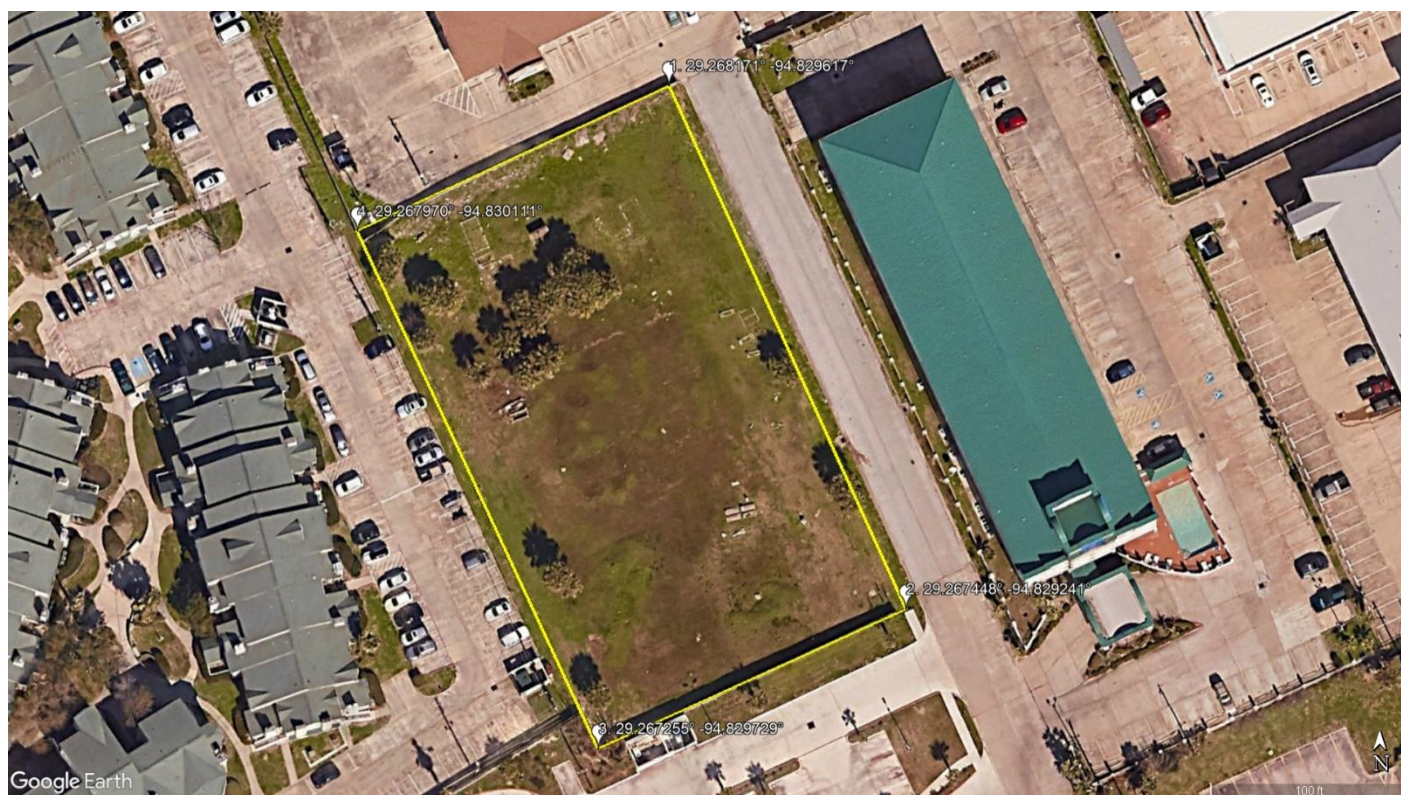
Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Map 1. Location of Rosewood Cemetery. Stantec, 2023.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Map 2. Map of Rosewood Cemetery Site.
Google Earth (Accessed January 8, 2024)



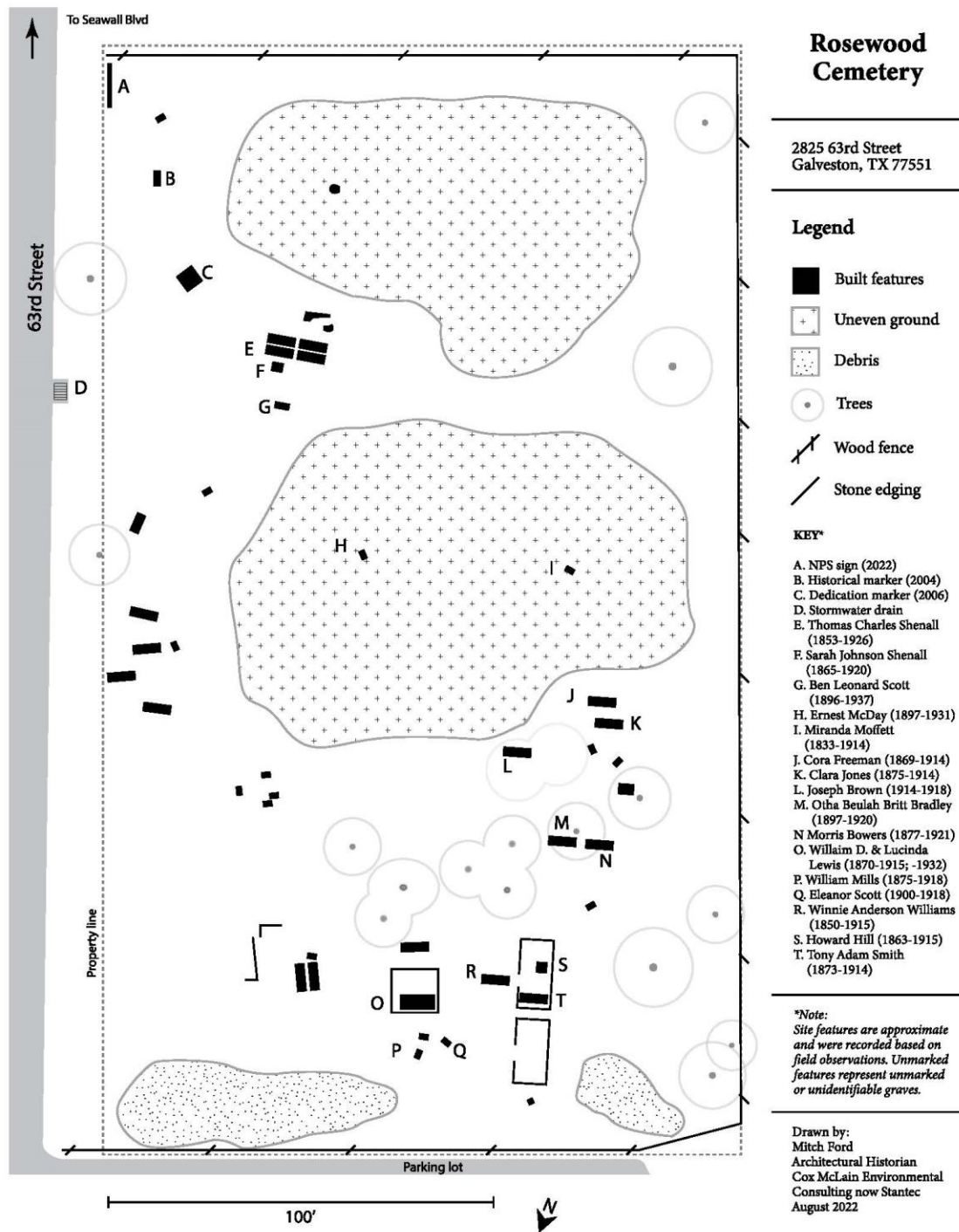
Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Map 3. Schematic Map of Rosewood Cemetery, on aerial image. Stantec, 2022.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Map 4. Schematic Map of Rosewood Cemetery on aerial image. Stantec, 2022.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 1. Chain of Title Table

Tract 1A, E/2 Lot 60, Section 1, of the Trimble & Lindsey Survey (Abstract 121) in Galveston, Galveston Co., Texas.

| Grantor | Grantee | Date | Volume/Page or Document Number | Instrument | Description |
|---|---|-----------|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Joseph M. Levy Mrs. Fiora Levy Mrs. Ben Saas (Carrie L. Saas) Sam J. Levy Mrs. Julia Levy Hutchings Aaron Levy | Rosewood Cemetery Association | 4.12.1911 | 247/694 | Deed | East half of Lot 60, Section 1, Government Survey |
| Rosewood Cemetery Association | Joseph M. Levy, Trustee | 4.12.1911 | 247/648 | Deed of Trust | Same as above |
| Rosewood Cemetery Association | Galveston County | 6.5.1951 | 911/293 | Deed | 1.144 acres, defined as a strip of land 300 feet wide, 166.14 feet long on eastern half of Lot No. 60, from 46.5 feet south of the center line of the proposed Seawall extension to 253.5 north of the center line. |
| Rosewood Cemetery Association | Marguerite G. Armstrong, Thelma D. Armstrong Hannah, and Thomas D. Armstrong II, beneficiaries of Thomas D. Armstrong, deceased | 4.24.1975 | 2567/598 | Deed, Case of <i>Thomas D. Armstrong vs. Nando J. Herbert et al.</i> | East half of Lot 60 in Section 1, Trimble & Lindsey Survey, except that portion conveyed to county in 1951 |
| Galveston County | Marguerite G. Armstrong | 6.3.1982 | 001-71-1166 | Deed** | 0.381 acres, containing the portion of the east half of Lot 60 Section 1, Trimble & Lindsey Survey previously deeded to the County that was not used for the construction of seawall or Seawall Boulevard, and described as the southerly 100 feet of the northerly 15 feet of the Seawall Boulevard right-of-way. |

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Marguerite G. Armstrong, Thelma D. Armstrong Hannah, and Thomas D. Armstrong II | Lee Otis Zapp, Jr., Trustee | 10.11.1983 | 002-57/1945 | Deed | The east half of Lot 60, Section 1, Trimble and Lindsey Survey save and except the Galveston County Seawall right-of-way southerly from the northerly edge of the concrete retaining wall northerly of Seawall Boulevard. |
| Lee Otis Zapp, Jr., Trustee | Leon S. Hirsch, Trustee | 11/10/1983 | 002-65/0256 | Special Warranty Deed | Same as above |
| Leon S. Hirsch | 6300 Corporation | 11.10.1983 | 002-65/0260 | Special Warranty Deed | Same as above |
| 6300 Corporation (John and Judy Saracco) | Sureshkumar J. and Paresha Shah | 6.30.1997 | 011-88-0246 | Warranty Deed with Vendor's Lien | Lot 1 of Judy Saracco Special Subdivision (part of the east half of Lot 60, Section 1, Trimble & Lindsey Survey) |
| 6300 Corporation (John and Judy Saracco) | Galveston Historical Foundation | 12.28.2006 | 2006087563 | Special Warranty Deed of Gift | Lot 2 of Judy Saracco Special Subdivision [1.08 acres] |

*Does not include right-of-way, utility, and rental leases. The cemetery had two portions of beach frontage leased from 1932 until the Galveston Seawall extension in 1951. Those leases were conveyed to the County of Galveston for proposed right-of-way for the Galveston Seawall extension on June 15, 1951.¹⁴⁹

**Galveston County released 0.318-acres originally acquired right-of-way for the Galveston Seawall extension back to the cemetery property. As the heir to the property, Marguerite G. Armstrong received the right-of-way return from the County on June 7, 1982.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Galveston County Clerk, Lease Record 498:363; Galveston County Clerk, Lease Transfer 898:696.

¹⁵⁰ Galveston County Clerk, Deed Record 1166:1.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 2. Oblique Imagery, 2005



View facing north, December 2005; cemetery on left.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Pictometry Online Eagleview, "Galveston Central Appraisal District," 2005.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 3. Oblique Imagery, 2005



View facing west, December 2005; cemetery on right.¹⁵²

¹⁵² Pictometry Online Eagleview, "Galveston Central Appraisal District."

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 4. Oblique Imagery, 2021



View facing west, January 2021; cemetery on right.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Pictometry Online Eagleview, “Galveston Central Appraisal District,” 2021.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 5. LIDAR Analysis, 2021



Aerial view in 2021.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Ben Ritt, "LIDAR images of Rosewood Cemetery," 2021, Galveston Historical Foundation.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 6. LIDAR Analysis, 2021

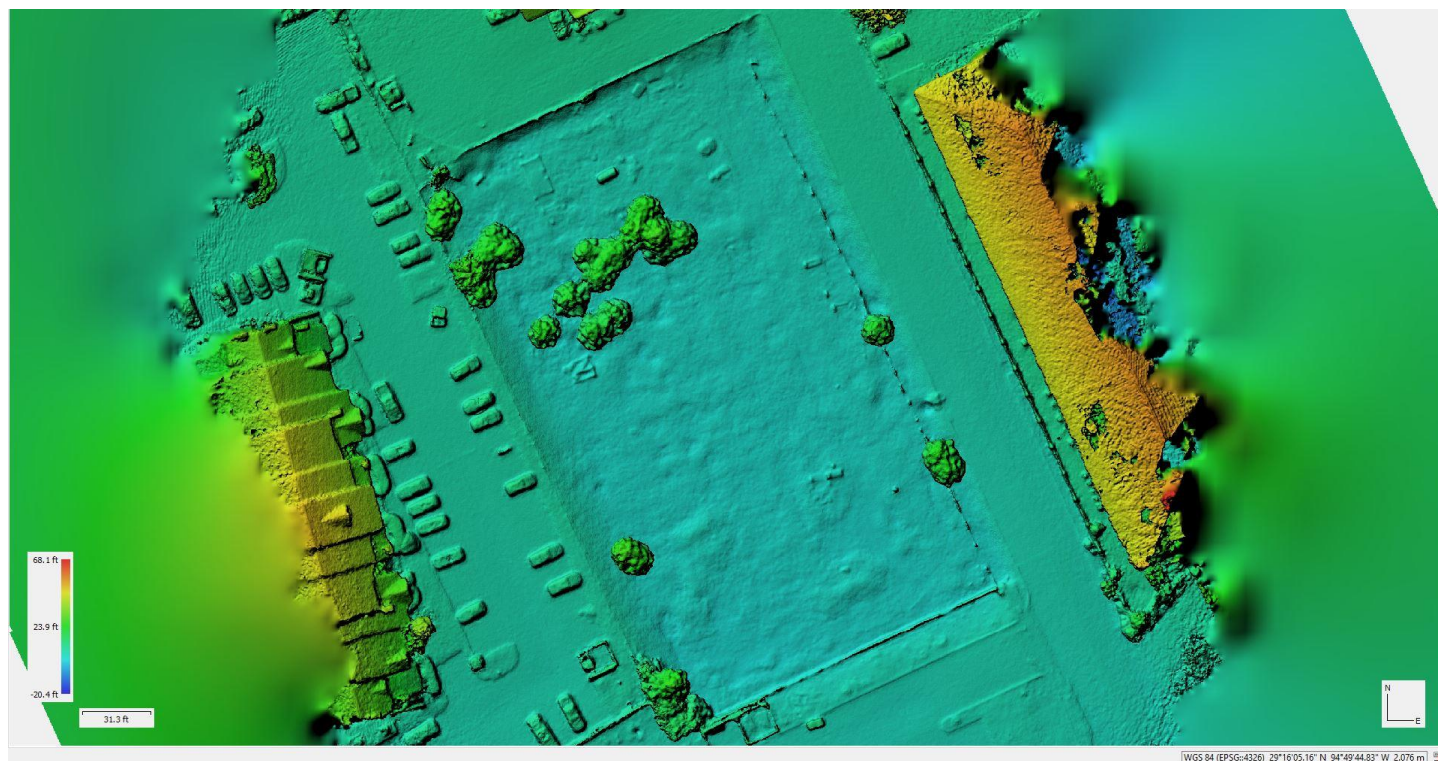


Aerial view in 2021 with burial areas highlighted.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Ritt, "LIDAR images of Rosewood Cemetery."

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 7. LIDAR Analysis, 2021

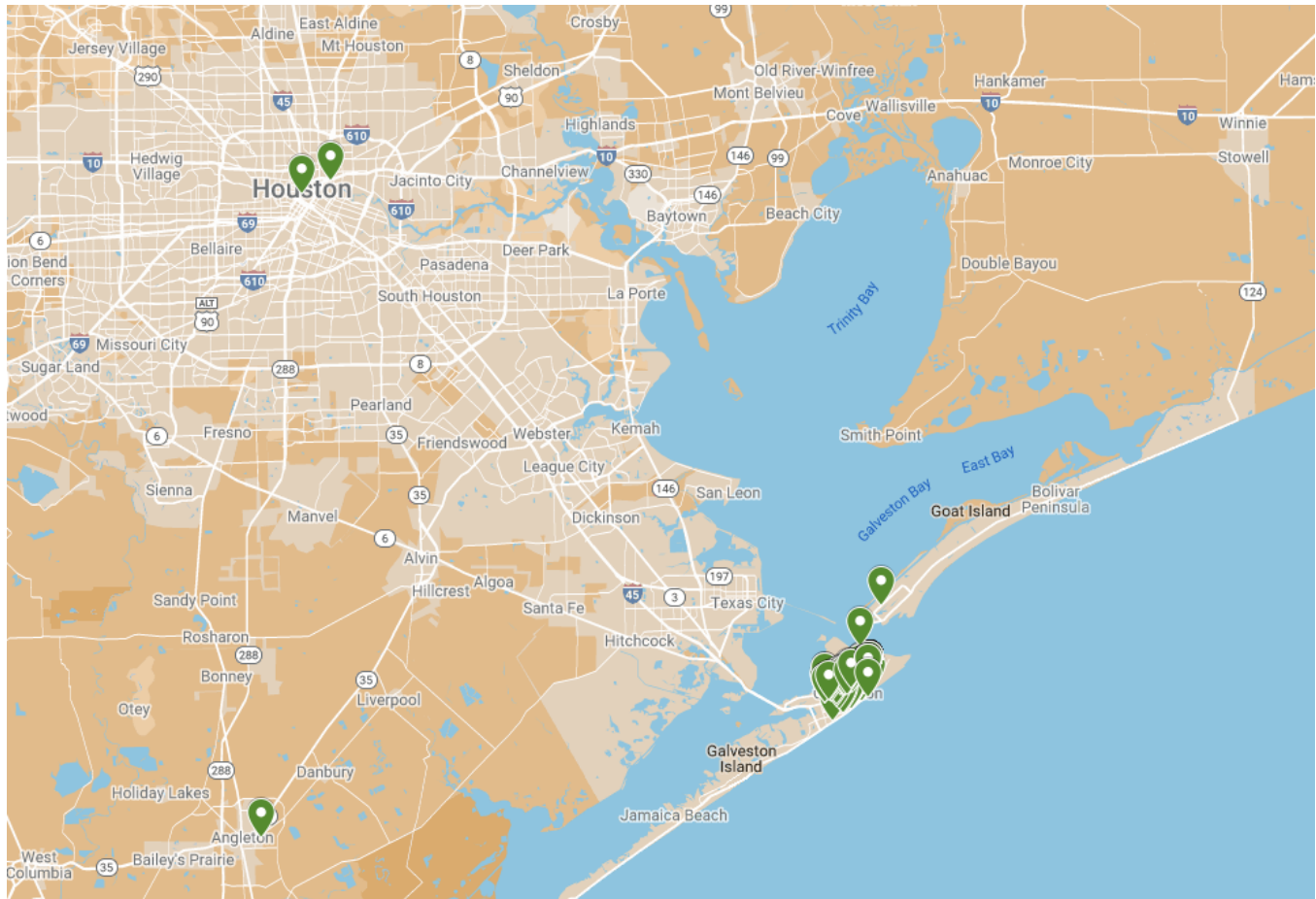


Digital Elevation Model by Ben Ritt, 2021; view showing uneven surfaces on the property.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Ben Ritt, “DEM of Rosewood Cemetery,” 2021, Galveston Historical Foundation.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 8. Mapped Addresses

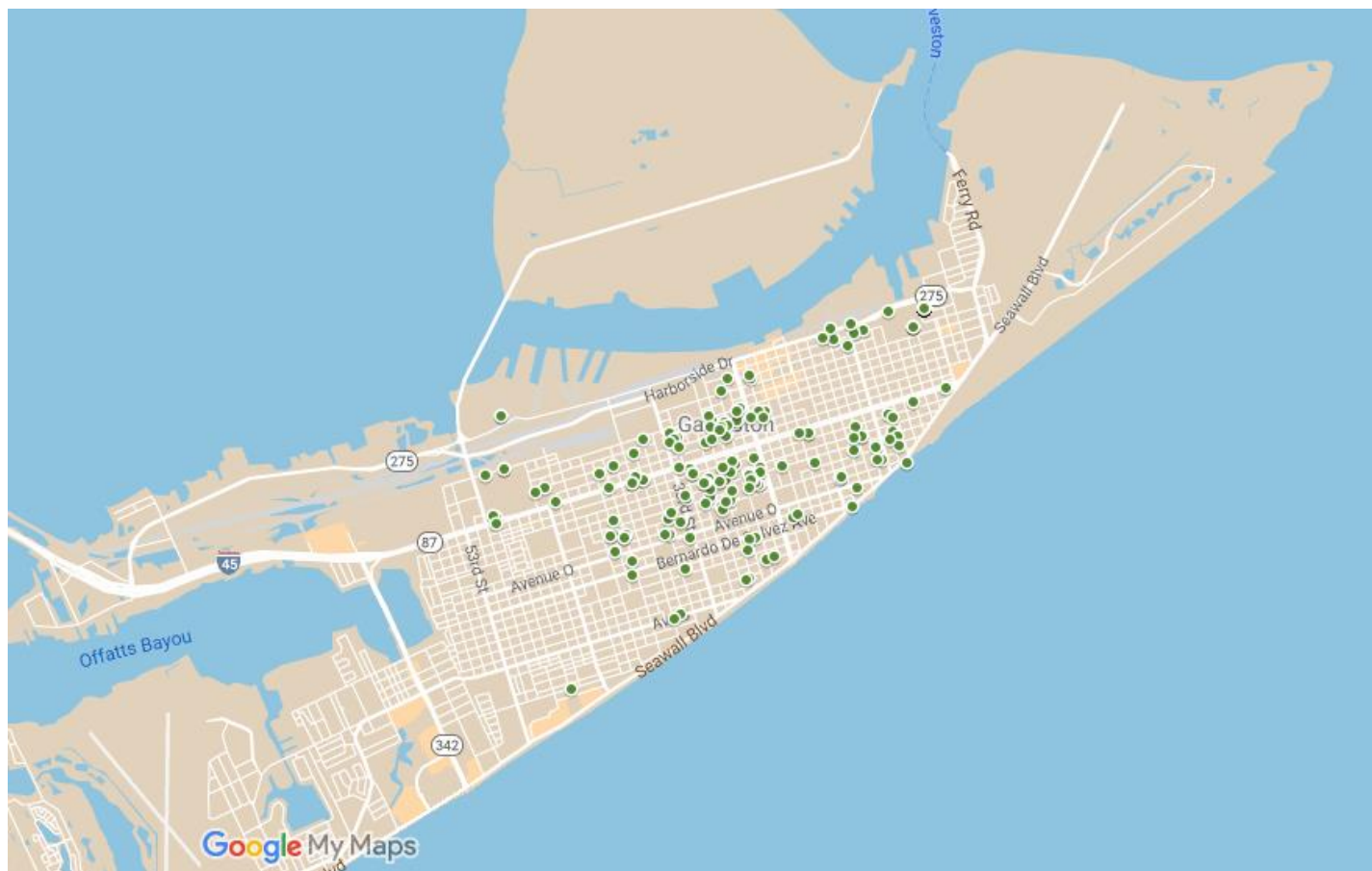


An online map showing the home addresses (in green) of approximately half of the interred individuals in Rosewood Cemetery. Addresses were mapped based on the individual death certificates.¹⁵⁷ Tabulated by Mitch S. Ford.

¹⁵⁷ Find A Grave, "Rosewood Cemetery," 2010; Google My Maps, "Rosewood Cemetery," 2022.

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Figure 9. Mapped Addresses



A Google My Map showing the home addresses (in green) of approximately half of the interred individuals in Rosewood Cemetery. Addresses were mapped based on the individual death certificates.¹⁵⁸ Tabulated by Mitch S. Ford.

¹⁵⁸ Google My Maps, "Rosewood Cemetery"; Find A Grave, "Rosewood Cemetery."

Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 1. Cemetery site, view facing northwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 2. Cemetery site, view facing northwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 3. Cemetery site, view facing south.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 4. Cemetery site, view facing northwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 5. Grave marker for Ernest McDay, view facing west.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 6. Grave marker for William Mills.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 7. Vaulted crypt of William D. and Lucinda Lewis, view facing north/northwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 8. Vaulted crypt of William D. and Lucinda Lewis, view facing east.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 9. Grave markers for T. C. and Sarah Shenall, view facing west/southwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 10. Grave marker for T. C. Shenall, view facing west.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 11. Grave marker for Clara Jones, view facing west.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 12. Grave marker for Joseph Scott, view facing west.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 13. Grave marker for Tony Smith at left, view facing northwest.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 14. Grave marker for Tony Smith at center, view facing east.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 15. Grave marker for William Lewis.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 16. Unmarked grave marker.



Rosewood Cemetery, Galveston County, Texas

Photo 17. Grave marker for Miranda Moffett.



- end -