

# Red Hill Cemetery Project

CREATING A CULTURAL HERITAGE DATABASE

## Documenting an African-American Cemetery in Waycross, Georgia

Francisco Mendoza, Laura Bullard, Andrew Pemberton, Dr. David Sheffler



### A Brief History

In cooperation with the Okefenokee Heritage Center and the community of Waycross, the Red Hill Cemetery Project seeks to document the oldest African-American cemetery in Waycross, Georgia. During the last half century, the site has suffered from neglect, vandalism, and an aborted effort at redevelopment, leaving the nearly six-acre parcel overgrown with brush and pines and marked by open graves and toppled monuments. With as many as



Headstone of William Zackery, WWI Veteran



Aerial View, 1954

2000 burials, some of them dating from the 1800s, the cemetery, even in its current condition, memorializes the lives and struggles of an African-American community during a period of monumental political, social, and cultural change. By mapping and recording graves, developing a database of names and dates, and conducting oral histories of surviving family members, the Red Hill Cemetery Project will record often-neglected voices before they fall irretrievably silent.

### Current & Future Projects

The research team is developing a virtual cemetery that will include a searchable database linked to digitized death certificates, audio recordings and transcriptions of selected oral histories, and multi-layered, interactive maps. The project will also include aerial drone photography, GPR, GIS, and thermal mapping data. Using this data, we will be able to digitally reconstruct much of the original layout of the cemetery and more accurately assess both the number of graves and their connections to each other. The 800 names already identified by



Current State of the Cemetery

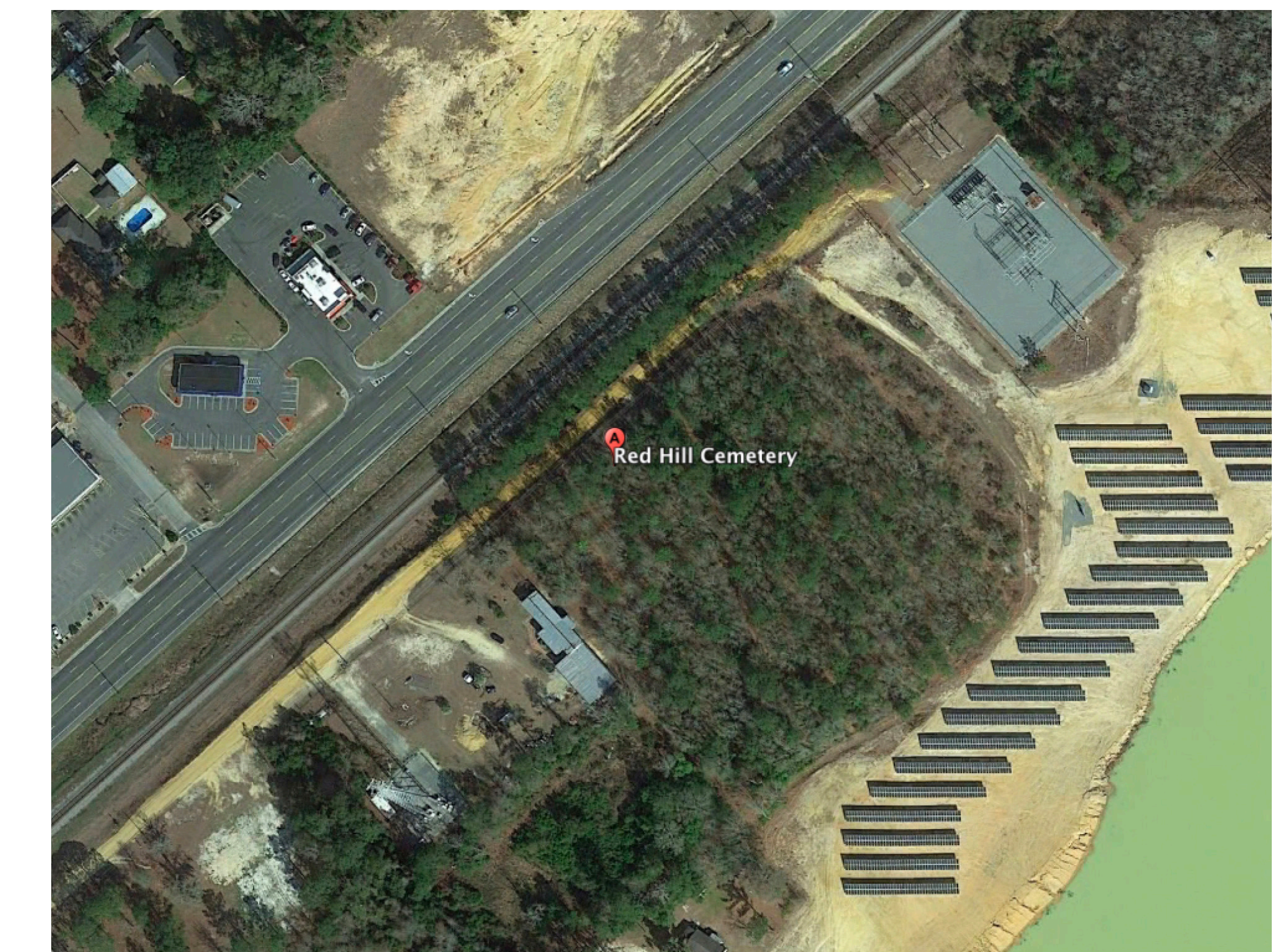


Students and Faculty Survey Site

the Okefenokee Heritage Center will serve to produce a searchable database of family names, dates, and other biographical information. Future projects will include a documentary film and the collection and curation of oral histories to preserve, publicize, and record voices from the Waycross community. The virtual cemetery will also provide a valuable archive for scholars working in African-American history and related fields as well as a resource for K-12 teachers.

### University & Community Partners

College of Arts and Sciences  
Center for Instruction and Research Technology  
Department of History  
Department of Economics and Geography  
Department of English  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work  
Office of Undergraduate Research  
Okefenokee Heritage Center/  
Black Heritage Committee



Aerial View, 2018

### Applied Technology

Sokkia EDM Total Station  
LiDAR  
Ricoh Theta 360 Degree Camera  
GoPro  
Bad Elf GPS Pro+  
Motion X GPS  
ArcMAP  
Drone Imagery  
Document Scanning



Website