

MARKERS XXXIII



edited by
Elise Madeleine Ciregna

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The Association for Gravestone Studies**

***Edited by*
Elise Madeleine Ciregna**

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Greenfield, Massachusetts



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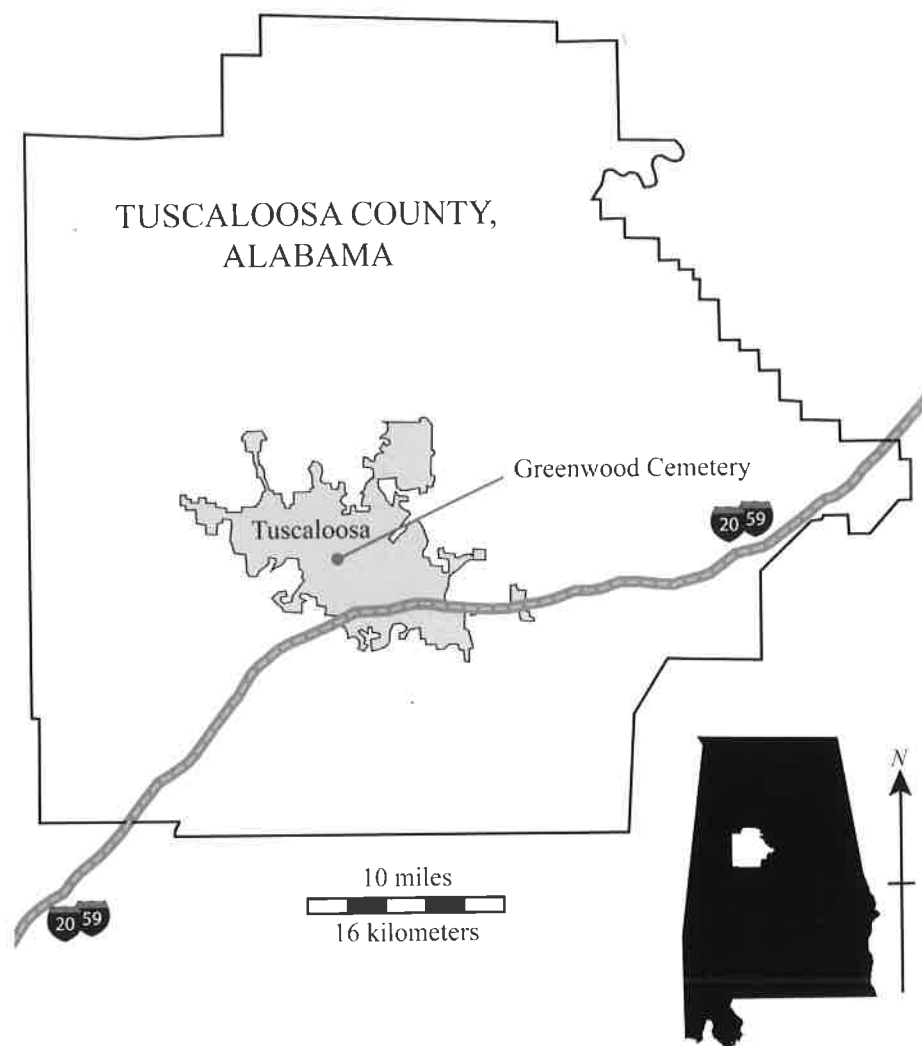
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Erastus Dow Palmer, Amey Owen Weeden Monument, 1860,
Swan Point Cemetery, Providence, Rhode Island, discussed in
"Hope and Memory: The Monuments of Swan Point Cemetery"
by Ronald J. Onorato

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Frontispiece: Map of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama showing the location of Greenwood Cemetery.

The Sandstone Grave Markers of Greenwood Cemetery, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Daniel A. LaDu and Ian W. Brown

GREENWOOD CEMETERY IS THE OLDEST surviving city cemetery in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Formally established in 1821, Greenwood served the elite, working class, and impoverished residents of Tuscaloosa alike during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The cemetery's diversity is reflected in the wide variety of grave markers found here. Wealthy citizens commissioned marble obelisks and sculptures from as far afield as New Orleans and Philadelphia, while those of lesser means created homemade markers out of wood and cement to memorialize their dearly departed. Visitors to Greenwood will also observe gravestones carved from the native sandstone. This paper presents both a descriptive analysis of the extant sandstone markers of Greenwood, as well as an attribute analysis of their forms, locations within the cemetery, orientations, decorative modes, and lettering modes. A method of estimating the age of sandstone markers is proposed, and three distinct Greenwood sandstone carving shops are postulated.

Scattered throughout Alabama are thousands of repositories for the dead including family cemeteries, which occur on plantations or small farms, churchyard burial grounds, and rural community graveyards found apart from churches.¹ In Tuscaloosa County alone there are approximately 250 burial grounds, a minimal number to be sure as there are undoubtedly many small burial plots in forested areas known only to the few.² Historians and genealogists have long recognized the value of cemeteries as prime sources of biographical information. Art historians have also looked to cemeteries to trace styles in sculpture and for learning folk traditions. So too have archaeologists turned to

burial grounds to develop and test models of culture change and continuity, as the authors do here.³

Greenwood Cemetery is a municipal burying ground, characteristic of most of the older Alabama communities, such as Oakwood in Montgomery and Church Street in Mobile. Located in the western end of Tuscaloosa at the corner of 27th Avenue, S.W. and 9th Street, Greenwood is the second oldest cemetery in the city (Frontispiece). Apparently an earlier one, the Baptist burial ground, once existed at the northern end of 27th Avenue in the first decade of the nineteenth century.⁴ The earliest marker at Greenwood was erected in 1818. Only one other burial ground in Tuscaloosa County, the Grants Creek Baptist Church cemetery near Fosters, can match this early date.⁵ Over the years there have been many devoted people who have labored at Greenwood, patiently recording the numerous inscriptions. In particular, local historian Alton Lambert made major contributions to preserving epitaphs in the 1970s and 1980s.⁶ During this period, he compiled most of the names and inscriptions of the people interred at Greenwood, at least those fortunate enough to have markers commemorating their graves.⁷ Billie Thomson Lockard and Maggie Hubbard Sudduth started with this information and added to it important biographical data that they drew from newspapers, court records, and other such sources.⁸ Their volume is a critical resource for anyone doing genealogical or historical research in Tuscaloosa.

The definitive study of the Greenwood Cemetery is Joey Brackner and Rae Hague Eighmey's *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery: An Historic Overview and Walking Tour*.⁹ After offering a brief introduction on the history of Greenwood, including its architects and carvers, Brackner, a folklorist and Director of the Alabama Center for Traditional Studies, focuses on the African-American occupants and the Civil War soldiers interred here. It is important to remember that Greenwood is a cemetery, not a graveyard. Graveyards, according to Brackner, derive from the vernacular folk traditions and are rural in nature. A cemetery, in contrast, is a planned city of the dead, and in the case of Greenwood, it is the city cemetery. Rich or poor, black or white, home-grown or immigrant, Greenwood was open to all of the residents of this burgeoning frontier municipality for almost a century. Perhaps the greatest resources in the Brackner and Eighmey volume are the very detailed maps. The cemetery is divided into a grid of twelve rectangles (four rows north-south and three columns east-west), and for each grid section there is a large-scale plan. All of the graves

are numbered, which is a blessing for anyone doing any sort of study in this cemetery. In the walking tour of Greenwood offered by Eighmey, each of the grid sections are described, generally with a picture or two and short discussions of each interment. A typical entry provides a name, birth date, death date, origin of birth, and relatives. In short, this is a remarkable source that can be used for any number of historical, sociological, or anthropological studies.

Another study that involves Greenwood Cemetery is Cleve Rooney's anthropological master's thesis on the Alabama Insane Hospital Cemetery (Bryce).¹⁰ In this work, Rooney examines the variety and structural arrangement of the two Tuscaloosa cemeteries. Whereas individuals and families stand out distinctly at Greenwood, testimony of their varying status and economic position, the dead of Bryce are treated rather uniformly with markers reflective of the cold, sterile institutional regimen that characterized life in an insane asylum. Sadly, even in death mental patients were denied any individualism they once might have had.

As noted above, Greenwood Cemetery is believed to have been founded no later than 1818. It fell into disuse in the first decade of the twentieth century, but because of the frequency of family plots, especially for the older sections of the cemetery, interments continued throughout the twentieth century. Not long after its founding, Greenwood was already nearing capacity. The opening of Evergreen Cemetery in the 1830s, to the east near what was to become the University of Alabama, helped alleviate the pressure on Greenwood. Evergreen was originally a private establishment that was intended to be for whites only. Occasionally some African-American patrons were buried at Evergreen, but these were exceptions to the rule, and such burials were prohibited altogether after 1884.¹¹ As a result, Greenwood remained the principal city repository for black residents throughout the nineteenth century.¹² When the Pine Ridge Cemetery was established in 1906 as an African-American burial ground, the bustle of activity that once characterized the original city cemetery rapidly came to an end.¹³

Most blacks at Greenwood are buried in the northwestern portion of the cemetery, while early whites are interred in the northeastern sector. Even a quick visit to Greenwood reveals marked differences between these two areas. Regularly structured family plots in the east gradually give way to broken stones and more unique marker arrangements as one moves west. There are also many more unmarked graves in the African-American section of

Greenwood. In the southwestern grid section, there are few visible graves; or rather, there are few markers, as the ground itself looks like a battlefield; dozens of shallow depressions demarcate the sinking of soil over unmarked graves. These are the potter's fields, where people were too poor to afford any lasting tribute to their existence.

The southeastern grid section is of interest because of the Civil War veteran markers. Even from a distance, a brief stroll through Greenwood reveals that this area is different. Here most of the markers are of identical construction and are carefully arranged in even, parallel rows. These marble stones were erected in the 1960s as replacements for earlier concrete markers. Archaeological investigations using ground-penetrating radar have revealed that many of the marble stones do not mark graves at all. Union graves also once existed in the southeastern grid section of Greenwood, but these individuals were exhumed and shipped home to the north long ago.¹⁴

Given that Greenwood Cemetery served every demographic of the newly incorporated town and later state capital of Alabama between 1819 and the 1830s, and continued to function as a public repository until at least 1906, it is little wonder that this necropolis contains such a diverse array of monuments, from the smallest, lamb-surmounted headstones to towering obelisks. Amongst this sea of gleaming white marble, low brick crypts, and concrete slabs visitors will occasionally glimpse the distinctive brown and gray hues of the native sandstone. The fine-grained, micaceous¹⁵ sandstone which outcrops locally in Alabama was an important resource, particularly during the state's formative years. Stone masons quarried sandstone, sometimes referred to as brownstone, from the local Pottsville formation for the construction of the State Capitol Building,¹⁶ parts of the university, and other buildings constructed throughout the 1820s and 30s.¹⁷ The sandstone markers found here are among the earliest gravestones in the cemetery. These distinctive memorials are clustered in the northeast corner of the site, in the oldest section of Greenwood (Fig. 1). Whereas the first marble monuments placed here had to be imported from Philadelphia or New Orleans,¹⁸ sandstone was less costly and more readily available.

As a relatively soft stone, sandstone is easy to work and yet readily preserves incisions and other sharp relief work. Often sandstone markers retain even the faint guidelines used by their carvers for the purpose of spacing the epitaph. However, due to the fact that sandstone is formed through a sedimentary

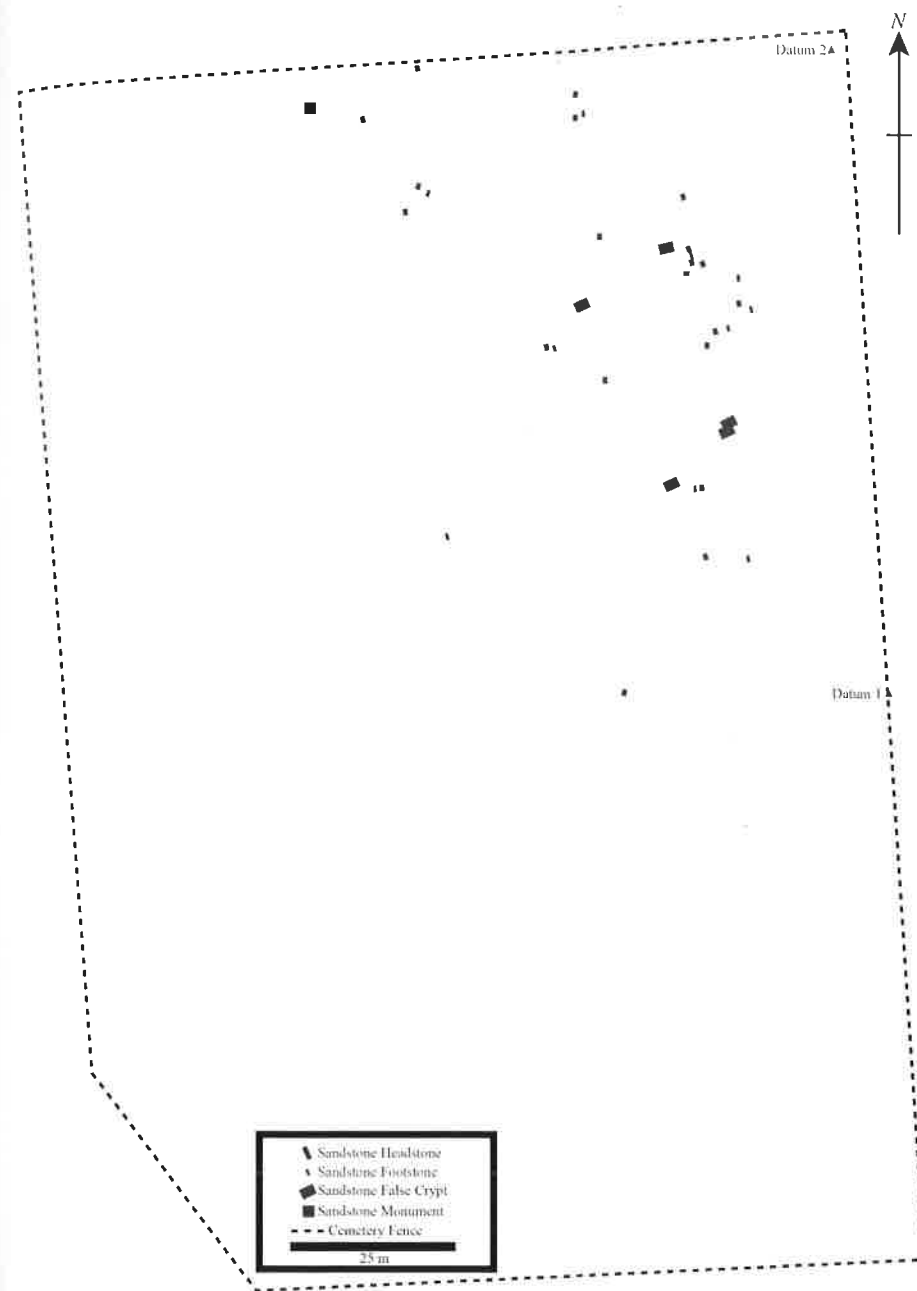


Fig. 1. Map of Greenwood Cemetery showing the distribution of sandstone grave markers.

process, this material is particularly susceptible to delamination when exposed to prolonged weathering. This means that when a sandstone marker begins to show signs of erosion or exfoliation, it is only a matter of time until it experiences the catastrophic loss of its outermost layers. For the sake of preservation of knowledge, it is important to document sandstone markers as they are encountered, before the information they convey is completely lost.

With this in mind, the authors set out to record all extant sandstone grave markers within Greenwood Cemetery in the fall of 2010. Our initial survey closely conformed to the methodology outlined by gravestone scholars Joanne Baker, Daniel Farber and Anne Giesecke in their survey work, previously published in *Markers*.¹⁹ Each stone was photographed and documented in terms of its measurements, epitaph, orientation, and location within the cemetery.²⁰ Recorded measurements included gravestone height, width at the base, thickness at the base, and thickness at the center of the tympanum. The location of each marker was plotted using two datums or reference points: a brick pillar that stands as part of Greenwood's front gate (Datum 1 on Figs. 1 and 2) and a large tree in the northeastern corner of the cemetery (Datum 2 on Figs. 1 and 2). These landmarks were chosen due to the fact that they are visible from almost any vantage point in the cemetery. Using an electronic range-finder, a Nikon Laser 800S model, the distance from both reference points was recorded for each individual marker. The relative locations of these gravestones were then plotted using a drafting compass, and the resulting map was checked against Brackner and Eighmey's inventory in *A Walk Through Greenwood Cemetery*. Each inscription was recorded, and a directional compass bearing was taken.

While this research began as a detailed descriptive analysis, it soon became apparent that the various physical attributes (i.e., form, location, and orientation) and ornamental flourishes (i.e., decorative and lettering modes) exhibited by these sandstone markers reveal a great deal more about the history of the city, including consumer preference in early nineteenth-century Tuscaloosa, as well as the compositional rules adhered to by the carvers responsible for these extraordinary memorials.²¹ To further explore these issues we decided to conduct a more intensive attribute analysis of these markers in order to examine the temporal and cultural trends encoded in these unique sandstone artifacts.

All told, twenty-two sandstone headstones, eleven footstones, one marker, one true crypt (exhibiting both a headstone and a footstone), four false crypts, one ledger, and one monument were documented within Greenwood Cemetery

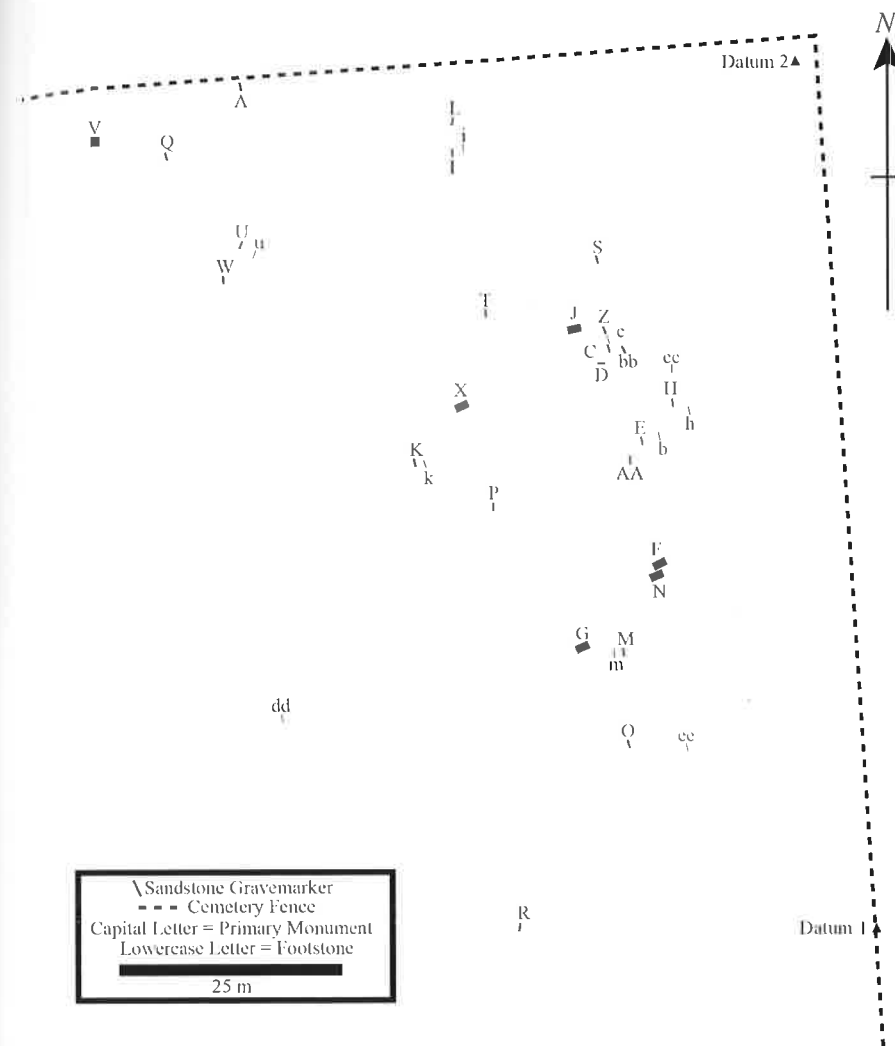


Fig. 2. The northeast corner of Greenwood Cemetery showing the distribution and orientation of the sandstone grave markers.

Summary of the Sandstone Grave Markers in Greenwood Cemetery					
Marker	Death Date	Last Name	Title, First Name, or Initials	Name as it Occurs on Marker	Type
A	1826	Elliot	Mrs. R.	Mrs. R. Elliot	Tablet, Headstone
B	1828	W[h]ite	J. M. M.	J. M.M. W[h]ite	Tablet, Headstone
b	1828	W.	J. M. M.	J. M. M.W.	Tablet, Footstone
C	1829	Mallory	Sarah	Sarah Mallory	Tablet, Headstone
c	1829	Mallory	Sarah A.	Sarah A. Mallory	Tablet, Footstone
D	1829	-	Mrs.	Mrs.	Tablet, Headstone
E	1830	Pledger	Elias	Elias Pledger	Tablet, Headstone
F	1831	Comeg'ys	Catherine	Catherine Comeg'ys	Ledger, False crypt
G	1831	Andrews	Joseph	Joseph Andrews	Ledger, False crypt
H	1831	Webb	James	James Webb	Tablet, Headstone
h	1831	W.	J.	J. W.	Tablet, Footstone
I	1832	Hodges	Mrs. Melinda	Mrs. Malinda Hodges	Tablet, Headstone
i	1832	-	-	-	Tablet, Footstone
J	1832	Watters	Jane Elizabeth	Jane Elizabeth Watters	Ledger
K	1833	McGehee	Laura M.	Laura M. McGehee	Tablet, Headstone
k	1833	M ^c G.	L. M.	L. M. M ^c G.	Tablet, Footstone
L	1834	Gillaspic	Seaborn P.	Seaborn P. Gillaspic	Tablet, Headstone
M	1834	Titus	Henry B.	Henry B. Titus	Tablet, Headstone
m	1834	-	-	-	Tablet, Footstone
N	1837	Irby	John Tyler	John Tyler Irby	Ledger, False crypt
O	1839	Hall	Susan E.	Susan E. Hall	Tablet, Headstone
P	183_	Stow	Virginia	Virginia Stow	Tablet, Headstone
Q	1840	M ^c , AuLiffe	P.	P. M ^c , AuLiffe	Tablet, Headstone
R	1844	Foster	Mrs. Elizabeth A.	Mrs. Elizabeth A. Foster	Tablet, Headstone
S	1844	Forrest	-	_ Forrest	Tablet, Headstone
T	-	McGehee	William	William McGehee	Tablet, Headstone
U	-	Farnsworth	Samuel	Samuel Farnsworth	Tablet, Headstone
u	-	F.	S.	S. F.	Tablet, Footstone
V	-	M(cCror)y	M(rs.) (N)ancy M.	M(rs.) (N)ancy M. M(cCror)y	Monument
W	-	Smith	J. T.	J. T. Smith	Tablet, Headstone
w	-	S.	J. T.	J. T. S.	Tablet, Footstone
X	-	-	-	-	Ledger, False crypt
Y	-	-	-	-	Tablet, Headstone
Z	-	-	-	-	Tablet, Headstone
AA	-	G...	Harriot	Harriot G...	Tablet, Headstone
bb	-	-	-	-	Tablet
CC	-	-	-	-	Tablet, Headstone
cc	-	H.	E.	E. H.	Tablet, Footstone
dd	-	-	W -	W -	Tablet, Footstone
ee	-	L.	H. R.	H. R. L.	Tablet, Footstone

Table 1. Summary of the sandstone grave markers in Greenwood Cemetery.

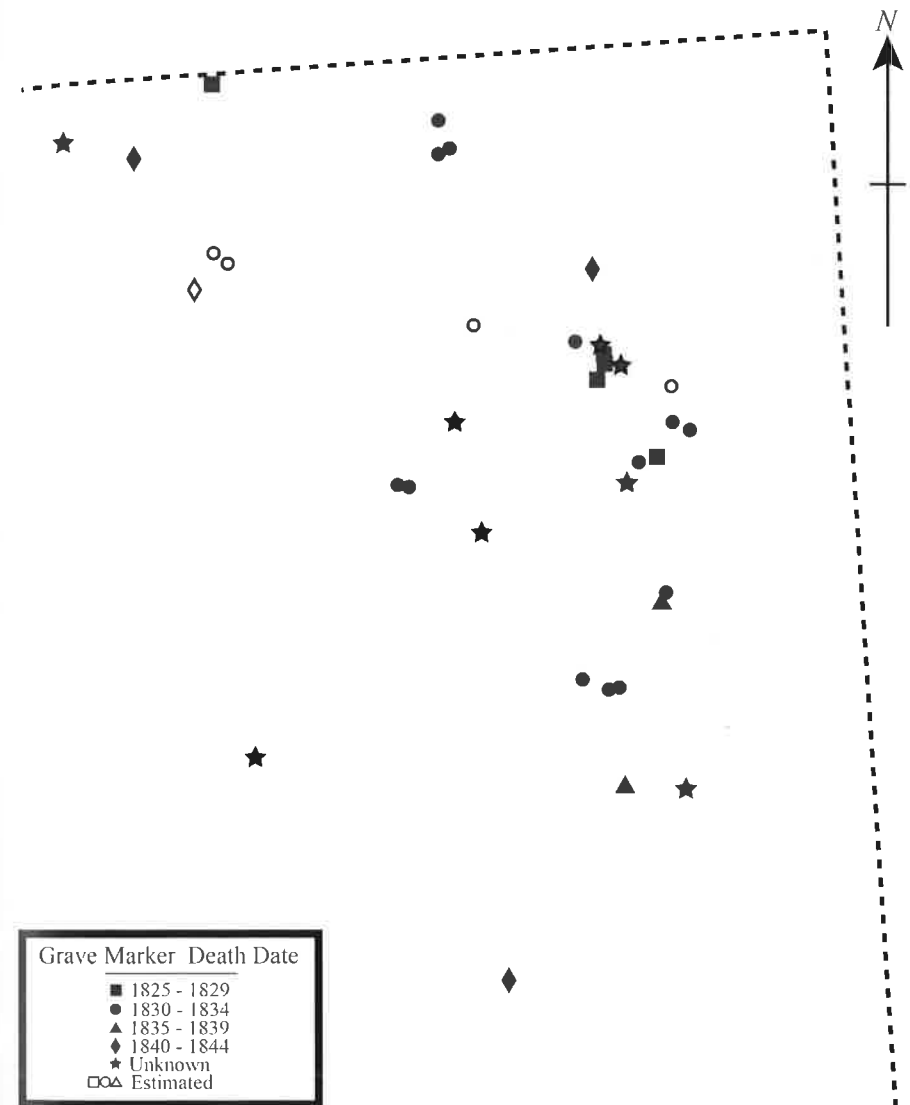


Fig. 3. Comparison of the death date of the sandstone grave markers of Greenwood.

(Fig. 2 and Table 1).²² These forty markers are a testament to a relatively short-lived sandstone carving tradition operating in the city of Tuscaloosa between 1826 and 1844 (Fig. 3). The first five sandstone markers in Greenwood were erected between 1825 and 1829. Between 1830 and 1834 sandstone reached the peak of its popularity at Greenwood, when between thirteen and seventeen gravestones were added to the cemetery. The next five years, from 1835 to 1839, saw a sharp decline in demand for the material; and by 1845 the final sandstone gravestone had been erected in Greenwood.

The majority of the sandstone markers in this cemetery are free-standing tablets, either a lone headstone or a headstone accompanied by a footstone. In fact, the simple tablet remained the most common marker type at Greenwood throughout the site's long history.²³ While each and every gravestone is unique, several markers distinguish themselves as truly curious. A few of the sandstone tablets are notable for their association with additional burial structures. For example, James Webb was interred in the only true crypt at Greenwood. Webb's sandstone headstone and footstone mark the ends of this vaulted brick structure (Fig. 4). Other stones were intentionally isolated from the larger cemetery by low walls. The brick enclosure surrounding Henry B. Titus's grave is unusual in that it is complete, without a point of access, making it difficult to even view his epitaph (Fig. 5). Other grave markers stand out by virtue of their inscriptions. The headstone of P. McAuliffe, a native of Ireland, is the only marker in Greenwood to contain a Latin inscription, "*Requiescat in pace*" or "rest in peace," and may well indicate his affiliation with the Catholic Church (Fig. 6). Another sandstone marker here is more commonly referred to as a "speaking stone."²⁴ It contains the familiar passage:

Stranger attend as you pass by.
As you are now, so once was I;
As I am now so you must be
Prepare:-For you must follow me-
To joy above, or pain below;
Then ever stand prepared to go.

It is noteworthy that this tablet neither exhibits a name nor a date (Fig. 7), suggesting that it may not have been erected in memory of a single individual. In fact, this marker's distinctive message may have been intended to commemorate



Fig. 4. Headstone H dedicated to James Webb. Photograph by the authors.



Fig. 5. Headstone M dedicated to Henry B. Titus. Photograph by the authors.

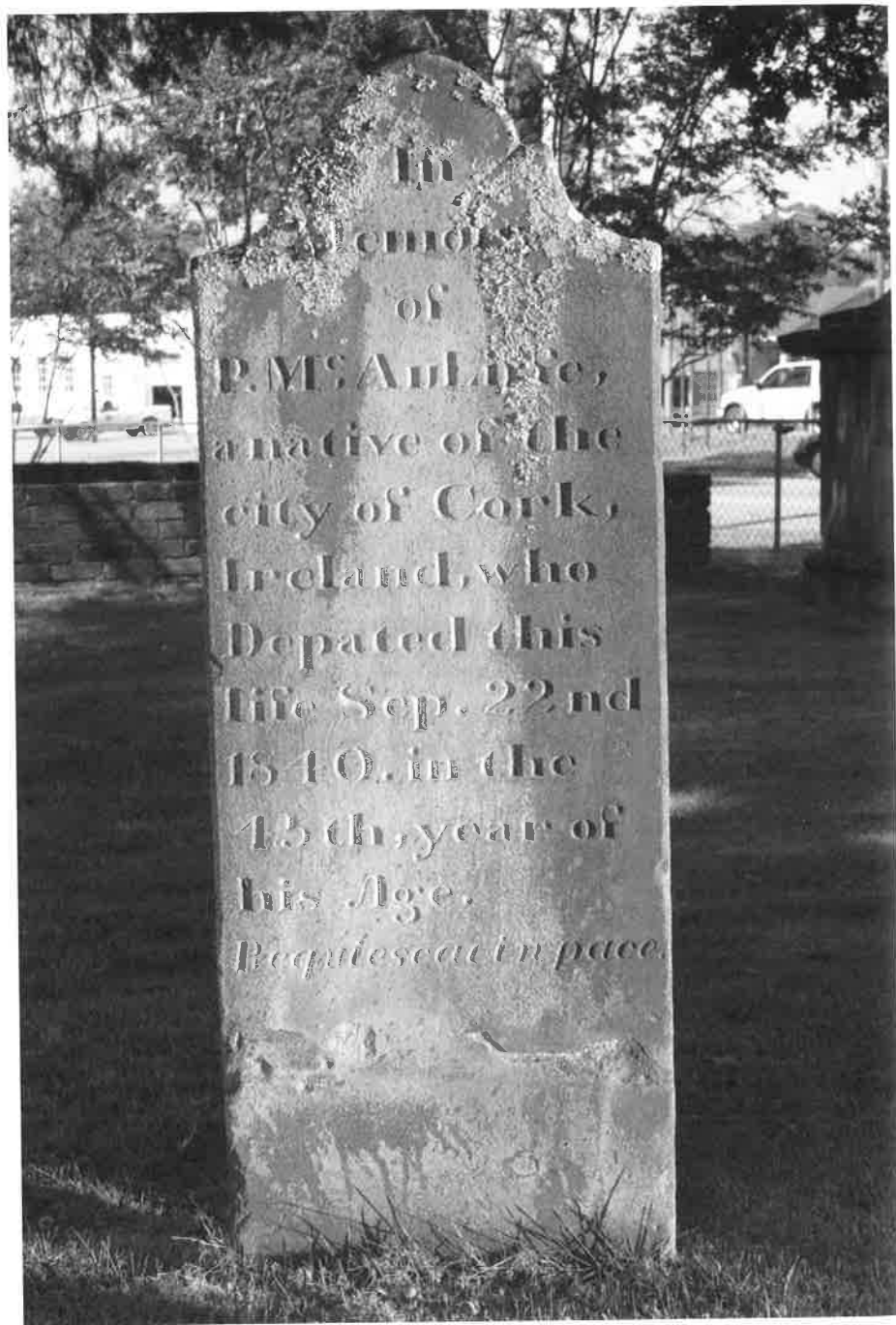


Fig. 6. Headstone Q dedicated to P. McAuLiffe. Photograph by the authors.



Fig. 7. Marker bb. Photograph by the authors.



Fig. 8. False Crypt N dedicated to John Tyler Irby. Photograph by the authors.

a certain section of Greenwood, maybe the Mallory family plot, or perhaps this macabre passage was dedicated to the entire cemetery. The sentiment of the inscription certainly seems to be directed toward the living patrons of Greenwood rather than the deceased. Although speaking stones do occasionally occur elsewhere in the burial grounds of Tuscaloosa County, this Greenwood marker is singularly remarkable because it is associated with no one in particular.

Another common form of sandstone marker at Greenwood is the ledger. Five graves are marked by these distinctive slabs. Four of these were installed on top of false crypts, and the remaining ledger was placed directly on the ground surface. The false crypts dedicated to Catherine Comeg'ys, Joseph Andrews, and another badly weathered example are composed of sandstone ledgers placed on top of approximately 50 cm tall brick foundations, while John Tyler Irby's entire marker was rendered in sandstone. Great care was taken in the decoration of the sandstone panels and pillars that support this ledger (Fig. 8).

Arguably the single most impressive sandstone marker at Greenwood is the monument dedicated to Mrs. Nancy M. McCrory. This marker assumes the shape of a pedestal, complete with decorative molding at its base and crown, surmounted by a sandstone urn typical of the neoclassical architecture associated with the garden cemeteries (Fig. 9).²⁵ This is the only Greenwood marker, sandstone or otherwise, to exhibit this particular form.

Sandstone Grave Marker Variation and Change through Time

Form

Herein, we define marker form as its profile, or silhouette. While each of the three sandstone grave marker types (i.e. tablets, ledgers, and monuments) at Greenwood adhere to their own set of prescriptive rules, headstones and footstones are those best represented in the sample. The sandstone tablets of Greenwood can be grouped into four basic categories of form (Fig. 10 and Table 2). Form 1 grave markers have rounded finials as well as a stepped and rounded tympanum. Eighteen headstones in Greenwood were classified as Form 1. No sandstone footstones were found to exhibit a Form 1 profile. Form 2 markers have stepped and rounded tympanum, but lack the finials characteristic of Form 1 markers. Nine grave markers (three headstones, five footstones, and another tablet) were determined to belong to the Form 2 category.²⁶ Form 3 grave markers lack both finials and stepped and rounded tympanum. Instead, the shoulders and tympanum of this form have been squared off. Two markers,



Fig. 9. Monument V dedicated to Nancy M. McCrory. Photograph by the authors.

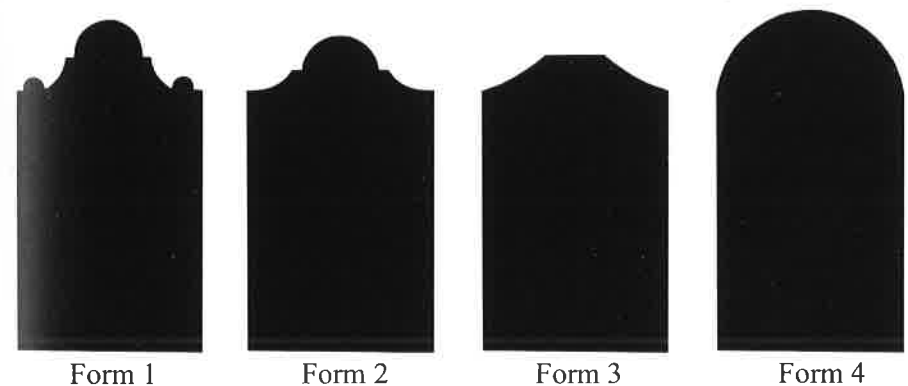


Fig. 10. The four forms of Sandstone Tablets at Greenwood.

Summary of the Sandstone Forms, Orientations, and Modes in Greenwood Cemetery						
Marker	Death Date	Name	Form	Orientation	Decorative Motifs	Lettering Motifs
A	1826	Mrs. R. Elliot	Form 1	West	Oval and Lanceolates	-
B	1828	J. M.M. White	Form 1	-	Oval and Lanceolates / Horizontal Line	-
b	1828	J. M. M.W.	Form 2	East	-	-
C	1829	Sarah Mallory	Form 1	West	Oval and Lanceolates	-
c	1829	Sarah A. Mallory	Form 3	West	-	-
D	1829	Mrs. _	Form 1	-	Oval and Lanceolates	-
E	1830	Elias Pledger	Form 1	West	-	-
F	1831	Catherine Comegys	-	East	Oval and Lanceolates	-
G	1831	Joseph Andrews	-	East	-	-
H	1831	James Webb	Form 1	West	Horizontal Line	-
h	1831	J. W.	Form 4	East	-	-
I	1832	Mrs. Malinda Hodges	Form 1	West	Framed Edges	Equal Sign
i	1832	-	Form 2	East	-	Equal Sign
J	1832	Jane Elizabeth Watters	-	East	Horizontal Line	Ampersand / Equal Sign
K	1833	Laura M. McGehee	Form 1	East	Framed Edges	Ampersand
k	1833	L. M. McG.	Form 2	East	Framed Edges	-
L	1834	Scaborn P. Gillaspie	Form 1	East	Framed Edges	-
M	1834	Henry B. Titus	Form 1	East	Framed Edges	-
m	1834	-	Form 2	-	-	-
N	1837	John Tyler Irby	-	East	Oval and Lanceolates	-
O	1839	Susan E. Hall	Form 1	East	-	-
P	183_	Virginia Stow	Form 1	-	-	-
Q	1840	P. M ^c Auliffe	Form 2	East	-	Subscript-Comma
R	1844	Mrs. Elizabeth A. Foster	Form 2	East	Horizontal Line	Ampersand / Subscript-Comma
S	1844	_ Forrest	Form 3	East	-	Ampersand
T	-	William McGehee	Form 1	West	-	-
U	-	Samuel Farnsworth	Form 1	West	-	-
u	-	S. F.	Form 4	East	-	-
V	-	M(rs.) (N)ancy M. M(c)Croft	-	West	Horizontal Line	-
W	-	J. T. Smith	Form 2	East	-	-
w	-	J. T. S.	Form 4	-	-	-
X	-	-	-	East	-	-
Y	-	-	Form 1	-	-	-
Z	-	-	Form 1	East	-	-
AA	-	Harriot G...	Form 1	-	-	-
bb	-	-	Form 2 (?)	East	-	-
CC	-	-	Form 1	-	-	-
cc	-	E. H.	Form 4	East	-	-
dd	-	W. _	Form 4	East	-	-
ee	-	H. R. L.	Form 2 (?)	East	-	-

Table 2. Summary of the sandstone forms, orientations, and motifs in Greenwood Cemetery.

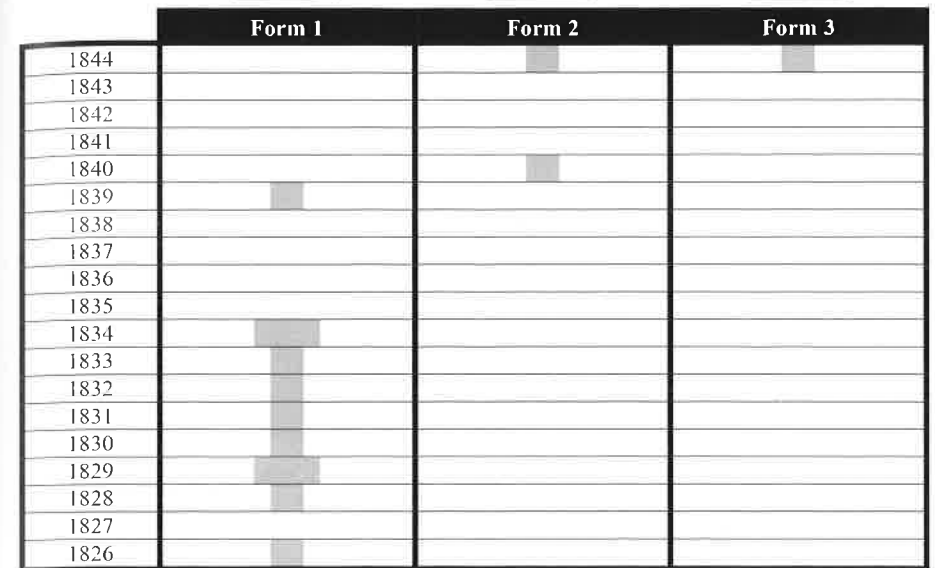


Table 3. Histogram depicting the frequency of sandstone headstone forms found in Greenwood Cemetery between 1826 and 1844.

one headstone and one footstone, are classified as Form 3. Form 4 grave markers lack shoulders entirely and exhibit a simple rounded tympanum. Five footstones in Greenwood are classified as Form 4, but curiously, no sandstone headstones exhibit this profile (Table 2). While James Webb's footstone is associated with a death date of 1831, the full chronological range of this fourth marker form remains unknown.

Table 3 depicts the frequency of the sandstone headstone forms found in Greenwood. Forms 1, 2, and 3 represent a sequence in headstone silhouette development over time. Form 1 headstones are the earliest dating to between 1826 and 1839. Form 2 headstones represent the intermediate silhouette and date to between 1840 and 1844. Form 3 headstones represent the most recent profile, dating no earlier than 1844. It is significant that when the stones are arranged in chronological order there is no overlap between marker type and death date.

Although this trend was identified from a sample of only fifteen headstones, the data indicate clear changes in the popularity of tablet form over time, akin to Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz's famous study of the death's head/cherub/willow and urn designs in eastern Massachusetts.²⁷

One additional trend identified by this study was that the headstone and footstone of the same grave never share the same marker form. This is a fascinating tendency given that both headstones and footstones were found to exhibit Form 2 and Form 3 profiles. The intentional avoidance of repetition in tablet form commemorating a single grave begs interesting questions concerning the rules of structure recognized by the carvers themselves.

Orientation

The orientation of the inscribed side of the stone indicates several interesting temporal trends at Greenwood. First, the inscriptions of all of the various markers face either west or east. The earliest sandstone headstones, dating to between 1826 and 1832, all face west; while the later ones, dating from 1833 to 1844, face east. Regardless of the dates, all of the sandstone footstones in Greenwood face east (Table 2).

While the sample is small and it is certainly possible, if not likely, that a few of the fallen sandstone tablets at Greenwood have been reset over the years, the clustering of the dates is interesting and suggestive. Such a punctuated shift in the orientation of these headstones at Greenwood implies a major behavioral change may have occurred here in or around 1833.²⁸ A grave with a west-facing headstone and an east-facing footstone discourages visitors from standing on the grave itself when reading the inscriptions, while a grave in which both the headstone and footstone face east allows for easier viewing, but does nothing to deter the tread of curious feet. The impetus behind this shift presently eludes us.



Fig. 11. Variation within the oval and lanceolates decorative mode found on sandstone markers at Greenwood.

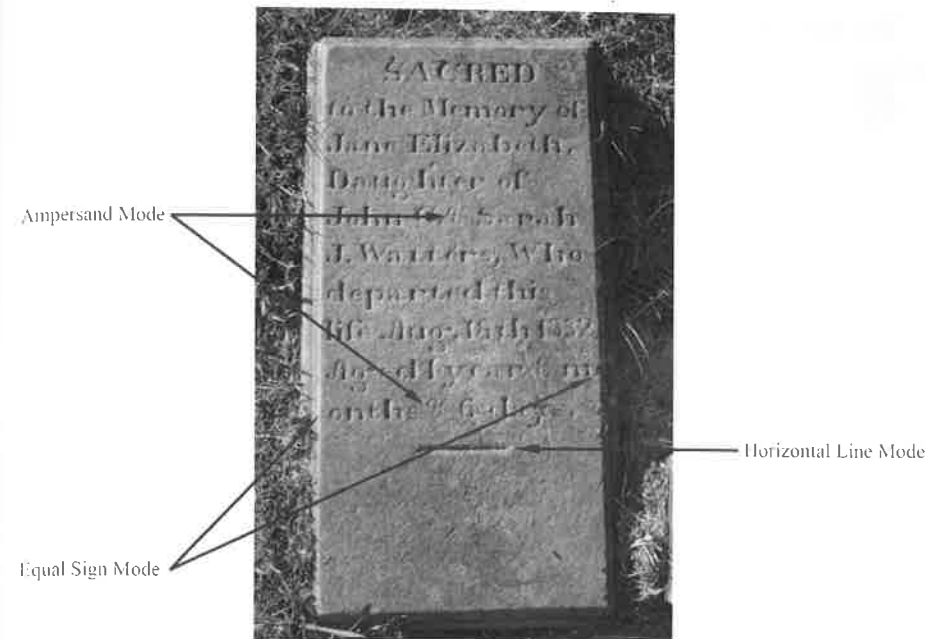


Fig. 12. Ledger J dedicated to Jane Elizabeth Watters. Arrows indicate the presence of the horizontal line, ampersand, and equal sign modes. Photograph by the authors.

Decorative Modes

For the purposes of the present study, we define modes as a recognizable and recurring attribute or series of attributes that convey meaning and contribute to a marker's overall design.²⁹ Attributes are themselves defined as distinctive qualities or features which combine to give an object form and function.³⁰ Three distinct decorative modes were identified on sandstone markers at Greenwood: the oval and lanceolates mode, the horizontal line mode, and the framed edges mode. The oval and lanceolates mode is composed of a central circle or oval flanked by two lanceolate-shaped leaves (Fig. 11). This mode is found on four headstones and two false crypts (Table 2). While the basic elements of this mode are consistent, the oval and lanceolates were never executed in exactly the same manner. This mode predominates on Form 1 headstones dating to between 1826 and 1829, although oval and lanceolates also occur on two ledgers dating just slightly later in time (1831 and 1837).

The horizontal line mode consists of a single linear incision, often used to indicate the end of a sentiment similar to how a period is used to conclude a sentence. This mode occurs on three headstones, a single ledger (Fig. 12), and twice on the lone monument (Table 2). The horizontal line did not prove to be a particularly useful temporal indicator, appearing selectively on markers between 1828 and 1844.

The framed edges decorative mode is found on several of the grave markers and consists of a single incision that parallels the overall form of the marker, as on the Titus headstone (Fig. 5). This incision is associated only with headstones, and does not occur on sandstone footstones, ledgers, or the solitary monument at Greenwood Cemetery. This mode is characteristic of a tight temporal range dating to between 1832 and 1834. During this span of time all five of the sandstone headstones erected here incorporated a frame into their layout, making the presence of this decoration a particularly sensitive chronological indicator (Table 2).

Lettering Modes

Lettering modes differ from decorative modes in that they represent distinct and recurring ways of executing or abbreviating letters, words, or punctuation. These symbols were developed and employed both as a method of conserving labor as well as maximizing the area of the decorative field. Three different lettering modes were identified on Greenwood sandstone markers: the ampersand, the equal sign, and the subscript-comma. The proliferation of these idiosyncratic conventions makes them especially useful in identifying and differentiating between shops and/or carvers.

The ampersand is composed of a complete U-shaped symbol used as an abbreviation for the word "and" (Fig. 13a). This lettering mode occurs on three

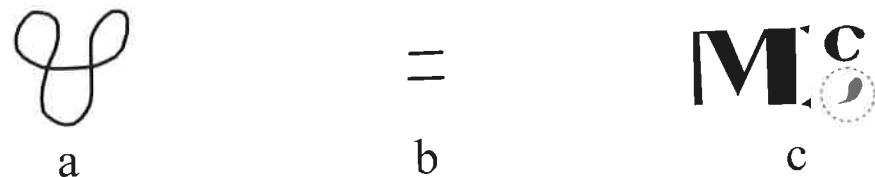


Fig. 13. Decorative letter modes found on sandstone markers at Greenwood.

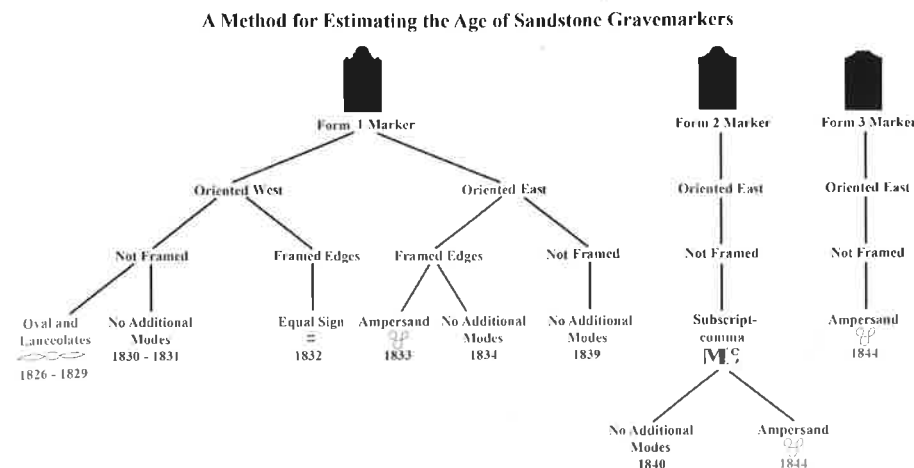


Fig. 14. Flowchart for estimating the age of sandstone headstones at Greenwood.

Greenwood headstones and a single ledger (Fig. 12 and Table 2). The stones exhibiting the ampersand mode report death dates of 1832, 1833, and 1844.

The equal sign lettering mode is composed of two parallel, horizontal lines (Fig. 13b). This mode occurs on the edges of markers, and it is used to indicate that a word continues on the line below. For example, on Jane Elizabeth Watters's ledger equal signs are employed to complete the word "months" (Fig. 12). This lettering mode is found on a headstone, footstone, and ledger in Greenwood all dating to 1832 (Table 2).

The subscript-comma mode is indicated by a comma placed below a superscript letter (Fig. 13c). This mode occurs as part of a title such as below the "s" in Mrs. or part of a last name such as below the "c" in McAuLiffe (Fig. 6). Although we are once again limited by the sample size, the subscript-comma mode occurs on two headstones dating to between 1840 and 1844, which suggests this lettering mode may serve as yet another useful chronological indicator (Table 2).

A Method for Estimating the Age of the Sandstone Headstones of Greenwood

In addition to sorting grave markers into descriptively useful categories, the aspects of form, orientation, decorative modes, and lettering modes indicate important chronological shifts in the sandstone headstones at Greenwood. Individually, each of these characteristics provides clues as to the age of undated or badly weathered headstones. However, when form, orientation, and certain



Fig. 15. Headstone U dedicated to Samuel Farnsworth. Photograph by the authors.

decorative and lettering modes are considered together, date ranges can be significantly refined. Using these four aspects of Greenwood's sandstone markers, a flow chart was constructed in order to facilitate this process (Fig. 14).

To illustrate the utility of the proposed method of sandstone marker age estimation, let us consider the headstone of Samuel Farnsworth (Fig. 15). Settling that has occurred over the last 170 years or so has left the face of this marker exposed to weathering, resulting in the loss of the death date inscription. The first step in estimating the age of the Farnsworth headstone is determining its form (Fig. 10). With its stepped and rounded tympanum and rounded finials, it is clear that this marker exhibits a Form 1 silhouette. Next we consider the orientation of the stone's inscription. The reader will recall that before 1833 all of the sandstone headstones in Greenwood were established with their epitaphs facing west, while all those since that time were erected facing east. In this case, the Farnsworth headstone was oriented west. Step three considers the presence or absence of the framed edges mode. That Mr. Farnsworth's marker lacks this particular flourish suggests that it predates the mode's introduction to Greenwood. Finally, the presence or absence of any additional decorative and/or lettering modes brings us to a death date range. While Samuel Farnsworth's headstone does not seem to exhibit any additional decorative or lettering modes, so much exfoliation has occurred that we cannot preclude the possibility, bringing us to an estimated date range of 1826-1831.

Twenty-four years ago, Brackner and Eighmey's survey of Greenwood recorded Samuel Farnsworth's headstone, including a still legible death date of July 30, 1829.³¹ While it is important to keep in mind that this deductive methodology and the accompanying flow chart was formulated using evidence from but a single cemetery and a sample of only fifteen dated headstones, confirmation that Mr. Farnsworth did indeed depart this world within the estimated date range (1826-1831) serves as an important proof of concept. In the future, this method could be significantly expanded and refined by adding to the Greenwood dataset to produce a more widely applicable model of estimating the death dates recorded on damaged or displaced markers in Tuscaloosa County and the state of Alabama.

Greenwood Cemetery's Sandstone Carvers

We now turn to a brief consideration of the shops and artists responsible for the sandstone grave markers found in Greenwood Cemetery.³² Subtle differences in the various combinations of form, decorative modes, and lettering modes

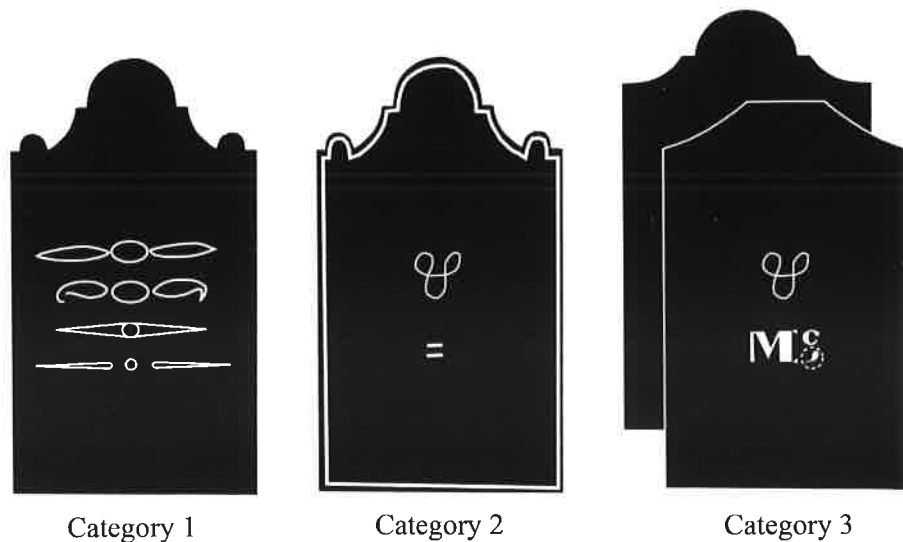


Fig. 16. Distinct stylistic categories of sandstone markers in Greenwood.

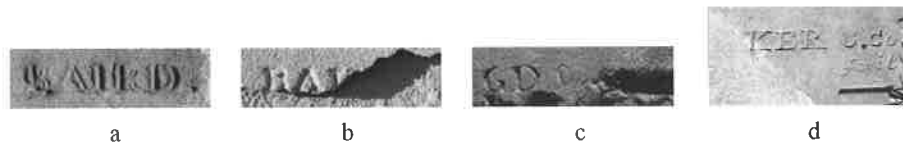


Fig. 17. Sandstone Carver Signatures in Greenwood. a-b, BAIRD. c, GD.... d, ... KER & Co. fecit. Photographs by the authors.

offers compelling evidence that more than a single individual and/or shop was responsible for these distinctive memorials. By noting patterns of association between the attributes discussed above, three distinct categories of sandstone markers were identified which may, in fact, correspond to different shops of carvers. As shown in Figure 16, these include Category 1, composed of a Form 1 marker exhibiting the oval and lanceolate mode; Category 2, which combines the framed edges, ampersand, and equal sign modes all on a Form 2 headstone; and Category 3 that incorporates the ampersand and subscript-comma modes on either a Form 2 or Form 3 headstone.

Out of 40 total sandstone grave markers in our study, a scant four of them exhibit carver signatures. The headstone dedicated to Sarah A. Mallory (1829) (Fig. 17a) and the Nancy M. McCrory monument (1827) (Figs. 9 and 17b)



Fig. 18. An example of a Form 1 marble marker exhibiting the framed edges mode and dating to 1823. Photograph by the authors.

both have the name, "BAIRD," inscribed near the bottom right corner of their respective western faces. Alexander Baird was a stone mason who was born in Richmond, Virginia. He lent his estimable skills to the construction of the nearby Alabama State Capitol Building which was completed in 1829. The handiwork of John Baird, Alexander's brother, is also on display in Greenwood, although his stones date a little later in time, circa 1858.³³

Another signature, "G.D....," climbs vertically up the lower right corner of Mrs. R. Elliot's headstone (1826) (Fig. 17c). In all likelihood, this mark belongs to one G.D. Luck. He too was a local Tuscaloosa carver who operated between 1826 and 1831, but very little else is known about Luck.³⁴

The fourth and final signature, "...KER & Co. fecit"³⁵ can be found on the headstone commemorating J.M.M. White (Fig. 17d). The complete inscription may have once read "BAKER & Co. fecit." R.P. Baker was yet another stone mason who worked on the Alabama Capitol Building. He was hired to create the decorative lintels for its upper windows.³⁶

If the three categories of sandstone markers that we identified do indeed correspond to specific shops, it is interesting to note that Baird, Luck, and Baker



a

b

Fig. 19. Examples of two distinct sandstone marker reduction patterns. Photographs by the authors.

all belong to Category 1. It is, perhaps, not too much of a stretch to suggest that these carvers were all part of the same shop given that all three were operating contemporaneously, and the fact that Baird and Baker were both otherwise employed in the construction of the Alabama Capitol. It is also possible that client preference between 1826 and 1829 is responsible for the similarities of form and the popularity of the oval and lanceolate mode on grave markers produced by all three stonecutters. It remains to be seen whether the Category 2 and 3 markers represent innovations in the initial Baird/Luck/Baker layout and design (Category 1) or were the signatures of different carvers and/or shops altogether.

An unfortunate limitation of studying a single medium of marker such as sandstone is that individual carvers are very likely to have worked with a variety of materials. For example, Mary Amanda Vincent's marble headstone exhibits the same Form 1 profile and the framed edges mode found on contemporary sandstone markers (Fig. 18). If this study were expanded to include all of the

markers erected in Greenwood Cemetery between 1826 and 1844, then we would be able to compare and contrast the trends in form, orientation, decorative modes, and lettering modes found on the marble markers with those identified here in sandstone, all in an effort to obtain more definitive evidence of Greenwood carvers. Another area of future inquiry would be to mount a detailed comparison of the process by which each sandstone marker was prepared. The procedure of reducing sandstone blocks to the desired dimensions and form leaves a distinct pattern of scars that remain visible on the backs and sides of these gravestones (Fig. 19). Assuming that specific patterns of reduction can be attributed to individual shops and/or carvers, this could add a whole new dimension to this line of questioning.

Conclusion

One might assume that with all of the extant publications dealing with Greenwood Cemetery there remains very little left to study. It is true that we do know a lot, but in this regard a cemetery should be considered akin to a library. Every time someone opens a book, peruses an old letter, or takes a magnifying glass to a crinkled yellow map, new insights unfold. We keep coming back to libraries, much as we do to museums, to look at old things with fresh eyes. However, there is a difference between libraries and museums on the one hand and cemeteries on the other. Objects in libraries and museums often get shifted around. Librarians or curators eventually retire, and new people, with their own interests and motivations, take their place. It is easy to erase the lifelong labor and care of a librarian or curator in a single shift to a new facility. Such radical changes rarely occur at cemeteries, however, so the "books/artifacts" there remain in place. Some markers have fallen over, and others have been erected over unmarked graves, but these generally are minor changes. Although there are exceptions, the resources of most cemeteries are stable. We still have the stones and we also have their original placements. This is what makes cemeteries such wonderful venues of study. Greenwood Cemetery is a library that constantly needs to be opened to gain new insights on Tuscaloosa's past. The markers at Greenwood are a little eroded, to be sure, but they still bear critical information when used in innovative ways.

This research has contributed both a descriptive study and an attribute analysis of the extant sandstone gravestones contained within Greenwood Cemetery. The forty markers identified in the course of survey and analysis

were first discussed in terms of their forms and locations. Next, temporal trends in orientation, decorative modes, and lettering modes were considered, and a method for estimating the age of sandstone grave markers was proposed. Finally, the sandstone carvers of Greenwood were considered. Several lines of evidence suggest that the individual artists responsible for these markers adhered to a strict set of compositional rules, and teasing this structural grammar from the stones themselves has the potential to reveal insight into the carver's decision making process, as well as shed light on consumer choice.

It is our hope that this study may serve as both a model for future gravestone studies, and an example of how historical and social issues are reflected in the material remains of the past. The utility of the analytical approaches advocated herein are neither exclusive to the medium of sandstone nor the region. Through an examination of any number of grave marker attributes, researchers may perceive spatial, temporal, and demographic patterns that would otherwise go unrecognized.

NOTES

1. Joey Brackner, "An Overview of the Tombstones of Nineteenth-Century Alabama and Their Markers," *The Southern Quarterly* 31(2) (Winter 1993):21.
2. W. Craig Remington, ed., *Historical Atlas of Alabama, Vol. 2, Cemetery Locations by County*, 3rd ed. (Tuscaloosa: Department of Geography, College of Arts and Sciences, The University of Alabama, 2014, orig. pub. 1999). Ian W. Brown, "Teaching Tombstones in Tuscaloosa County," *Alabama Heritage* 88 (Spring 2008):10-17.
3. Harold Mytum, *Recording and Analysing Graveyards*, Practical Handbooks in Archaeology No. 15 (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2000, reprinted 2002); Several anthropological contributions that address sociocultural change are James Deetz and Edwin S. Dethlefsen, "Some Social Aspects of New England Colonial Mortuary Art," in James A. Brown, ed., *Approaches to the Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices*, Memoirs of the Society for American Archaeology No. 25 (1971), 30-38; James Deetz and Edwin S. Dethlefsen, "Death's Head, Cherub, Urn and Willow," in Mark P. Leone, ed., *Contemporary Archaeology: A Guide to Theory and Contributions* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 402-410; David H. Watters, "Gravestones and Historical Archaeology: A Review Essay," *Markers* 1 (1980):174-179; Ross W. Jamieson, "Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices," *Historical Archaeology* 29(4) (1995):39-58; James Deetz, "Remember Me as You Pass By," in *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1996, orig. pub. 1977), 89-124; Robert C. Mainfort, Jr. and James M. Davidson, eds., *Two Historic Cemeteries in Crawford County, Arkansas*, Arkansas Archeological Survey Research Series No. 62 (Fayetteville, Arkansas: Arkansas Archeological Survey, 2006); and Sherene Baugher and Richard F. Veit, *The Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Gravemarkers* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2014).
4. Joey Brackner and Rae Hague Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery: An Historic Overview and Walking Tour* (Tuscaloosa, AL: City of Tuscaloosa and the Heritage Commission of Tuscaloosa County, 1992), 5. Billie Thomson Lockard and Massie Hubbard Smith, *A Biographical Index of Greenwood Cemetery, Tuscaloosa, Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Morning Group, Tuscaloosa Genealogical Society and The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, 1992), vi. Ian Brown and Chuck Gerdau, "Greenwood: Tuscaloosa's Oldest Existing Cemetery," *Heritage Week Guide*, a Special Publication of the Tuscaloosa Preservation Society, May, 2008, 10-11.
5. Alton Lambert, compiler, "Cemeteries of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama," (unpublished manuscript, The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1978).
6. Lambert, "Cemeteries of Tuscaloosa County"; Alton Lambert, compiler, "Evergreen Cemetery" (unpublished manuscript, The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1980); Alton Lambert, compiler, "Fifty-five Tuscaloosa County Cemeteries" (unpublished manuscript, The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1980); Alton Lambert, compiler, "Greenwood Cemetery in Tuscaloosa" (unpublished manuscript, The University of

Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1980); Alton Lambert, compiler, vol. 3 of *Cemetery Records of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama* (Centre, AL: The Stewart University Press of the Stewart University System and The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, 1982), 96-127.

7. Although there has been question as to the quality of Lambert's research, scholars recently have lauded Lambert's work; see <http://www.tuscaloosa-library.org/friday-focus-august-14-2015-all-about-tuscaloosa/> as an example.

8. Lockard and Smith, *A Biographical Index*.

9. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*.

10. Clete A. Rooney, "Institutional Expression in Nineteenth Century Cemeteries: the Alabama Insane Hospital Cemetery" (MA thesis, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, 1999).

11. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 6; Lambert, "Evergreen Cemetery;" Lambert, *Cemetery Records*, 1-95; Lambert, "Fifty-five Tuscaloosa County Cemeteries."

12. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 13.

13. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 6; Alton Lambert, compiler, vol. 5 of *Cemetery Records of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama*, (Centre, AL: The Stewart University Press of the Stewart University System and The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, 1982), 27-30.

14. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 14-18.

15. That is, it contains appreciable quantities of mica. This quality is often readily visible, imbuing stones with distinctive, shimmery flecks.

16. Although the Capitol Building in Tuscaloosa burned down in 1923, its sandstone ruins have been preserved as part of the city's Capitol Park.

17. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 8.

18. *Ibid*, 7.

19. Joanne F. Baker, Daniel Farber, and Anne G. Giesecke, "Recording Cemetery Data," *Markers* 1 (1980).

20. Daniel A. LaDu and Ian W. Brown, "2010 Inventory of the Sandstone Grave Markers of Greenwood Cemetery, Tuscaloosa, Alabama" (unpublished manuscript, The University of Alabama, Hoole Alabama Collection, Tuscaloosa, Alabama). A copy of this manuscript has been donated to the AGS Archives at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

21. See, for example, Brackner, "An Overview of the Tombstones" and Brown, "Teaching Tombstones."

22. Markers B, CC, w, and Y are intentionally omitted from Figure 2. These stones are no longer standing, having either toppled over or been relocated altogether.

23. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 11.

24. Lucien L. Agosta, "Speaking Stones: New England Grave Carving and the Emblematic Tradition," *Markers* 3 (1985).

25. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 11.

26. This number includes Tablet bb and Footstone ee, although these markers lack the characteristically stepped portion of the tympanum.

27. Edwin Dethlefsen and James Deetz, "Death's Heads, Cherubs, and Willow Trees: Experimental Archaeology in Colonial Cemeteries," *American Antiquity* 31, no. 4 (1966).

28. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 11.

29. Philip Phillips, *Archaeological Survey in the Lower Yazoo Basin, Mississippi, 1949-1955*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 60 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1970), 28; Stephen Williams and Jeffrey P. Brain, *Excavations at Lake George, Yazoo County, Mississippi, 1958-1960*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology 74 (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1983), 90.

30. Jeffrey P. Brain and Philip Phillips, *Shell Gorgets*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: the Peabody Museum Press, 1996), 5-8; James Deetz, *Invitation to Archaeology* (Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press, 1967), 46, 87.

31. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 60.

32. Brackner's "An Overview of the Tombstones" lays a solid groundwork for our study, as he examined cravers throughout the entire state of Alabama. Appendix 1 in his essay provides a roster of signed monuments from Tuscaloosa's Greenwood Cemetery.

33. Brackner and Eighmey, *A Walk through Greenwood Cemetery*, 7-8, 10.

34. *Ibid*, 10. Bracker, "An Overview of the Tombstones," 27, Appendix II.

35. The Latin word "fecit" translates to "he made" in English.

36. Robert Mellown, pers. Comm. Email message, May 16, 2016. Robert Mellown is Associate Professor Emeritus of Art History at the University of Alabama and has been involved for well over four decades in many historical and architectural projects involving the University and the City of Tuscaloosa, and the State of Alabama.