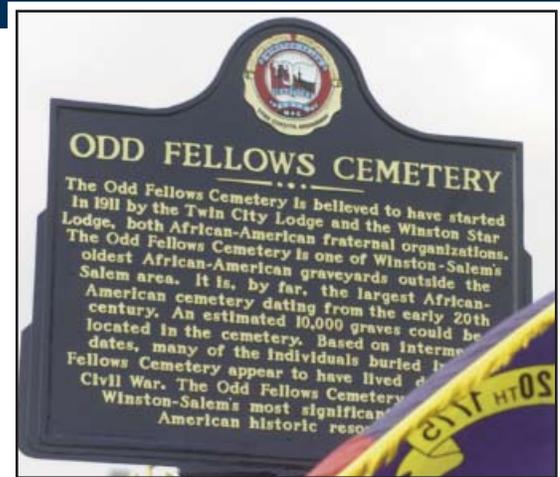


HISTORIC MARKER PROGRAM

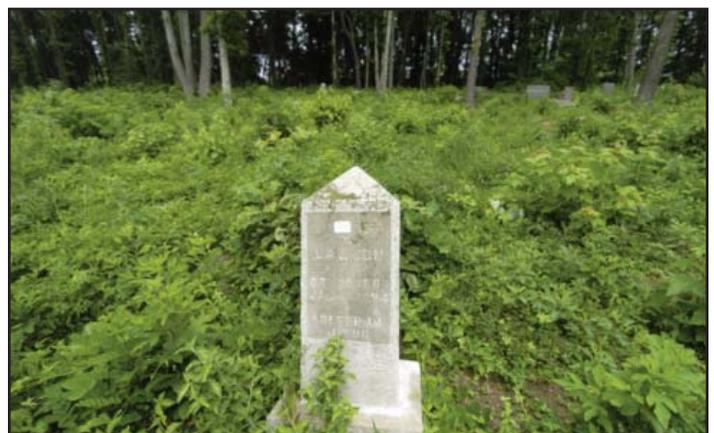
Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Odd Fellows Cemetery

Located off Shorefair Drive in Winston-Salem, the Odd Fellows Cemetery is reputed to have been started in 1911 by the Twin City Lodge and the Winston Star Lodge, both African-American fraternal organizations. The Odd Fellows Cemetery is significant because it is a rare example (outside the Salem area) of an early African-American graveyard predating the 1913 merger of Winston and Salem. Containing the remains of many individuals who lived during the mid-19th century Civil War period, the cemetery is important to the social and cultural history of the city as the largest African-American graveyard dating from the early 20th century. In fact, historians estimate that as many as 10,000 graves could be located in the cemetery. Some of Winston-Salem's most prominent African-American community members were buried at Odd Fellows Cemetery, including George Hill, a founder of the Winston Mutual Life Insurance Company, and Reverend R.L. File, a longtime pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church. The approximately 10-acre cemetery is one of Winston-Salem's most important African-American historic resources.



Odd Fellows Cemetery is additionally important because of its potential archaeological significance. Specifically, the unique physical characteristics of African-American graveyards in general make the Odd Fellows Cemetery one that may provide important archaeological data. For instance, typical African-American cemeteries can feature grave depressions as well as mounded graves. Often graves were placed without symmetry and in a somewhat random fashion. One significant component of African-American graveyards is the decoration of the graves themselves. Graves were marked in a variety of ways besides traditional markers. Some graves were marked using plants, shells, white quartz, colored glass, etc. Additionally, probably one of the most common African-American burial practices was the use of "offerings" on top of the grave. Such items could include pottery, saucers, bowls, pots, marbles, and the like. Due to the current condition of portions of the graveyard, it is not possible to ascertain if these physical characteristics are present throughout. However, African-American burial traditions would indicate the likely presence of such artifacts.



Over time, Odd Fellows Cemetery's interments diminished and it fell into disrepair. The cemetery had become heavily overgrown with vegetation. In 2008, the Friends of Odd Fellows Cemetery Inc. was established to work on the cemetery's restoration. With the help of volunteers and organizations, the group's recent efforts to clear the area have revealed a large number of granite and concrete

gravestones in good condition. Additionally, brick and concrete block borders delineate some family plots.

In 2000, Odd Fellows Cemetery was designated as a Forsyth County Local Historic Landmark, and in 2008, the property was placed on the North Carolina National Register of Historic Places Study List.



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[http://www.cityofws.org/Home/Departments/Planning/
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