

Unearthing Deep South Narratives From Texas Graveyard

Nestled amidst the bustling campus of the University of Houston, lies a hidden gem that holds a wealth of untold stories from the Deep South. The historic graveyard, located on the west side of the university, is a poignant reminder of the lives and struggles of those who came before us.



Cemeteries of Ambivalent Desire: Unearthing Deep South Narratives from a Texas Graveyard (University of Houston Series in Mexican American Studies, Sponsored ... Center for Mexican American Studies

Book 5) by Dewey Lambdin

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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In the 19th century, the land on which the university now stands was part of a plantation owned by a wealthy slaveholder named John Austin. Austin's slaves worked the land, tending to the cotton and sugar crops that made him rich. When Austin died in 1835, he left behind a vast estate, including

his slaves. His will stipulated that his slaves be freed and given land upon his death.

However, Austin's will was not honored. His heirs refused to free the slaves, and they continued to be worked on the plantation. In 1865, the slaves were finally emancipated after the Civil War. They left the plantation and settled in the area that is now the University of Houston.

Many of the former slaves who settled in the area were buried in the graveyard. Their gravesites are marked with simple headstones, many of which are now worn and weathered. The headstones bear the names of the deceased, their dates of birth and death, and often a brief inscription. These inscriptions offer a glimpse into the lives of the people who lived and died in this community.

One of the most poignant gravesites in the graveyard is that of a young woman named Sarah. Sarah was born into slavery in 1845. She died in 1866, just one year after the end of the Civil War. Sarah's headstone bears a simple inscription: "Sarah, a slave." This inscription is a reminder of the horrors of slavery and the dehumanizing treatment of African Americans during that era.

Another notable gravesite in the graveyard is that of a man named Jake. Jake was born a slave in 1825. He worked on the plantation until he was emancipated in 1865. After the war, Jake became a successful farmer and businessman. He owned a farm and a store, and he was active in the community. Jake's headstone bears a lengthy inscription that tells the story of his life. The inscription reads: "Jake, a slave, a soldier, a farmer, a

businessman, a father, a friend." This inscription is a testament to the resilience and determination of African Americans in the face of adversity.

The graveyard at the University of Houston is a valuable historical resource. It is a place where we can learn about the lives and struggles of those who came before us. It is a place where we can remember the horrors of slavery and the fight for freedom and equality. And it is a place where we can celebrate the resilience and determination of the human spirit.

In recent years, the graveyard has been the focus of renewed interest. In 2019, the university launched a project to restore and preserve the graveyard. The project includes cleaning and repairing the headstones, as well as installing new fencing and landscaping. The university also plans to create a website and mobile app that will provide visitors with information about the graveyard and its history.

The restoration of the graveyard is a fitting tribute to the people who are buried there. It is a way to honor their memory and to ensure that their stories will continue to be told for generations to come.



Further Reading

- Restoring Forgotten History Preserves Slavery and Emancipation Stories at UH
- The Forgotten Graveyard at the University of Houston
- Historic Houston cemetery gets a facelift



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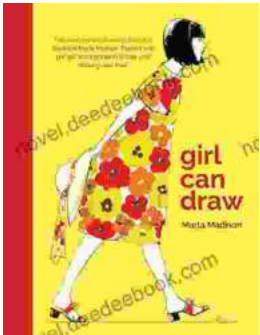
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