Joy Murphy:

Hello, and welcome to The Stories We Tell, the podcast of the Collier County Museums. I am Joy Murphy, your host. And today, I am happy to welcome Amanda Townsend, our Museum Director.

Amanda Townsend:

Good morning.

Joy Murphy:

And Jennifer Guida, who is our Curator of Collections.

Jennifer Guida:

Good morning, Joy.

Joy Murphy:

And on the phone, we have Rachael Kangas, with the Florida Public Archaeology Network, Southwest Regional Center.

Rachael Kangas:

Hello!

Joy Murphy:

Hi, Rachael. How are you?

Rachael Kangas:

I'm great. Thanks.

Joy Murphy:

All right. Welcome, everyone. Today, we are going to talk about Rosemary Cemetery. Now, Rosemary Cemetery is a local cemetery here in Naples. Now, I'm going to let Amanda give us more information about it.

Amanda Townsend:

Sure. Rosemary is a really, really interesting story, and it has not only a story, but a little bit of mystery wrapped in it. It was the cemetery that was established for Naples in 1930. Now, of course, there were people living in Naples prior to 1930, and you have to ask yourself where they were buried. And the answer is that they were buried in a small cemetery near St. Ann's Church, which is on 3rd Street downtown.

But by 1930, the town was growing enough that they wanted to use the land near St. Ann's for another purpose, so they created a cemetery, which, at the time, was way far out of town. Right now, it's in the heart of things, and that would be south of Pine Ridge Road. And the original plot of the cemetery stretched all the way from U.S. 41, the Tamiami Trail, all the way east to what was then the railroad, and now is Goodlette-Frank Road. It was a really large area, 20 acres, that was designated. And if you think about it, that way, they were planning for the future. You could put a lot of people in that amount of space.

The cemetery officially opened in 1930, and some burials were relocated from St. Ann's Church to the new Rosemary Cemetery. We don't know exactly how many. We think maybe about 10, and then they were moved to what we call unit B in what is now Rosemary. But then, the historical record isn't really accurate. We've lost records over time. Over the years, people have tried to figure out, from people's historical memory, how many burials were moved from St. Ann's to Rosemary. The numbers are all over the map, but we know for sure it was probably about 10.

The cemetery operated through the 1930s, but the way one historian put it, which I think is really accurate, is that it was an unpopular cemetery, if you can imagine that. A lot of people wanted to send their relatives back up north to wherever their families were up north. The cemetery did have... There are records that say they had trouble with the water table, so they couldn't always keep the burials down.

Joy Murphy:

Bodies buried.

Amanda Townsend:

Yeah. That's not really something you want. And also, that area's a sandy ridge. It's called Pine Ridge. The sugar sand was really, really problematic. It was difficult to dig a grave and actually get a hole, because the sand would just collapse back inside. Despite the fact that it was really good planning as far as enough space for this to be a really permanent solution for the community, it didn't really work out. People didn't like it, and it was difficult to use properly as a cemetery, so it never really took off.

Joy Murphy:

No one is buried there anymore? I'm sorry, new. No one new is buried there.

Amanda Townsend:

The last burial was in 1947. That points to you, even though enough space was reserved, it just wasn't going anywhere. There was a cemetery in Fort Myers, people would send the bodies to Fort Myers. And then the cemetery in North Naples, the Memorial Gardens, opened in 1954. It was like, "Okay, we've got to find a better and more permanent place." That became the replacement.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. Now, specifically today, we want to talk about plots W and plots N. Rosemary Cemetery comes up every few years to the public. Now, as a museum system, we are always concerned about it.

Amanda Townsend:

Sure, we're worried about it all the time. To give people an idea, if you think of 20 acres stretching south of Pine Ridge Road between 41 and Goodlette-Frank, you can imagine a very long and narrow strip of land running east-west. Plot B, we'll talk about first. Plot B actually has become Collier County property. It was quitclaimed to Collier County in 1975, I think. '76, says Jen. And that is where we know there are 24 burials, I think. And we, as the museum system, manage that as the historic cemetery. And if you go, we have a beautiful bronze sign that's just recently been refinished, as well as a fence around, and we maintain it as a historic cemetery. We'll talk a little bit more later with Jen and Rachael about what it takes to manage a historic cemetery.

But there are two other plots where we believe people are buried, and those are W and N. Those are not Collier County properties, and therefore, we don't have any right to manage them. But they do exist, and it's fairly well documented that there are people buried there, and we know that because in 1944, the city engineer, Cambier, did a survey of the cemetery, and that's really the best historical record we have of who's buried there.

Plot W is in front of a strip plaza that now houses various businesses in town, and I think it's right in front of an Asian market, is where W is. And then plot N is all the way on the eastern side of the cemetery, the original cemetery, almost exactly at the corner of Pine Ridge Road and Goodlette-Frank, on the southwest corner.

Joy Murphy:

Is there any idea about who is buried in them, specifically?

Amanda Townsend:

We know a little bit. I believe that who's buried in W is identified. I can't recall who it is. And then the mystery that attracts the attention of the community a lot is that plot N, on the 1944 survey, is clearly marked as containing eight unknown Negro graves.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. All right. You know what? We'll circle back to that. Let's talk a little bit to Jen about how we, as a museum system, how we're maintaining and managing the cemetery.

Jennifer Guida:

Well, actual approval from the board came shortly after the historic designation. By 1993, it was decided that the county museum would supervise the cemetery itself. And I believe around 1993, '94, a one-time appropriation was made, just over $18,000, to make these improvements, which included a brand-new fence, new headstones that would conform to the era of 1920 to 1940. They're small, light marble, semicircular headstones. There are two original headstones there that have not been touched, as well as a tabby mortar border by the largest of the two. And a marker in the shape of a historic marker from the state of Florida was also put up in 1994.

Joy Murphy:

First, we want to point out that it is a Collier County historic site, right?

Jennifer Guida:

Yes. Local designation.

Joy Murphy:

Okay.

Jennifer Guida:

Correct.

Joy Murphy:

We've done all those things. What else do we do annually or, I don't know, monthly, weekly, to maintain the cemetery?

Jennifer Guida:

Right. Well, shortly after Amanda started, we started basically regrouping on how we can maintain our sites a little bit better. Something I saw I think just on social media was that FPAN was advertising CRPT training, which is Cemetery Resource Protection Training. I reached out to them, and we set up our first CRPT training here at the museum in September of 2016. Four years ago, which is hard to believe. We did the morning portion here at the museum, and then the afternoon portion, we spent several hours at the cemetery, observing it, documenting it.

And then we went for the really fun stuff, which was cleaning the headstones with the D/2 Biological Solution. That solution is pretty much good for maintenance for about a period of two years. Then two years later, again, we had FPAN come out with one of their other programs, and we did another headstone cleaning and just monitored the site. But furthermore, we do monthly inspections, usually conducted by myself, and I'll go out. And the county has an asset management database, so all those inspections are officially recorded and reported on the county level.

Joy Murphy:

Well, that is a good segue to bring Rachael on into the conversation. Rachael, can you tell us a little bit more about the CRPT training?

Rachael Kangas:

Absolutely. At the Florida Public Archaeology Network, or FPAN, we're a statewide organization that is pretty much dedicated to teaching people about archaeology and history in Florida. We do that in all sorts of ways. We give public talks and things like that. But one of the things that we do is training. We have the Cemetery Resource Protection Training that Jen was talking about, and during this training, we teach people how to legally and ethically work in historic cemeteries in Florida. We have lots of historic cemeteries all around the state, and there is a lot of maintenance that's required. A lot of these can end up falling into disrepair and abandonment, so we have a lot of local citizens and county governments and local governments who are interested in how to care for these.

That's the training that we've put together, and we do on-demand. Right now, we've got some slated through December that are virtual, that, again, teach people how to legally and ethically work in historic cemeteries. That's a really important, a really fun training to give. It's really fun to meet people who just like to walk around cemeteries. A lot of people are like, "Oh, I never realized there are other people who like to just go hang out in cemeteries." And there are. We like to find those people and to teach them how to help care for and maintain these cemeteries. We're always happy to put those together. It's been really nice to work with the county in maintaining Rosemary Cemetery.

Joy Murphy:

Anyone who just has an interest in cemeteries and, I don't know, historic cemeteries can attend the CRPT training? Can be anyone in the public?

Rachael Kangas:

Absolutely. Yep. We are happy to put them together on-demand if you have a small group. And like I said, we are planning some virtual trainings that are on Facebook. They're posted on Facebook, but

they'll be held via Zoom, through December already, so that's something we're always happy to put together to teach people about.

And we have another training that's not specifically for cemeteries. It's for archaeological and historic sites, including cemeteries in Florida. Instead of maintenance of these sites, it's more monitoring. If you're just a person that likes to go walk around sites, walk around cemeteries and take some pictures, we have a program called Heritage Monitoring Scouts, or HMS Florida. We do trainings for those. Again, we have some virtual trainings coming up, where we just teach people how to monitor sites. It's non-invasive, you don't touch anything. You just take some pictures and fill out a form about how the site you're doing is looking.

And that's how we've actually been documenting the work we're doing with Collier County at Rosemary Cemetery. I just checked this morning in our online database, and Rosemary Cemetery has been visited and documented through our HMS system five times since 2016. We've got pictures from those visits, and we see how the cemetery looks and how it's changed over time. Yeah, those are our trainings that we offer to the public and to local governments and, really, anyone who's interested.

Amanda Townsend:

Joy, I've got a question for Rachael.

Joy Murphy:

Okay, go ahead.

Amanda Townsend:

Rachael, tell us, when you're doing those trainings and you've got these interested members of the public, you mentioned that one of the things you want to do is take them through how to perform those activities legally and ethically. What are the biggest legal and ethical issues that you've seen that folks may be ignorant of?

Rachael Kangas:

A lot of folks we know, they like cemeteries, they want to help them, but they don't really know how. Luckily, a lot of the folks that I've talked to, they're like, "Well, I don't want to do anything, because I'm afraid to mess it up." It's always good to be careful as opposed to just going into a cemetery and doing what you think is right when it might not be.

Some of the really common things that we see that people do that aren't really recommended are cleaning headstones with bleach. Don't ever, ever, ever put bleach on a headstone ever. The best thing you can use is the solution that Jen was talking about. It's called D/2 Biologic Solution. And if you don't have that, just warm water and a soft-bristle brush. We never recommend sand blasting or cleaning headstones with anything that has high pressure. And again, never put bleach on a headstone, because those will actually start to erode and corrode the headstones and can actually make them much, much weaker. That's probably the biggest thing that we see in cemeteries, and there're always some eyes that go wide when we do those trainings and talk about that. Some people are like, "Oops. Okay. Good to know." That's really a common maintenance issue that we see, is just people trying to do what's right and just not knowing what's really recommended.

And something that we always stress in the cemetery program and in the HMS program is just being aware of the land that you're on, and who owns that land. We always tell people, don't ever go into a cemetery that's gated and closed. Some cemeteries are on private land, some are on public land.

The main part, the gated part of Rosemary Cemetery is county land, so if the gate is open, you're welcome to go in, but we always encourage people to be careful. And if there's a closed gate, don't go into the cemetery. If it's on private land, you want to get landowner permission. There are some legal ways for descendants to access burials of people who they are descended from, but they always trust that... Folks just need to be mindful of the land that they're on and who owns it. The last thing that we want is someone trying to do right by a cemetery or a site and getting in trouble for that. Those are things that we cover in both of the trainings, how to do that legally.

Amanda Townsend:

Gotcha.

Joy Murphy:

That's interesting, because I don't know that people ever think about cemeteries really being privately owned, or not being able to just walk into a cemetery. There are places that you can go, like in Louisiana and stuff like that, where you see these interesting cemeteries, and people just go and walk on the... But that's really not always the case. You could really be in trouble, walking on someone else's property.

Rachael Kangas:

Yeah, and cemeteries, a lot of times, I think people think of cemeteries as looking like... If you picture a cemetery in your head, a lot of people are going to think of this big, large area with lots of headstones, maybe some larger areas that you might be able to see, and these sprawling cemeteries. Cemeteries and burials have changed a lot in the last couple hundred years. We don't see these big community cemeteries until the 1800s. People have been in Florida for a lot longer than that. Even in the 1500s, when we have colonization of Florida, people are normally buried in really small plots. A lot of times, we have land managers who will be on their hundreds or thousands of acres of land, and there'll be little family plots of headstones or markers or something like that.

Cemeteries really changed a lot over their history, and burials have not always looked the way that they look today. They pop up in places that you wouldn't normally think of them, and like I said, they're not always these big, sprawling, well-maintained, beautiful cemeteries. They can really be in a lot of places. We always encourage folks to think about that, figure out who owns the land. We always tell people, don't put yourself in harm's way, and don't get yourself into any legal trouble to record a site or anything like that.

Joy Murphy:

Let's explore a little bit more... You're saying that cemeteries haven't always looked the way that they look. But this concept of finding a cemetery. A college professor of mine actually did that and did some research. He was researching a specific person. He was looking for his burial, and nobody could find his grave. When they finally found it, it was a small cemetery that no one even knew existed. I don't know if we consider Rosemary Cemetery, or parts of it, as lost, but the concept of having a lost or a found cemetery, what do people do if they think they've found a cemetery?

Rachael Kangas:

Yeah. Let me backtrack just a little and talk about this idea of lost cemeteries. You even have a story from a college professor. This happens quite a lot. Around the country, and especially in Florida, it's not uncommon for historic cemeteries to be forgotten, lost, and sometimes literally erased off of maps.

Again, we always think of cemeteries as these beautifully maintained, big, huge areas, and we think, "How could anybody ever forget where that is? There's all this physical stuff that reminds us that that's a cemetery." But if we think about some of these smaller plots, and even huge cemeteries sometimes, if those physical markers are destroyed...

People haven't always used stone to mark cemeteries. Sometimes they will make grave markers out of wood or other things that might deteriorate. Sometimes even big stones are moved either by accident or on purpose. If you lose that physical marker, or if you just let things go back to nature, a cemetery can really quickly be lost. And if we don't have good records and the only thing that's keeping that cemetery in memory is literally a person's memory, then all it takes to lose that cemetery is for that memory to be gone. That's why it's really important that we keep good, accurate documentation of cemeteries, and that that documentation is kept safe. We've seen many, many times that... For example, a church cemetery will have all the documentation in the church, and the church is built out of wood, and then the church burns down, and we lose all of that documentation. It's really important not only to have good documentation, but also to keep it safe so that there's more than just one person's memory, or a few people's memory, because again, that can be gone in literally one generation. We can lose an entire cemetery.

And we also have a lot of situations of really unfortunate history, but we have a really consistent pattern where we see specifically Black cemeteries being at even higher risk of being forgotten or erased. My colleagues in our West Central Region, which is based in Tampa, they've been working on a cemetery called Zion Cemetery for over a year now, doing GPR survey and basically finding potentially hundreds of burials that are under what is today public housing. And this cemetery, my colleague Rebecca O'Sullivan does a beautiful job of showing a map of the cemetery from a few decades ago, and then as the city remade the map, they literally erased the cemetery from the map.

She has a really fantastic talk that she gives that I believe we're going to have recorded up on the FPAN YouTube channel soon. I know Becky is going to give that talk tomorrow, but I'm not sure if this will air in time for that. But it should be on our YouTube channel, where you can actually watch the story of how the cemetery was literally erased off of maps, and other things were built on top of it. And now, it's taken work from my colleagues from an archaeological firm and from a local journalist to rediscover the cemetery, and now they're trying to figure out what to do with it and how they're going to respect the graves that are there. This is unfortunately a very common thing that we see in Florida. And sometimes, it's just people forgetting, and sometimes, it's a little more insidious than that, and we literally see these being erased.

Let's say someone is out in the woods, they're going for a hike, and they find a gravestone that they don't think anybody else knows about. The best thing that you can do is take a picture of what you see, make a map. A really easy way to do that is to just put a pin on your phone if you have a smartphone, so you have a location indicator where you are. And then you can call me at the Florida Public Archaeology Network. If you're anywhere in Florida, you can call your local FPAN regional center, and we can help you see if it's documented. And if it's not documented, we can get officially documented with the Florida Master Site File. That is the official list of all of the historic and archaeological sites in Florida. We are more than happy to help with that. If you find a cemetery, please don't go digging. If you find a headstone, please don't dig. But document where it is and let us know, and we'd be happy to help you.

And I should also mention, because we're talking about potentially unmarked graves, too, if you ever find human remains, your job is to call the cops. If you find human remains that are unmarked, if you're out in the woods and you find them, even if you think it's a historic cemetery, if you don't see markers or anything, stop what you're doing, call the police. That's what I'd do if I were to ever

encounter that. Yeah, we don't ever want to disturb human remains. That is against the law no matter where those remains are. It's against the law to disturb human remains without a permit.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. Well, thank you for that. I do want to bring it back to Rosemary specifically. Talk a little bit about... You mentioned GPR, which is ground-penetrating radar. How do we use GPR? How does it help with identifying grave sites, and how has it helped with Rosemary Cemetery, or how can it help?

Rachael Kangas:

That is an excellent question. GPR is super cool, and it's a really fantastic tool for getting an idea of what might be underground. It uses radar waves. I like to think of it... People who know how to use GPR always get mad at me when I say this, but it really helps me. I think of it as echolocation from a bat, but it's using radar waves instead. It's shooting these little waves into the ground, and if there's any change in the underground [inaudible 00:27:00], it will change the way those waves come back.

If the ground is all the same, the waves go all the way down, and they'll bounce back at the same time. If there is, let's say, a coffin underground, all of the waves around it will go down and come back, but when it hits that coffin, it'll come back faster. It comes up with these, we call them anomalies, which just means we don't know what they are. You can't say for sure that you have burials unless you ground truth, which is actually going in and seeing what is underground. But GPR is used very commonly to look for unmarked graves, because you don't have to dig to use it. You don't have to disturb what's underground in order to use GPR.

What they did, for example, at Zion Cemetery, like I was talking about earlier, is they did a GPR survey, and they found these rectangular anomalies that were about six feet underground and regularly spaced. Again, we can't say for sure that they are burials without checking, but that's a pretty good indicator that they are probably burials. And then at that site, they have since then gone in, and they have ground truthed, and they did confirm that those are unmarked graves. GPR is a really fantastic tool for getting an idea of what might be underground without disturbing the ground.

Joy Murphy:

And has any GPR been used at Rosemary?

Jennifer Guida:

No.

Rachael Kangas:

Not to my knowledge.

Jennifer Guida:

Yeah, no. But we have done with FPAN, we started some preliminary 3D scans of the property, with the hope that those would be uploaded into CAD, and we could have that feature posted on our website so folks could actually virtually visit the cemetery if they were so inclined.

Amanda Townsend:

Rachael brought up just a whole bunch of things about the management of historic cemeteries in general that apply to Rosemary. She touched on almost every little aspect that we deal with when the public has questions about how we manage the cemetery. Everything from that expectation that you have, rolling green hills with beautiful coiffured lawn. Of course, we attempt to manage Rosemary so that it's pretty, but it's more similar to what it may have been like when it was an operating cemetery. To some members of the public, it might look a little scrubby, especially if they're comparing it to the Memorial Gardens or what have you. But that's intentional on our part. We're not actually trying to make it look unkempt, but we're trying to keep the spirit of what a pioneer cemetery may have looked like.

Similarly, Jennifer mentioned that there are just a few original headstones in the cemetery. Many of the original burials may have had wooden crosses or other markers, those physical markers that Rachael was talking about, that were more ephemeral in nature. It's a long way from a stone quarry here in southwest Florida, or from a quartz quarry or granite. I think people probably used what they had, and that meant that some of those markers went away. There's also one original headstone in the cemetery that has a crack. We get questions about that all the time, whether it should be fixed or not, but Jennifer has some recommendations for best management practices. Tell us what those are.

Jennifer Guida:

Well, that repair was made decades ago, before the county's involvement. I actually had photographed it from several different angles and shared those photos with a conservator that we work with. Of course, she has a colleague that works up in Washington D.C. that works on specifically monuments. Those photos were shared, and the overall consensus was it wasn't the best repair, but it was a repair, so just to leave it as is. We also have a couple leaning headstones, and folks are wanting to maybe try to set those upright, but we've just been advised to just let them be.

Most of the cemetery's appearance, several interviews were conducted with residents in the 1970s, and a lot of those folks recall the cemetery having more of a natural, less trimmed appearance. We're trying to keep in spirit of what those interviews were about 45 years ago.

Amanda Townsend:

Again, that bit about documentation, we have the 1944 survey. That's what we believe is our best information about who's buried in Rosemary. But also, there of course are things that we don't know. For example, who's in those Negro graves, and that speaks to what Rachael said about traditionally Black cemeteries. The records just aren't as good. And unfortunately, it's not always a priority to remember those people, and you see that time marches on and people can be forgotten. We certainly would like to right those wrongs when we can.

Joy Murphy:

I did read an article where they talked to some longtime Collier County residents. I think all of them that were mentioned have now passed away. Even ones who had been here around that time, and even they said they had no idea. They remember the cemetery, but they don't have any idea of who was buried there. But there are quite a few theories.

Amanda Townsend:

There are quite a few theories. There's a popular notion that the people who are buried in plot N could have been killed constructing the railroad or in a railroad accident. We have reasons to think that that's

not probable, one of which is the railroad was completed in '28, and the cemetery didn't open until 1930. Another of which is that one of the eight graves that's clearly marked on that 1944 survey is small in size, and can be inferred to be a child's grave. And that doesn't really square with that person being a railroad worker.

I have read articles throughout the '90s, lots of newspaper articles about Rosemary Cemetery, try to mine local historical memory to see what people can remember. Memories are a tricky thing. Somewhere, there's a hint that it might've been people killed in a card game. People like to sensationalize and imagine and think of what it could be. It makes for fun reporting, but not necessarily good history.

The one article that I have seen that's probably... The only clue as to maybe a good identity of any of these individuals who are buried there that I've seen is a 1978 Naples Star article. Naples Star was a little afternoon paper. And Lorenzo Walker, who's a longtime civic leader in the community, is quoting as he remembered that one of those African-Americans buried in plot N had the nickname Pastime. And that's such a specific thing that it seems that could have some merit to it. Of course, that is also a 40-year-old memory. Even in 1978, those people had been in the ground for 40 years. We're guessing that we're probably never going to know who they are.

Joy Murphy:

Is it possible that maybe it's one family?

Amanda Townsend:

Sure.

Joy Murphy:

Eight is so small of a number, in my mind, it would sound like it was just maybe one family.

Amanda Townsend:

Sure. Hard to say. And like I said, we may never know. If there's a possible way to at some point recognize that plot, as well as plot W, we could work with... Like I said, they're not Collier County property. They're privately owned, but we'd love to work with the community members who are in charge there, to see if we could do something in the future. But it's a little complicated. We've gone down some roads of investigating the legality of that. If it were simple, we'd be doing it already.

Joy Murphy:

Well, that's a nice segue into my next question. Well, two questions. One is about... As I mentioned before, it pops up in the public's visual-

Amanda Townsend:

Consciousness.

Joy Murphy:

... consciousness every so often, and this last time was because of some broken pillars. I do want to talk a little bit about these broken pillars and the maintenance of them, and what we've done or what we're doing. Well, let's start there and then see where it goes.

Amanda Townsend:

Sure. Absolutely. For us, this came to our awareness in May, when the museums were closed because of coronavirus. We spent a good deal of effort trying to bring what would be a museum message to folks through digital means. We actually had some staffers who were out at Rosemary Cemetery filming a little video clip for Facebook or Instagram, and when they left Rosemary, they traveled east on Pine Ridge and then turned right to go south on Goodlette and saw that there had been those little four-by-four, about 18-inch high stone or concrete pillars that were probably demarking the edge of plot N. They're not headstones, they're not grave markers, but they probably were just a little low fence or something to demark the edge of where that plot was. It's all that's left to really demonstrate where plot N is physically. And they noticed, as they drove by, that two of them had been damaged, appeared to be knocked over.

At that time, we said, "Well, what can we do?" We did some investigation to try to find out who might be responsible for the road maintenance, et cetera. That's when we discovered that that piece of property is a small parcel that's still privately owned, so we made contact with an heir of the owners of record, and really gain permission to be able to see if we could fix those pillars.

Then it got a little more complicated, because they weren't just knocked over. They were actually broken off. We've made some temporary repairs, again, with property owner permission, and are investigating ways, number one, to make a better and more permanent repair to the pillars and keep them upright and conserve them as best as possible. And then number two, perhaps to be able to see if we could manage plot N and plot W potentially, the same way that we manage plot B, which is the Rosemary Cemetery with the fence around it that we've been talking about a bit.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. And then with the discovery of the broken pillars and then the public-

Amanda Townsend:

Interest.

Joy Murphy:

Interest is a good word. The public interest in them. We started getting a lot of phone calls and things like that. And that leads me to the question of, how can the public support the efforts of the museum to maintain the Rosemary Cemetery? What do you need from the public? What do we need from the public, I should say, to help us along the way?

Amanda Townsend:

Part of it is, we love the involvement. We run museums, and we're really happy when people get excited about history. That's the long and the short of it. I would almost say that, definitely, we can take the interested people, we make sure that they've got good and accurate information, and that's Jennifer's job and my job. And then we'd love to hook them up with Rachael and see if they wanted to become Heritage Monitoring Scouts, or otherwise get involved in that legal and ethical activities that can help us maintain that history.

Joy Murphy:

Okay. Yeah, I like the HMS part. I think that would be a really good thing if we had people in the public who are helping us do that, who would just go by and check on it and let us know.

Amanda Townsend:

Yeah, absolutely. Surprisingly, Rosemary is not the only historic cemetery in town. Or in Collier County, I should say. There are a small handful of others. Most of them are privately owned. When we had our cemetery resource training program here in 2016, we actually had a participant who is a family member who has a historic cemetery in their family, still owned by the family, and was interested in learning what she could on how to properly care for that resource as well.

Joy Murphy:

Wow. Okay. We're getting ready wrap up, but just a few... I'll just leave some space here to talk about maybe future plans for the cemetery, what we would love to do with it. And any myths, I guess is a good word, that people have called us with or we've heard out in public that we'd like to take a little time here to dispel.

Amanda Townsend:

Sure. I think one of the myths that is a little persistent, and sometimes it even tickles my brain just a little bit, because if you're interested in historically, you love the mystery. Are there other burials? It is 20 acres of land, and now there're parking lots and office buildings and night clubs and whatever else there are in that strip. Did we build buildings over top of burials?

Part of the answer is we can't know for sure, but one of the things that gives me a little heart is, before one of those developments happened along that area, in the area that is east of W but west of N, before that construction happened, the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, which is a well-respected archaeology consultant, did do extensive research, as well as 70 shovel tests. Why they didn't use ground-penetrating radar, I don't know, but their report says... And this was in 1997. And they found absolutely no evidence of other burials. The idea that there are folks buried all up and down the south side of Pine Ridge Road between 41 and Goodlette-Frank is probably only fun speculation and not reality.

Jennifer Guida:

Yeah, I have a question for Rachael. Would GPR have been available in the mid to late-'90s?

Rachael Kangas:

It would've been. I would imagine that maybe the company didn't have a GPR unit. Yeah, there are lots of reasons that they might not have used it. Yeah, I would assume that they either didn't have access to it, or it was being used on another project, would be my guess.

Joy Murphy:

All right. Any other myths that you've heard, or any questions that you've received from the public that you might want to answer?

Amanda Townsend:

Yeah, nothing else I can think of. Like I said, the idea that there are other burials, or the idea that... And who knows? If there is a thread to trace back to identify those eight unknown people, we would welcome the public to bring that forward. We've worked pretty hard, and we haven't been able to come up with it yet, but that doesn't mean that the record is completely exhaustive.

Joy Murphy:

All right. If someone in the public either is interested in the HMS process or taking the CRPT training, or thinks they may have some information that might be beneficial, maybe about the burials, who do they contact?

Amanda Townsend:

Well, for CRPT training or HMS, it would be Florida Public Archaeology Network. And Rachael, what would be the best way to contact you all?

Rachael Kangas:

Link for our websites is FPAN.us, and all of our regions have Facebook pages and Instagram accounts as well. If you know what region you're in, you can find your specific region, or you can email any of us, and we would be happy to point you in the right direction.

Amanda Townsend:

Gotcha. And then if you've got very specific questions about Rosemary, or you think you've got some historical information that we have been missing, that would be contacting us at museums@colliermuseums.com, or area code (239)252-8476.

Joy Murphy:

All right. Any last-minute comments, concerns, from anyone?

Amanda Townsend:

No.

Jennifer Guida:

No.

Amanda Townsend:

Thank you so much for bringing it up.

Joy Murphy:

All right. Rachael, you okay?

Rachael Kangas:

Great to talk about. I would like to say, just hearing the history of the cemetery is so interesting and so amazing, and I'm glad that the county is looking into this. GPR is always a good way to find if there are potential graves, especially if this was a cemetery that wasn't preferred. Unfortunately, during this time, the cemetery was [inaudible 00:46:31], so I would imagine that people who were buried there were probably part of the Black community if it was the quote-unquote less desirable cemetery, unfortunately, which might lead to lack of documentation. Yeah, if anybody... I'm really curious to see if you have folks from the community who maybe know folks who were buried in the cemetery. And like I said, GPR is always a nice way to see if there's anything that could potentially be unmarked graves in any of the [inaudible 00:47:07].

Joy Murphy:

All right. Well, thank you Amanda, thank you Jen, thank you Rachael, for joining us.

Amanda Townsend:

Our pleasure.

Jennifer Guida:

Thank you, Joy.

Joy Murphy:

This has been a very, very interesting conversation. I always like conversations where it's something I don't know a lot about, because then I get to learn something new, which I did today. All right. Thank you all for listening to The Stories We Tell, and I hope you join us for our next podcast episode. Have a great day.