

**Dallas Landmark Commission  
Landmark Nomination Form**

**1. Name**

**Historic:** L. Butler Nelson Cemetery  
**and/or common:** (Woodland and Hillside Cemeteries)  
**Date:** c. 1896

**2. Location**

**Address:** 2900 Block, Hatcher Street  
**Location/neighborhood:** South Dallas  
**Block:** 4438 and 4439 **lot:** n/a  
**Land survey:** Lagow League **tract size:** 14.8 acres

**3. Current Zoning**

**Current zoning:**

**4. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> residence
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public</b>	<b>Accessibility</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Acquisition</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes:restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> yes:unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other, specify
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<u>Cemetery</u>

**5. Ownership**

**Current Owner:** Park and Recreation Department, City of Dallas  
**Contact:** Willis Winters, Assistant Director  
**Phone:** 214/670-4282  
**Address:** 1500 Marilla Street, 6A North, Dallas Texas 75201

**6. Form Preparation**

**Date:** December 6, 2007 (w/ revisions January 1, 2008)  
**Name & Title:** Frances James; edited by Marcel Quimby  
**Organization:** Landmark Commission and Designation Committee  
**Contact:** Frances James  
**Phone:** 214/381-0445

*For Office Use Only*

**Date Rec'd:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Survey Verified:** Y N **by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Field Check by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Petitions Needed:** Y N  
**Nomination:** Archaeological Site Structure(s) Structure & Site District



**Item # 12. Physical Description**

appear to have been planted but are not currently maintained. Most of the eastern portion of the cemetery is in the 100-year flood plain, although there is no apparent evidence of prior flooding at the site. A metal fence was recently placed at the property line at the north (Hatcher Street), west (Lincoln High School) and east (Cason Street) sides of the site; a high chain link separates the cemetery from the adjacent Glenoak cemetery to the south; the metal fence was added in 2002 along with an ornamental entry gate and arch at the main entrance at Hatcher Street.

Grave markers consist of vertical monuments, upright stones and markers as well as flat stones in the ground; materials of these markers include stones and granite. Some gravesites are grouped together with comfortable spaces between them; there are no low fences, walls or other enclosures at family areas. Gravesites appear to be more densely located near the north end of the site (near the entry gate at Hatcher Street) with more open areas at the southern portion. The oldest marker dates from 1896 while the newest dates from the last burial in the cemetery in 1969. Survey work recently completed has located 1200+ headstones to date. While many markers are intact, a large number have suffered damage from vandalism, earth movement, damage from maintenance, and other causes.



Variety of headstones in the cemetery; many have been damaged and are in need of repair.

***Item # 12. Physical Description***

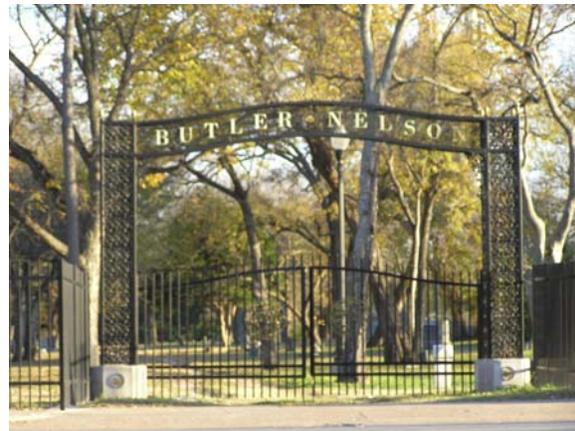
A Texas Historical Grave marker and several other markers commemorating churches and other groups that have assisted in the restoration of this cemetery are located near the front entry to the cemetery; these markers are surrounded by a metal fence.

There are two man-made site features within the cemetery: a gravel road that is close to and parallels the west property line and a concrete drainage channel that runs the entire length of the site and drains to the south to the Trinity River; this channel is located near the center of the site and is about 6' deep with sloped concrete walls. A concrete bridge extends across this channel near the center of the site. The City of Dallas purchased the right-of-way in Woodland and Hillside cemeteries in 1934 for this drainage channel, and constructed this concrete drainage channel through the cemetery towards the Trinity River.

At the south-west corner of the site (in the historic Hillside cemetery) is a pet cemetery for family pets. These graves date from the 1920's through the 1950's and many have granite or stone headstones commemorating beloved family pets. This area is located in a grove of trees and is secluded from the main areas of the cemetery.



View of northern portion of cemetery, showing enclosure with new markers.



Entrance at Hatcher Street.

### ***13. Historical Significance***

*Statement of historical and cultural significance. Include: cultural influences, special events and important personages, influences on neighborhood, on the city, etc.*

The L. Butler Nelson Cemetery is comprised of two historic cemeteries – Woodland Cemetery and the adjacent Hillside Cemetery; these two cemeteries were active cemeteries for Dallas’ African American community from at least 1896 until 1969, and are important sites to Dallas’ history. Etched in stone, the dates on the remaining twelve hundred-plus headstones document people who came to Dallas as slaves or were first generation free men and women. They managed by their own efforts to attend school, find jobs, make a living for their families, purchase a gravesite and their families installed headstones that were placed in their honor.

Those buried in this cemetery were contemporaries (and often neighbors) of those buried at Freedman’s Cemetery adjacent to Central Expressway. Unlike Freedman’s Cemetery (also a City of Dallas Landmark) where very little personal information is known about those buried, the L. Butler Nelson cemetery has names and dates of birth and death for many of those interred. These remaining headstones help tell the unique and remarkable stories of these early Dallas pioneers. Woodland Cemetery is thought to be the second cemetery that served the African American population in Dallas, although at the time it was outside Dallas’ city limits.

#### **Early History of the Woodland and Hillside Cemeteries: 1840’s to 1954**

##### ***Woodland Cemetery***

The origins of the land that would become Woodland Cemetery date from 1841 when Thomas Lagow received forty-four hundred (4,400) acres of land from the Republic of Texas as a first class headright. Lagow never came to Dallas and following his death, his estate was divided among his sons William, Silas, Richard and Harrison Lagow. In 1854, 680 acres of this area was sold to Nathaniel C. Floyd; his heirs sold 10 acres in the south half of this sub-division to Harvey Jones on June 15, 1874. Jones later deeded this property to H.H. Sneed [1].

Of interest to this site’s history is that on March 6, 1891, the City of Dallas made it illegal to expand or purchase land in the city limits for cemetery use. The passage of this ordinance is concurrent with discussion of what to do with Freedman’s cemetery (Dallas’ first cemetery for African Americans) as it was filling up and how to purchase new land for another African American cemetery. Woodland Cemetery was then outside Dallas’ city limits, so was not affected by this ordinance.

During the 1890’s and first decade of the 1900’s this area became known as ‘Woodland’ and burials occurred here; these burials predate the formal dedication of the cemetery. It is not known how this site was selected for burials. While the oldest headstone dates from 1896, it is possible that there were burials at this site prior to that date. Dallas Morning News articles refer to burials at ‘Woodland’ as early as 1907 (Amanda Burns) with several more occurring in the years that follow. Other early graves are thought to date from 1907 when the Freedman’s Cemetery, adjacent to the H&TC Railroad (now Central Expressway) and north of downtown Dallas, was closed as all the burial space was used. A study concerning the archeology findings at Freedman’s, suggests that some families had their loved ones re-interred at Woodland after 1907 rather than bury them in the nearby pauper’s cemetery; this could explain the burials before 1911.[33] Despite these burials, there are no references to this land as a cemetery in deeds prior to 1911.

**13. Historical Significance**

The adjacent land to the cemetery was once owned by several of Dallas' more prominent citizens - John J. Good, a Mayor of Dallas, and E.H. R Green, the son of Hetty Green, once the richest woman in the world and known as the "Witch of Wall Street." Green was a shipping tycoon with lavish tastes who moved to Dallas in the late 1800's and is famous in Dallas's history for driving the first car to Dallas in 1899 (he sent the car by railroad to Terrell and then drove to Dallas).

By 1910, Mr. W.D. Kynerd, an oil man who lived on Forest Avenue, and dealt in real estate in Dallas County owned the land that would be known as Woodland Cemetery. In 1911, this lot was purchased by John Paul Starks (1865-1923)[2], William B. West (1861-1912), and William E. Ewing (b. 1872) for use as a private cemetery for their undertaking company. The three men paid \$100.00 down and signed a note for \$2,400.00 with an interest rate of 8% to be paid at \$25.00 a month until paid in full.[3]

Mr. William B. West was the presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church and President of Peoples Undertaking Company from 1908 until his death. He and his wife boarded at 387 Flora. Unfortunately, Mr. West died before the year was past and his widow, Adlissa West was paid over \$4,000.00 by the J.P. Starks Undertaking Company for his one-third interest in the Company.[4] In the 1900 City Directory Starks was listed as barber in business with John McCain on North Akard. In the 1915 City Directory, Mr. W.E. Ewing is shown as being a barber and part owner of Peoples Undertaking Company. [5]

Kentucky native J. P. Starks had come to the Dallas area in 1883 with the family of Mrs. Jules Schneider.[6] He had "completed the public school course" in Louisville, Kentucky. Starks began teaching in Dallas in September 1883, and was later honored for the thirty-nine years he had been involved in the education of Dallas children. One of the schools in the Dallas Independent School District is named for him. Mr. Starks, was an advocate for children and was able to get the first brick school building built for black children. He is also credited with influencing the School District to provide the first African American high school in 1892. Starks was first and foremost an educator and served as principal of Colored School No. 3 from 1890 until 1899; and was principal of Colored School No. 4 in 1895. He married Sallie Ewell whom he had met at the Bethel A.M.E. and St. James A.M.E. churches where she was the organist in 1891. Starks was also involved in the establishment, or management, of the Excelsior Insurance Company. After the death of Mr. West in 1912, Starks actively managed the Peoples Undertaking Company, one of the first African American corporations in Texas. He was president of the Dallas Express Publishing Company, that published the first black weekly newspaper in Dallas[7], and was executive committee chairman of the National Negro Business and Professional Directory of Colored Persons in Dallas.[8]

In 1912 a court case notes a judgment rendered against W.E. Ewing, and Sheriff B.F. Brandenburg was ordered to seize all goods, chattels, lands, and tenements of Mr. Ewing.[9] Thus in August 1912, J.P. Starks, who outbid everyone else, became the sole owner of all of the property of W.E. Ewing that had been advertised on the door of the courthouse, by paying \$200.00; this sale was advertised in the Mesquite Newspaper. There were two other pieces of property in the City of Dallas that Starks picked up at the same time.

**13. Historical Significance**

Between 1900 and 1915 there were ten undertaking (funeral) companies listed in the City Directory. Of these, four were used by the black community: Crawford on Bryan Street, Kernard, [10] in the next block on Bryan Street, Peoples [11] on N. Pearl and the Black Company on E. 10<sup>th</sup> Street. (Later Black and Clark). The Colored Cemetery (Freedman's Cemetery) is listed on Lemmon at the northwest corner of Central Avenue. Woodland Cemetery is listed in the directory as being on Oakland  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile south of Warren. This area was not within the City limits of Dallas until after 1918. By 1924 Hatcher Street was one block long (2800 block) and Woodlawn (not Woodland) is listed. Hatcher was a two-lane dirt street until the 1940s.

Records indicate that in 1934, Peoples Undertaking Company deeded land for a drainage channel that ran through the cemetery to the City of Dallas. This channel enters White Rock Creek a short distance south of the site.

***Hillside Cemetery***

The land for this site was also a portion of the Thomas Lagow League in the City of Dallas sold by James O. Crutchfield to General Pettiford. The land had also been owned by John Jones et al who sold to John V. Hughes, President of the Beulah Land Company. [12] G.W. Brock purchased this land in September 1921 from the Beulah Land Company and it is thought he developed this as a cemetery at that time [13].

Brock was a veterinarian with his clinic located on Holmes Street. Dr. Brock was responsible for setting aside a portion of the land he had purchased for the pet cemetery. Dr. Brock was still operating the Hillside Cemetery in 1934. As with Woodland Cemetery, it is not known when this land first became used as a cemetery.

An adjacent small cemetery to the south of the Hillside Nelson Cemetery is Glenoak Cemetery; this was also in the Lagow League, but has had a different set of previous owners. This cemetery now reflects Lee G. Pinkston, Jr. et al as trustee. Of the original three adjacent cemeteries – Woodland, Hillside and Glenoak – only Glenoak is still an active cemetery; it is surrounded by a metal fence. Many members of the Pinkston family are buried here [14] and the gravesite of Sidney Pittman (1875-1958), Dallas' first black architect who was responsible for several prominent buildings including the Knights of Pythias on Elm Street and St. James A.M.E. Church, both City of Dallas Landmarks. Mr. Pittman died penniless, but Mr. Pinkston made arrangements for him to have a fitting burial. In 1985 a group of Dallas Architects and others raised the funds for a headstone to be placed at his gravesite in recognition of his architectural achievements. Glenoak Cemetery is not included in this Landmark Designation.

**13. Historical Significance****History of Woodland and Hillside Cemeteries: 1954 – 2002**

In 1954 Reverend L. Butler Nelson came to Dallas from Phoenix, Arizona to serve as pastor of the historic Salem Baptist Church (founded as the Mission Station of the New Hope Baptist in 1888). Nelson was appalled at the unkempt appearance of this sacred ground and attempted to get the community involved in the upkeep of this site. His fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma, donated \$800 which paid for a caretaker to work in the cemetery in the spring, summer and fall. Reverend Nelson was concerned that only six other Negro ministers of the city and their churches had supported the project [15].

Mrs. Lillie Belle Dandridge, a neighborhood resident, assisted Nelson's efforts and contacted surviving family members in hopes of raising funds to clean up the site [16]. She also contacted Mayor Erik Jonsson regarding the importance of the cemetery.

As a result of her efforts and numerous complaints by the surrounding neighborhoods about the neglected conditions of the two cemeteries (Woodland and Hillside), Dallas Dallas's Park and Recreation Department reviewed the situation for several years, including a thorough investigation of the property deeds where they were not able to find any evidence that this property was ever dedicated as a cemetery (however, the fact that it has been used as a cemetery is sufficient under Texas Law to establish this use).

Dallas City Manager Scott McDonald proposed converting the cemeteries to a park if City Council members approved this takeover. At a City Council meeting on November 23, 1970, the Council approved a resolution to 'abate the public nuisance and preserve Woodland and Hillside Cemeteries as a memorial park' (City of Dallas Office Memorandum to L. B. Houston from E. H. Denton, Assistant City Manager). The City of Dallas acquired the entire ten acres in 1971. As the Dallas Park and Recreation Department does not allow burials in a city park, they then purchased all unused burial lots held by individuals. The last burial at the cemetery was held in 1969 before the City purchased the land.

In 1971, after the City purchased the site, the name was changed from Woodland/Hillside in honor of L. Butler Nelson at the request of those who knew how much time and effort Nelson had expended to improve the condition of the two cemeteries[22]; without his efforts, it is unlikely this historic cemetery would have been saved as a cemetery.

Subsequent efforts by others have provided assistance in maintaining and improving the cemetery. In 1965, 100 Boy Scouts from Circle 10 spent many hours in sweltering weather - it was 98 degrees that day (July 24, 1965) - trying to chop back the growth, haul off the trash and stand the stones upright again [17]. At a later date 450 Boy Scouts all joined together to clean up not only this site, but eight other South Dallas cemeteries that needed help. On another occasion 300 students from SMU and 200 from Bishop College worked to help maintain this sacred spot [18].

Otto Friday, the principal at Lincoln in the 1960s-1970s, acquired a nick-name of "No Escape" Friday over the years 1965-1969 because of his diligent searches for truants hiding out in the graveyards tangled vegetation and its intertwining paths [19]. It has been said that he would resort to getting on the roof of the school to better observe what was going on in the cemetery.

**13. Historical Significance****Recent Cemetery History: 2002 - 2007**

Since 2002, the cemetery has received help from several sources:

- Partial Inventory of gravesites, 2002: A partial inventory (the project only inventoried the west side of the channel) of the cemetery was made by Boy Scout, Kevin Vilbig, for his Eagle Project in 2000. His sister Jennifer Vilbig participated and received the Girl Scout award for her involvement. His Troop No. 712 from Coppell, Texas spent many hours gathering the data. They subsequently made sure it was alphabetized as well as numbered for easy reference. Pictures have been made of many of the stones.
- New Fence at perimeter of site, 2002: The City of Dallas Park Department placed a metal fence along the side of the Butler Nelson Cemetery at Hatcher Street and adjacent to Cason Alley. The alley was paved at this time. Prior to the fencing and paving project AR Consultants were hired by the Public Works and Transportation Department for the City of Dallas to study the area to ascertain that no graves would be disturbed by the planned work. Evidence of graves very close to the property lines was found. Only one could be identified and that was the gravestone for John Conner 1881-1930 [34].
- Inventory of gravesites completed, 2003: In 2003, Kevin Cangelosi and his Boy Scout Troop No. 829, also from Coppell using the same format used in 2002, completed the inventory for the entire area. With these two now combined inventories, it is possible to document the many Black citizens who were pioneers when Dallas was just a settlement. The local newspapers, City Directories, old established churches, students from the school and neighborhoods are all being asked to participate in finding any information of people buried in this site.
- Texas Historical Grave Markers: an on-going effort to place grave markers are being applied for from the Texas Historical Commission so the people who stroll through this peaceful area may learn of the accomplishments of these Dallas Pioneers. One of the first applications, for Tueria Dell Marshall, the first principal at Lincoln High School, has been approved and the marker installed.
- Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and Plaque for the site (see following).
- The Silent Souls Project was started in 2003 when the Principal of Lincoln High School, Earl Jones, and Jerry Chambers, who has recently retired after teaching in DISD for 42 years, realized the history that could be found in this sacred spot that was available for the students at the adjacent Lincoln High School. This two year process has produced the Historic Texas Cemetery Medallion and Plaque for the site. This large marker mounted on granite was funded by Salem Institutional Baptist Church. Through the generosity of The Good Street Baptist Church, and The New Hope Baptist Church, who have pastors and members buried here, funds for the project were made available and are noted by plaques. Councilman Leo Chaney, who has family in this cemetery, was instrumental in making this restoration a reality. The men of the churches have already found and re-stored many of the markers that had been lying in the dirt for many years. This project will be on-going as their goal is to restore every headstone.

### 13. Historical Significance

#### Burials at Woodland and Hillside Cemeteries 1896 – 1969

Many of the African American citizens of Dallas buried in this site were, owners of businesses, teachers, and pastors of churches that are still worshipping together every Sunday. Many of those buried there were well-known and respected Dallas citizens and include:

**Veterans:** There are over one hundred veterans from all wars since the Spanish American War through World War II. Government issued headstones mark their graves.

**Cherry Lawler (also Lauler) (d. 1896):** The earliest marked gravesite is Cherry Lawler, a grandmother, who was in Woodside in 1896 and was thought to be 85 years old. However, an article in the Times Herald mentioned that she may have been closer to 100 years old [24].

**Mr. and Mrs. (names unknown) Clay (d. 1900):** The parents of Margaret Clay are interred here along with other family members. Unfortunately, some of these family stones have been vandalized.

Reverend Abner Taylor (1855-1908): Taylor was one of the early pastors at the Salem Baptist Church [27]

**Reverend J.W. (b. 1845) and Mrs. Emma A. Joshua (1849-1914) and daughter (1868):** These three family members are buried together at this site and their names are included on a large stone. Emma E. Joshua was one of three women to graduate in the first graduating class of Paul Quinn College in Waco in 1889 (Black Texas Women page 108) Rev. J. W. and his family lived at 2601 Cochran in Dallas. Their son, John W.B. Joshua worked at Continental Gin Company. In 1918 Reverend J.W. Joshua was a driver for Texas Lumber Company.

**Charles Rice (1852-1915):** A native of Florida, Charles Rice was able to go to school after his family moved from Florida to Georgia. He was recognized early on for his diligence and work ethics and was admitted to Atlanta University. Because of his strong, beautiful voice, he majored in music.

In 1884 Rice married Sallie Holsey (b. 1859) from South Carolina. They had five children but two died quite young. Charles, Sallie and their three surviving children (Ella, 1885; John, 1892; Robert, 1896) moved to Dallas in 1896 and Charles became a music teacher in Colored School Number 1. This was one of the first two school buildings built in 1884 when the city of Dallas first started providing public schools. The name of this school was changed to Wright Cuney in 1902 and Charles Rice was made principal. This school was located on the corner of Canton and Cockrell Streets. The family lived at 372 Hall at this time.

In 1908, Charles Rice became principal of the Colored School No. 2; that name was later changed to Booker T. Washington and became the first high school for blacks. There were three graduates from the high school in 1908. Charles Rice stayed here until his health failed 1913. Charles died in 1915 and is buried along the fence line at L. Butler Nelson Cemetery. His head stone says "Professor Charles Rice." DISD later named a school in his honor. (Resources: Inventory at the Cemetery, Education in Dallas, History Dallas Negro High School, WPA Dallas Guide and History, Black Dallas Remembered 1989 Calendar).

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**Benjamin F. Darrell (1856 – 1919):** Benjamin Franklin Darrell was born in Winchester, Tennessee and educated in local schools; he attended Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee (founded in 1866 by the American Missionary Association as a liberal arts institution committed to educate the newly freed slaves). Darrell received both a Bachelor and Masters Degree from Fisk; while enrolled in this University, Benjamin Darrell took an active part in the choral organizations on campus and was an initial member of the Jubilee Singers who were established in 1871; Darrell was part of the original nine-member troupe that toured the United States and Europe in the summer of 1871 in an effort to raise funds for Fisk. The funds they raised (\$150,000) were used to buy the land where the university is located and contributed to the campus's first permanent building on campus – Jubilee Hall. Darrell also participated in the Jubilee Singers second tour in 1873. The Jubilee Singers continue as a renowned choral ensemble and toured Dallas in February 2007.

After teaching for several years in Tennessee, Benjamin Darrell came to Dallas. He lived on State Street and in 1908 became principal of elementary Colored School No. 1. Located at Santa Fe and Canton Streets near downtown Dallas, this was one of the original frame schools built in 1884 when free public schools were first organized in Dallas.

B.F. Darrell had a rich tenor voice and his interest in music and his voice training, that had developed when he was in college, was quite impressive. He led the children in Sunday School at the St. James A.M.E. Church. In 1917 he became the principal of Booker T. Washington High School and died mid-semester in 1919. A new elementary school was built in the 1980s (4730 Lancaster Road), it was named for B.F. Darrell. (Resource: DISD records, [A History of Dallas High School for Negroes](#)).

**Mack Mark Rodgers (1859-1921):** Mr. Rodgers was born in La Grange, Texas and was educated in the schools available at the time. He attended Prairie View College [28] and taught school for several years in La Grange before coming to Dallas around the turn of the century. He owned and operated a barber shop at 2547 Elm in the Knights of Pythias Building and lived on Thomas Street in the State Thomas area. He served as Secretary of the Knights of Pythias Lodge of Texas and was involved in the Republican Party in Texas. His grandson, L.A. Bedford, a Dallas Attorney remains in Dallas.

**J. P. Starks (1865 – 1923):** In 1911 John Paul Starks was one of three men who signed the note for \$2400.00 to purchase the site of the Woodland Cemetery. Starks had been brought to Dallas from Kentucky by Mrs. Jules Schneider where he had gone to school; Mr. Schneider was the president of the State Fair of Texas and a banker. Starks has several vocations: he was a teacher in the Dallas Public schools and was involved in education for thirty-nine years; he owned the J.P. Starks Undertaking Company and in the 1900 City Directory Starks was listed as barber. By 1915 Starks was actively managing the Peoples Undertaking Company, one of the first African American corporations in Texas. He was president of the [Dallas Express Publishing Company](#), which published the first black weekly newspaper in Dallas. He was the executive committee chairman of the National Negro Business and Professional Directory of Colored Persons in Dallas. There is a large headstone for the Starks family, with gravesites for several members of the family. (Resources: Inventory of Cemetery, Dallas City Directories, Dallas County Deed Records, Clipping dated March 8, 1923 from [The Dallas Express](#), [Education in Dallas](#), [Big D. Triumphs and Troubles](#)).

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**Silas Cofield (1880-1927):** An Alabama native, Cofield was a member of a large family and at the age of thirteen was farmed out to a white school teacher. He never attended school but was taught by the teacher (his guardian) and moved to Dallas with this family while still a youth. He learned to cook and attend his guardian who in later years became his best friend and confidant.

**Reverend George Harlee (1894-1929):** Also a pastor at Salem Baptist Church at one time, has a big headstone erected in his memory by his wife. Harlee Elementary School in the Tenth Street Historic District in Oak Cliff is named in his honor.

**Marcellus Clayton Cooper (1863-1929):** Marcellus Clayton Cooper was born in Dallas on the Caruth Farm in the "White Rock Community." His mother, Sallie Lively was a slave and his father was M.C. Cooper. Marcellus started school in the Little Egypt settlement (north of White Rock Lake). His father moved to Missouri and took Marcellus with him and there he was able to go to high school. When he returned to Dallas, he went to work at Sanger's Brothers store. After eleven years he had saved enough money to go to Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee to study dentistry. In an article in The Dallas Morning News dated September 29, 1891 it was reported that he was so popular that his co-workers gave him a gold-headed cane when he left for college.

In 1896 he returned to Dallas as one of the first licensed, black, dentists in Texas. In 1900 his office was in the same building as Dr. Benjamin Bluit, a surgeon [35]. When Bluit's Sanitarium opened in 1905 at 2034 Commerce, Dr. Cooper moved his practice into that building. They remained closely associated for twenty years, sharing facilities and other business interests. Cooper later moved his office to the Knights of Pythias Building when it was completed in 1916. Many of Dr. Cooper's patients were white and he was recognized by other dentists for his quality work. He was a Board member of the Black Chamber of Commerce, and other civic organizations and a stalwart member of the Bethel AME Church. Dr. Cooper invested in the Lewis Dry Goods Store, the first black-owned department store in downtown Dallas and was one of the founders of the black-owned Penny Savings Bank. The M.C. Cooper Dental Society was named in honor of Dr. Cooper. (Resource: African American Families and Settlements of Dallas; On the Inside Looking Out pages 137-140; Crawford Undertaking (Funeral Home Register) 1928-1930).

**Silas Brewer:** Silas and Estelle Brewer met by chance when he stopped and asked for a drink of water at her house; after dissolving his partnership with his white guardian to start a life with a family of his own, Silas and Estelle were married in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Silas sold insurance for the American Mutual Benefit Association for several years and then approached his former guardian and asked for a loan of \$1000.00 to finance the organizational expenses to set up the Excelsior Mutual Benefit Association. He was granted the loan and the firm received a charter in Texas in 1916. Silas bought Lot One, Section One from Dr. Brock for \$100.00 when lots were made available in the Hillside Cemetery [30] and took out a loan to pay for this; he and his wife would ride horseback all night, if necessary to pay off a burial "over the casket" [29]. In the 1960s when the City assumed ownership of the cemetery and were acquiring the remaining burial plots, Estelle Cofield received \$1,000.00 for her share of the remaining space [31].

### 13. Historical Significance

**William Will (1839 - 1930):** William Winn was one of the former slaves owned by Alex and Sarah Horton Cockrell, an early Dallas family; he helped tend to the Cockrell children and grandchildren and helped Sarah run the Cockrell businesses in Dallas after Alex was killed in 1858 [25]. Sarah died in 1892, and their son Frank, made the final arrangements for Mr. William Winn and the headstone that was placed for him; this headstone states:” Age about 91 years: Faithful through life” placed by the Alex Cockrell Family [26].



Photograph of Winn with five teenage Cockrell children, taken 1909. Courtesy of Vivian Castleberry, ‘Sarah the Bridge Builder’

**Cornelia Ford Bluit (1872 – 1934):** There is a large stone that reads “Aunt Cornelia Bluit (1872-1934) and Maria Bluit (1830-1903)”. Cornelia Ford of Nashville, Tennessee was the first wife of Dr. Benjamin Bluit (1865-1946); Bluit was the first African American surgeon in Texas and the second African American doctor in Dallas when he moved to Dallas in 1888. In 1905 he built and opened Bluit Sanitarium, the first sanitarium (hospital) for African Americans in Dallas. Cornelia J. Ford met Benjamin Bluit when he attended Meherry College in her hometown of Nashville. They were married in Nashville December 28, 1889 and she moved to Dallas to join him. Cornelia participated in many community affairs including the Colored Literary Society and in the 1910’s is noted as winning several prizes at the Colored State Fair for her culinary entries. They lived in Dallas until 1920 when they moved to Chicago. Cornelia died in Chicago in 1934 of ‘acute intestinal

**13. Historical Significance**

obstruction' and her body was returned to Dallas for burial at L. Butler Nelson. Dr. Bluit left Dallas in 1920 for Chicago where he practiced medicine there until he died in 1946; he is buried in Chicago. (Resource: Inventory of the Cemetery, Chicago Public Library, Research done by Stan Solomillo for Landmark Designation and the *Bluitt Sanitarium Building National Register nomination* by Marcel Quimby and *Benjamin Bluitt article* In *Legacies*, Winter 2007, Dallas City Directories).

***Maria Bluitt (1830–1903):*** Maria Bluitt's name appears on the same stone as Cornelia Bluitt's; Maria was Dr. Benjamin Bluitt's mother who he brought to Dallas from the Comanche Crossing settlement in Limestone County where he was born shortly after he moved to Dallas in the mid-1880s; she worked as a nurse in his clinic and is listed as living at the same address as Cornelia and Benjamin, 351 Flora in the 1900 City Directory. It is not known if she is interred here or if this marker is only a commemorative marker. (Resource: Inventory of the Cemetery, Chicago Public Library, Research done by Stan Solomillo for Landmark Designation and the *Bluitt Sanitarium Building National Register nomination* by Marcel Quimby and Benjamin Bluitt article in *Legacies* magazine, Winter 2007; Dallas City Directories).

***Dr. Alexander Stephens Jackson (1857-1936):*** Dr. Jackson and his wife Odalie Morse Jackson (1864-1941), who had come to Dallas from New Orleans in 1899 was pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church. For three decades they were involved in Dallas' community in many capacities. Their son, Rev. Maynard Holbrook Jackson and grandson, George Maynard Jackson (mayor of Atlanta) were prominent members of the Dallas and Atlanta, Georgia communities respectively. A commemorative marker is located nearby for his son, Rev. Maynard Holbrook Jackson (see below).

***Samuel C. Black (1871 – 1939):*** Samuel C. Black started his funeral home along with the grocery store he operated in the Tenth Street area of Oak Cliff in 1914; at this time there were only two undertakers for African Americans in Dallas at the time – Blacks and Peoples. In 1927 his nephew, Charles Jackson Clark, joined him as a partner. Charles Clark had graduated from Crawford Gunter Mortuary School in 1924 and was a licensed funeral director and mortician. After Sam Black died, Clark became the sole owner of the Black and Clark Funeral Home and kept the name. (Resource: Inventory at Cemetery, Dallas City Directories, *African American Families and Settlements of Dallas: On the Inside Looking Out* page 126).

***Alice Chesley (d. 1939):*** Alice attended Bishop College in Marshall during the depression and received her certificate to be a teacher in 1932. She had taught at Thompson Elementary School in Dallas, and worked at St. Johns Church, Peoples Funeral Home, and Williams Funeral Home on State and Hall. [32] She moved to St. Louis, Missouri to teach school and died while there

**13. Historical Significance**

**Betty Ward (1864 – 1954):** Betty Ward was born on the Caruth Farm in the Northern part of Dallas County in 1864. She moved to Dallas so her five children could attend school in Dallas; the family lived on Allen Street and the children attended the Dallas Colored High School. She was associated with the St. John's Baptist Church. She died away from Dallas while visiting her daughter; her funeral service was conducted by Rev. E.C. Estel and she was survived by a daughter, Mildred Harrell, and one of her sons, Dr. Edgar E. Ward. Dr. Ward became a prominent doctor in Dallas. Dr. Ward graduated from Dallas Colored High School in 1911 and was able to attend Meharry Medical School in Nashville, Tennessee graduating in 1915. He was the medical director for the Excelsior Life Insurance Company and in 1937 was elected Bronze Mayor of Dallas. Edgar Ward Place in West Dallas was named for him. Dr. Ward and his wife attended New Hope Baptist Church. (Resources: DMN clipping 1-7-1954)

**Tueria Dell Marshall (1883 – 1960):** T.D. Marshall was the first principal of Lincoln High School, the second high school built for black students in Dallas in 1938. He was one of fourteen children born to Edmon Lott and Texana Dickson Marshall in Millican, Texas. He attended Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, and later Prairie View. By 1895, when Marshall was twenty-two years old, he was a teacher in Dallas at Frederick Douglas, one of the first public schools for black students in Dallas. In 1916, he became principal at the Fannie C. Harris Elementary School and the next year was principal at Pacific Avenue School. In 1919 Marshall was moved again to be the principal at B.F. Darrell an elementary school. In January 1939, Lincoln High School finally opened and became Dallas' second active high school (Booker T. Washington was the other) with Marshall as its principal of the new school where he remained until 1955 when he retired.

Not only had T.D. Marshall guided the destiny of thousands of students through his over sixty years in the education system, but, he was the co-founder of the weekly newspaper the Dallas Star Post, he organized the Wiley College Extension School, and was an active member of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church where I.B. Loud was his pastor.

Mr. Marshall has been accredited with keeping the politics of Dallas out of the schools and seeing that the children had the best that could be offered for the times. He died at the age of seventy-seven on October 10, 1960 and is buried at what was then known as Woodland Cemetery next to his beloved Lincoln High School. (Sources: DISD records, T.D. Marshall death certificate, Handbook of Texas (on line); Norma Wade article in DMN February 20, 1987, Education in Dallas page 31, Dallas City Directories, A History of the Dallas High School for Negroes page 25, Records at Lincoln High School.)

**13. Historical Significance****Commemorative Markers for Rev. Maynard Holbrook Jackson Sr. and Dr. Irene Dobbs Jackson**

In addition to burials at this cemetery, there are several markers that commemorate the lives of members of prominent Dallas families buried at Woodland but who are themselves buried elsewhere. The most prominent of these are Rev. Maynard Jackson and his wife Dr. Irene Dobbs Jackson.

Rev. Dr. Maynard Holbrook Jackson Sr. (1894-1953) was the son of Alexander Stephens Jackson (see above) and while he grew up in Dallas, he attended Atlanta Baptist College in Atlanta, Georgia. Rev. Maynard Jackson and his wife Irene Dobbs Jackson, co-pastored at New Hope Baptist Church in South Dallas with his father during his declining years and followed as pastor at New Hope from 1934-1945. Jackson was involved in early civil rights activities in Dallas, was president and former executive director of the Dallas Negro Chamber of Commerce, founder of the Texas Progressive Voters League. Jackson ran for Dallas Board of Education in 1945; following his defeat, he accepted the pastorate of Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia and the family moved to Atlanta. He held the position of pastor at the church until his retirement in 1952.

The spirit and vitality of the Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta was revived during his ministry. One of the significant contributions made by Rev. Jackson was the establishment, in the former old forks home, of a well-baby clinic and a recreational and health center for boys and girls in the community. Rev. Jackson, like his predecessors, believed in the community outreach of the church. He joined the black leadership of Atlanta in articulating and supporting full citizenship rights for blacks. Nationally, he helped set the climate for the progress that was ushered in by the 1954 Supreme Court's anti-segregation decision.

His and Irene's son, Maynard Jackson Jr. (1938-2003) who would become an attorney, was born in Dallas, and made his mark in Georgia where he was the youngest mayor that city had ever had (1973-81 and 1989-1993), and the first African American mayor of a major Southern city [23]. The Atlanta airport is named 'Hartsfield Jackson International Airport' in his honor. Funeral services for Rev. Jackson were held in Dallas in June 1953, following his death; no mention is made of his burial and it is not known if he was buried in Atlanta or in Woodland Cemetery.

Dr. Irene Dobbs Jackson (1900 - 1999), wife of Rev. Maynard Jackson Sr., was the eldest of six daughters of John Wesley Dobbs of the prominent Dobbs family of Atlanta, Georgia. Irene received her undergraduate degree from Spelman College in 1929, as valedictorian, and studied at the University of Chicago, Middlebury College, University of Grenoble, and the University of Toulouse (where she obtained her masters degree) prior to her marriage to Reverend Jackson, Sr. whom she had met in Atlanta where he attended college. Irene and Maynard had six children; their third child was Maynard Jackson Jr., the late Mayor of Atlanta, Georgia. Upon her husband's death in 1953, she returned to the University of Toulouse and received her doctorate in French language in 1958. She then returned to Spelman College (in Atlanta) to teach and was a respected member of the community and received the first library card granted to an African American in 1959 as Atlanta began integration. Irene was also an accomplished pianist, and often accompanied her sister Matiwilda Jackson, an internationally acclaimed opera star and the first African American to sing with the New York Metropolitan Opera. Irene moved to

**13. Historical Significance**

North Carolina and taught French at Central University until her death. Upon her death in 1999, the Georgia legislature passed a resolution conveying their sincerest sympathy to her family. She never remarried, and is thought to be buried in Atlanta.

**Rev. Butler L. Nelson**

Born in Como, Mississippi, Nelson was the 16<sup>th</sup> child (of 17) born to Albert and Martha J. Nelson in 1906. He received his early education in the Como public schools and finished high school in Kansas City, Kansas. He attended Grand Canyon College in Phoenix, Arizona and then attended the Department of Religion of Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee and graduated from the American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville.

His first job was at the Blue Valley Baptist Church in Kansas City, and in 1941 was called to the First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix where he served until 1954. He was pastor of the Salem Institutional Baptist Church in Dallas from 1954 until the early 1960s, and returned to the First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix. During his pastorate in Dallas he served as First Vice President of the Baptist Ministers Union, and on the Board of Trustees of Boiler College, and was a Board Member of the Interracial Baptist Institute of Dallas, and was area chairman of the South Dallas Goals for Dallas, a position appointed by Mayor Eric Jonsson. He died in Phoenix in 1968.

Nelsons efforts saved this historic cemetery from further deterioration and from the same fate at Dallas' first cemetery for African Americans – Freedman's – where all vestiges of who were buried there have been lost, and in 1971, the name was changed from Woodland/Hillside Cemetery to L. Butler Nelson Cemetery in his honor [22]. Without his efforts, it is unlikely this historic cemetery would have remained intact and would be honored as a City of Dallas landmark.

- [1] Dallas County Deed records Volume V page 425.
- [2] The Dallas Express, March 8, 1923. Headline article regarding John Paul Starks' death in Oklahoma.
- [3] Dallas County Deed records Volume 507 page 295.
- [4] Dallas County Deed records Volume 540, page 5, dated 12-31-11.
- [5] Dallas City Directory for 1918, Mr. Ewing had connections with three barber shops; one on Jefferson, one on Jackson, one on Lane, as well as part owner of Peoples Undertaking Company. He lived on Holmes.
- [6] Clipping dated March 8, 1923 from The Dallas Express. Jules Schneider was the President of the State Fair and a banker.
- [7] Big D: Triumphs and Troubles pages 184,185, 186. Clipping from Dallas Express written by A.G. Weems dated May 3, 1943 concerning the history of the Dallas Express.
- [8] Dallas City Directory for 1918. Education in Dallas 1874-1966 pages 30 and 252; Dallas County Deed records Volume 558 page 302.
- [10] Joshua Kernard is listed in the 1915 City Directory as being an undertaker at 2633 Bryan and living at 1010 Boll Street. Large head stone in the cemetery for this family.
- [11] Peoples Undertaking Company was founded in 1900 by Rev. Abner Taylor and William H. Holland becoming the first Black Undertaking Company. Early advertisement in 1902 Dallas City Directory.
- [12] John V. Hughes was president and general manager of the Dorsey Company, 1000-1002 Commerce, an office supply, furniture, printing, etc. company.
- [13] Dallas County Deed Records Volume 908 page 484.
- [14] African American Families and Settlements of Dallas: On the Inside Looking Out page 109. Dr. Lee Gresham Pinkston (1883-1961) came to Texas in 1910 from Mississippi. He had received his medical degree from Meharry Medical College. He moved to Dallas in 1921 and joined Dr. W.R. McMillan at his Sanitarium on the corner of Hall and State Streets.
- [15] Article dated April 4, 1968.
- [16] Dallas Morning News clipping dated July 15, 1964.
- [17] Dallas Morning News clipping file dated July 24, 1965.

- [18] Article by Julia Scott Reed, columnist for the Dallas Morning News dated April 4, 1968.
- [19] Undated clipping written by Ester M. Bauer in the Dallas Morning News. (ca. 1970s)
- [20] Resolution dated September 23, 1970 (70-4187)
- [21] City of Dallas Memorandum dated January 8, 1971, the total estimated cost to purchase property was \$12,570.00.
- [22] The cemetery was renamed while George L. Allen was on the City Council June 1971.
- [23] A Century of Faith, 1873-1973 page 19.
- [24] Dallas Morning News article found on the Internet referring to Cherrie Lawler's death.
- [25] Alex Cockrell was killed in 1858 by A.M. Moore who had just been elected, town marshal. Mr. Moore advertised in the Dallas Weekly Herald in 1868 that he was an Undertaker and "prepared with all necessary lumber" to make coffins. He had also just completed his hearse. Excerpted from Unpublished M. A. Thesis by James Davidson, completed in 1999.
- [26] Photograph of William Winn in 1909 from the files of Vivian Castleberry. Preserved all these years by descendants of Sarah Horton Cockrell.
- [27] Headstone in cemetery.
- [28] Prairie View College established in 1876.
- [29] African American Families and Settlements of Dallas: On the Inside Looking Out page 127. Biography written by his niece Constance Brewer-Davis and William Davis.
- [30] Dallas County Deed Records Volume 1015, page 51. Dated June 20, 1923.
- [31] City of Dallas office memo dated January 8, 1971.
- [32] Telephone conversation with Louise Wilson in February 2003. These were her relatives.
- [33] Unpublished M.A. Thesis by James M. Davidson, completed in 1999.
- [34] The Cason Alley Edge of Woodlawn and Hillside Cemeteries, Cultural Resources report 2002-13 Prepared by A`R Consultants, Inc. by S. Alan Skinner, PhD. Page 18.
- [35] Information for the Bluit Building prepared by Stan Solomillo in the nomination for Bluit Sanitarium Dallas Landmark nomination and the National Register for the Bluit Sanitarium building, by Marcel Quimby.

## 15. Attachments

*District or Site Map*

*Site Plan*

*Photos (historic & current)*

*Additional descriptive material*

*Footnotes*

*Other:* \_\_\_\_\_

## 16. Inventory of Structures-Historic District Only – n/a)

*Please complete this form for each structure in a proposed historic district*

## 17. Designation Criteria

**History, heritage and culture:**  
*Represents the historical development, ethnic heritage or cultural characteristics of the city, state, or country.*

**Historic event:** *Location of or association with the site of a significant historic event.*

**Significant persons:**  
*Identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of the city, state, or country.*

**Architecture:** *Embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, landscape design, method of construction, exceptional craftsmanship, architectural innovation, or contains details which represent folk or ethnic art.*

**Architect or master builder:**  
*Represents the work of an architect, designer or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of the city, state or country.*

**Historic context:** *Relationship to other distinctive buildings, sites, or areas*

*which are eligible for preservation based on historic, cultural, or architectural characteristics.*

**Unique visual feature:** *Unique location of singular physical characteristics representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city that is a source of pride or cultural significance.*

**Archeological:** *Archeological or paleontological value in that it has produced or can be expected to produce data affecting theories of historic or prehistoric interest.*

**National and state recognition:**  
*Eligible of or designated as a National Historic Landmark, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, State Archeological Landmark, American Civil Engineering Landmark, or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.*

**Historic education:** *Represents as era of architectural, social, or economic history that allows an understanding of how the place or area was used by past generations.*

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>
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***The Designation Committee requests the Landmark Commission to deem this nominated landmark meritorious of designation as outlined in Chapter 51 and Chapter 51A, Dallas Development Code.***

***Further, the Designation Committee endorses the Preservation Criteria, policy recommendations and landmark boundary as presented by the Department of Planning and Development.***

***Date:***

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***Chair, Designation Committee***

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***Historic Preservation Planner  
Department of Planning and Development***