



February 8, 2022

Justin Patton, MAA, RPA  
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Re: Assessment and Recommendations  
Report: Scott Cemetery Anomaly Truthing, Broad Run, Prince William County, Virginia  
(Goode and Goode 2022)

### **Assessment**

I take issue with the description of Ron Turner's work on page 7 of the report as possibly finding cemeteries; "Turner collected GPS coordinates for over 400 possible cemetery locations..." I have personally visited approximately 100 cemeteries found by Mr. Turner, including the Scott Cemetery, and found evidence of human burials. Suggesting that Mr. Turner's surveys identified "possible" burials shows bias and a predilection by the report's authors to summarily dismiss Mr. Turner's survey results. Further, the "missing details" referenced on page 8 of this report were beyond the scope of Mr. Turner's project (see copied paragraph below).

Page 8 (portion). Scott Cemetery Anomaly Truthing, Broad Run, Prince William County, Virginia

"The 1996-2001 survey was an important effort to establish the location of know cemeteries and potential cemeteries. Yet there were vital details missing from the survey results that could have facilitated continued research and verification of potential cemetery locations. Missing details include the physical characteristics of the cemetery and markers. No additional information about the fieldstone markers (lithic type, inscriptions, epitaphs) was reported. Lithic types and descriptions are important to note, as are the relationship to local bedrock types and natural rock outcrops. Turner does not mention any ground depressions or ornamental vegetation. No dates or surnames were noted, either from inscriptions or from oral and documentary histories. There is no discussion of why the cemetery was called the "Scott Cemetery." No informant names or interview notes are provided. No background research into deed records, death certificates, church burial records, or other common sources of cemetery related information was conducted. No cemetery map was created to depict ground conditions, locations of markers, and associated features."

The report's authors provided an historic context for mortuary practices (burial practices) in the Mid-Atlantic regions and their context includes observations on African American burial practices. However, their reporting focuses on searching for burials with Christian characteristics. The Thoroughfare Community is of mixed-race (white, African-American, mulatto, Native American)

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and accordingly the burials in the Scott Cemetery could exhibit attributes of one or all of these cultures.

It is unclear based on the report's findings, whether the A horizon or the Ap horizon was completely disturbed by the removal trash, the use of heavy equipment (dumpsters and trucks associated with the delivery and removal of dumpsters), the use of the Forester to clear this parcel of vegetation and possibly the depth of the excavations. If an intact A horizon or an intact Ap horizon was present, it would have presented as a homogenous soil horizon. As reported, the authors observed some mottled soil profiles while other soil profiles align with the soil report in the Web Soil Survey, 2021.

Excavation of the 11 anomalies removed the A or Ap horizon soil down to the top of the B horizon soil, in two phases. The authors report that no features (difference in soil color or soil compaction) that exhibited human burials were within the 11 test areas and the majority of the GPR results were tree roots.

The authors did not offer recommendations on the remainder of the land in the general area identified as the Scott Cemetery, as reported by Mr. Ron Turner. While this current effort tested anomalies identified during the remote sensing effort, it did not clear or ensure that other portions of the cemetery area (reported by Ron Turner) contain human burials or is void of human burials.

## Recommendations

Additional archaeology is necessary, in order to ensure there are no human burials present.

Before additional archaeology, conduct a public meeting to discuss the results of the remote sensing and anomaly testing and next steps.

Research death records, obituaries and family bibles of descendants and residents in the Thoroughfare to determine who might have been buried in the Scott Cemetery and the number of burials.

Revise the report and add in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph on Page 2 that clearing of this parcel was performed with a forester attachment and that heavy equipment was used to haul away trash and, or junk.

In light of my statements on Mr. Turner's scope of work consider revising the statement on page 8 regarding his "missing details."