

What is Eastern Cemetery?

Eastern Cemetery, located at 641 Baxter Avenue, is one of Louisville's oldest cemeteries (established 1848). However, in 1989, it surfaced that mass overburial had been occurring at Eastern Cemetery by the Louisville Crematory and Cemeteries Company. It is estimated that there are about 138,000 bodies buried in 16,000 graves. Shortly thereafter, Eastern Cemetery was abandoned and became the victim of deterioration and vandalism for over 20 years.

Who are the Friends of Eastern Cemetery?

In 2013, our volunteer group the Friends of Eastern Cemetery (FOEC), armed with trash bags and a single mower, began maintaining the grounds. In 2015, FOEC officially became a 501(c)(3) non-profit to raise money for the care of the cemetery. In 2019, we are still striving to create a self-sustainable model for continued upkeep of Eastern Cemetery. It is difficult to maintain a 29-acre cemetery with an all-volunteer workforce. The grass, vegetation, and invasive plants can grow almost four feet in two weeks during spring and summer months. Over the past couple of years, we have sustained setbacks, including total theft of our landscape equipment.



2013

2016

2013

2018

How can you help?

After six years of maintaining Eastern, our biggest fear is that it will return to its prior state. While FOEC is truly dedicated, we are a short-term solution for Eastern Cemetery. The following problems require solutions to ensure Eastern Cemetery has a multigenerational plan that will outlive all of us and will enable FOEC to focus on the preservation, interpretation, and public education of historic Eastern Cemetery.

- An entity responsible for management of grass cutting and trimming detail for the cemetery grounds.
- Obtain possession of the house at the front gate to Eastern (original crematorium at 639 Baxter Avenue), enabling the front gate to be closed, which it currently cannot be.
- Install functioning gates at the front entrance and/or Payne Street entrance, establish open/closed hours, and promote a secure after hour's environment.
- Paving the driveway that runs throughout Eastern Cemetery will serve as a visual enhancement and protect visitors from risk of harm due to cracks, potholes, and uneven surfaces currently present.
- Access to water in the cemetery for visitors and volunteers promotes health and wellness.
- Posting signs about the rules and regulations of the cemetery (dog care, hours of operation, etc.) to educate on proper behavior. Provide guidance to let people know whom to contact if they have questions and reinforce that there is an active interest in the cemetery.

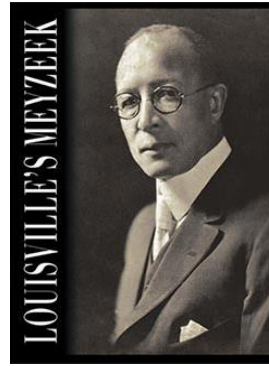
The maintenance and preservation of Eastern Cemetery will be a great asset to our community as a whole; however, it will truly benefit the families the most. These families who learned in 1989 that their loved ones' remains were severely mistreated; that some headstones were completely removed; and empty plots they purchased to spend eternity, interred near their loved one, cannot be used because they are not empty. We cannot change the grave abuse committed by the Louisville Crematory and Cemeteries Company, but we can ensure that the final resting place of over 138,000 individuals is better protected and respected.

Some of the Notable African Americans buried at Eastern Cemetery



Courtesy of FOEC

Washington Spradling, Sr. (1805-1868) was born into slavery in Kentucky. A barber by trade, he bought and sold real estate making him one of the richest African Americans in Louisville. He helped establish an African American presence in the Russell Neighborhood.



Courtesy of Jefferson County Public Schools

Albert E. Meyzeek (1872-1963) was a Civil Rights activist as well as a principal and teacher at several Louisville schools. He was a president of the Kentucky Negro Educational Association as well as a successful businessman. Meyzeek Middle School was named in his honor.

Dr. William J. Simmons (1849-1890) was the second president of Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (later named Simmons College in his honor). He was an African American rights and education activist. Simmons was born into slavery in Charleston, South Carolina.



Courtesy of FOEC

Georgia Anne Nugent (1864-1940) was the co-founder of the Woman's Improvement Club (renamed the Georgia A. Nugent Improvement Club) and the first president of the Kentucky Association of Colored Women's Clubs. She served as an officer in the National Association of Colored Women. She was a teacher for the Louisville Colored Schools. Her sister **Alice Emma Nugent** (1890-1971) was a teacher for the Louisville Colored Schools. She was active in many of the same organizations as her sister Georgia but in less visible roles.



Courtesy of Kentucky African American Encyclopedia

Mamie E. (Lee) Steward (1858-1930) was the co-founder and president of the Baptist Women's Education Convention and of the Kentucky Association of Colored Women's Clubs. She was also an officer of the National Association of Colored Women and head of the music department at Simmons College.



Courtesy of Kentucky Historical Society

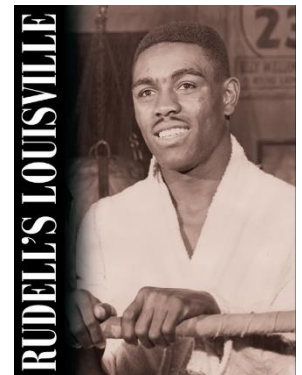
Charles Anderson, Jr. (1907-1960) was the first African American elected to the Kentucky House of Representatives (1935), the first African American legislator in the South since Reconstruction, and the first African American Assistant Commonwealth Attorney for Jefferson County (1946).

Fannie R. (Hicks) Givens (1864-1947) was one of the first African American policewomen in Louisville. She was president of the Baptist Women's Missionary Convention as well as head of the art department at Simmons College. Her students' work was exhibited at the 1893 World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago.



Courtesy of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority

Rudell Stitch (1933-1960) was a welterweight boxer from Louisville who received two Carnegie Hero Fund Metals. One in 1958 for saving Joseph Schifcar in the Ohio River, and one in 1960 for attempting to save boxer Charles Oliver in the Ohio River. They both drowned June 5, 1960.



Courtesy of KET

There are many more not highlighted on this list.