

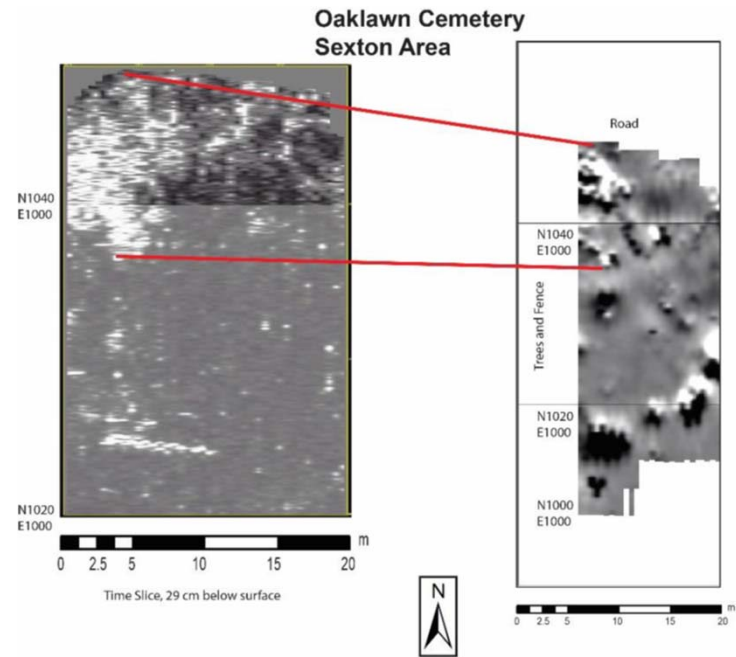
# 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre Investigation Proposed Test Excavations and Additional Geophysical Survey at Oaklawn Cemetery

**Presented to the Public Oversight Committee for Consideration  
February 3, 2020**

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# Geophysical Results: Sextons Area



# Proposed Test Excavations: Goals

- 1) Establish the presence or absence of human remains;
  - 2) Determine the nature of the interments (if present);
  - 3) Obtain data to help inform the ensuing steps in the investigation—including appropriate recovery efforts.
- No exhumation proposed at this time.
  - Any human remains that are uncovered during excavation will be treated respectfully.
  - Excavations may only proceed once the appropriate medicolegal documentation has been obtained.

# Proposed Testing Plan

- Accommodations will be made to allow safe observation of this phase of the investigation by interested members of the Public Oversight Committee.
- Accommodations will be made to honor requests for ceremonies, prayers, or similar observations that do not otherwise impede the investigation.
- Media access will be coordinated with the City.
- The City will attempt to notify family members of individuals who are interred near the proposed excavation area.

## Proposed Testing Plan (con't.)

- Expose an 8x8-foot area near the center at the base of the geophysical anomaly.
- Mechanical excavation to remove the top layers of soil over the targeted excavation area. Then, excavation will continue by hand.
- Mechanical excavations monitored by 2-3 qualified archaeologists and/or forensic anthropologists.
- Hand-excavations completed by a team of team of professional forensic anthropologists and/or archaeologists.
- Hand-excavated fill will be screened adjacent to the excavation block.

## Proposed Testing Plan (con't.)

- If burials are present, we will expose the remains adequately to assess:
  - the minimum number of individuals (MNI) in the excavation area;
  - contextual clues for the burial(s);
  - extent to which people were interred in containers (or not); and
  - maintain a state of preservation.
  - Other observations may be made depending on the condition of the remains.

## Proposed Testing Plan (con't.)

- Intrusive burials are not expected, but if encountered, accommodations will be made to address them appropriately and with utmost sensitivity.
- If such burials are encountered and they are not associated with a violent event, excavations will be adjusted to leave them in place if possible.
- If removal is necessary to allow continued excavation, such exhumed burials will be re-interred following Oklahoma state laws, preferably within Oaklawn Cemetery according to their existing practices.
- If the remains appear to have been associated with another criminal event, they will be further investigated by law enforcement and Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (Ok SS 21-1168.4).

## Proposed Testing Plan (con't.)

- Mechanical excavation may be accomplished in 1-2 days.
- Hand excavations would likely require an additional 4-8 days.
- Excavations will be covered by tarp at the end of each day and security measures enacted.
- Detailed documentation and total station mapping will be compiled throughout.
- Upon completion of the excavations, geotextile fabric and wood panels (or similar) will be emplaced in a manner to facilitate ease of later re-excavation.
- The removed overburden will be returned to the excavation block



## Proposed Testing Plan (con't.)

- Daily on-site meetings will be coordinated with interested members of the Public Oversight Committee.
- A summary briefing will be compiled and distributed to the Public Oversight Committee within two days of completion of the test excavations.
- A meeting will be arranged to further discuss the results with the Public Oversight Committee and a timeline for completion of a full report of this phase of the investigations.



# Comparative Example

- 19<sup>th</sup>-century Cemetery at Eastern State Hospital in Lexington, Kentucky
- Larger than the anomaly at Oaklawn
- Roughly 56 x 14 m (~184 x 50 ft)
- 62 individual graves, 28 mass graves with 97 individuals, and comingled remains of 27 individuals (186 total individuals)

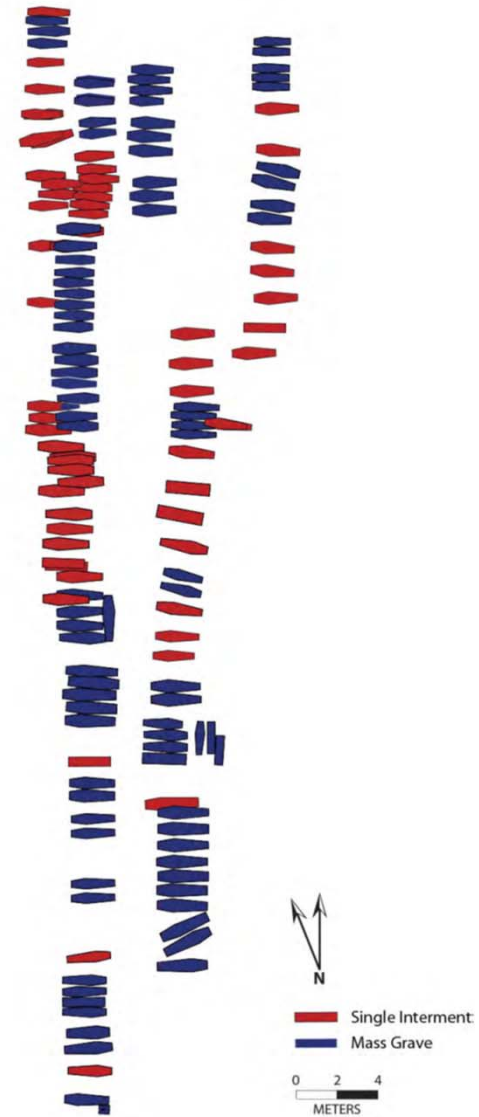
Image courtesy of David Pollack, Kentucky Archaeological Survey



# Eastern State Hospital Cemetery

- Both single and mass graves present in the cemetery.

Image courtesy of David Pollack and Greg Maggard,  
Kentucky Archaeological Survey



# Eastern State Hospital

- Example of a mass grave associated with cholera epidemic
- ~7 x 2 m (~22 X 6.5 ft)
- 11 individuals (one was earlier)

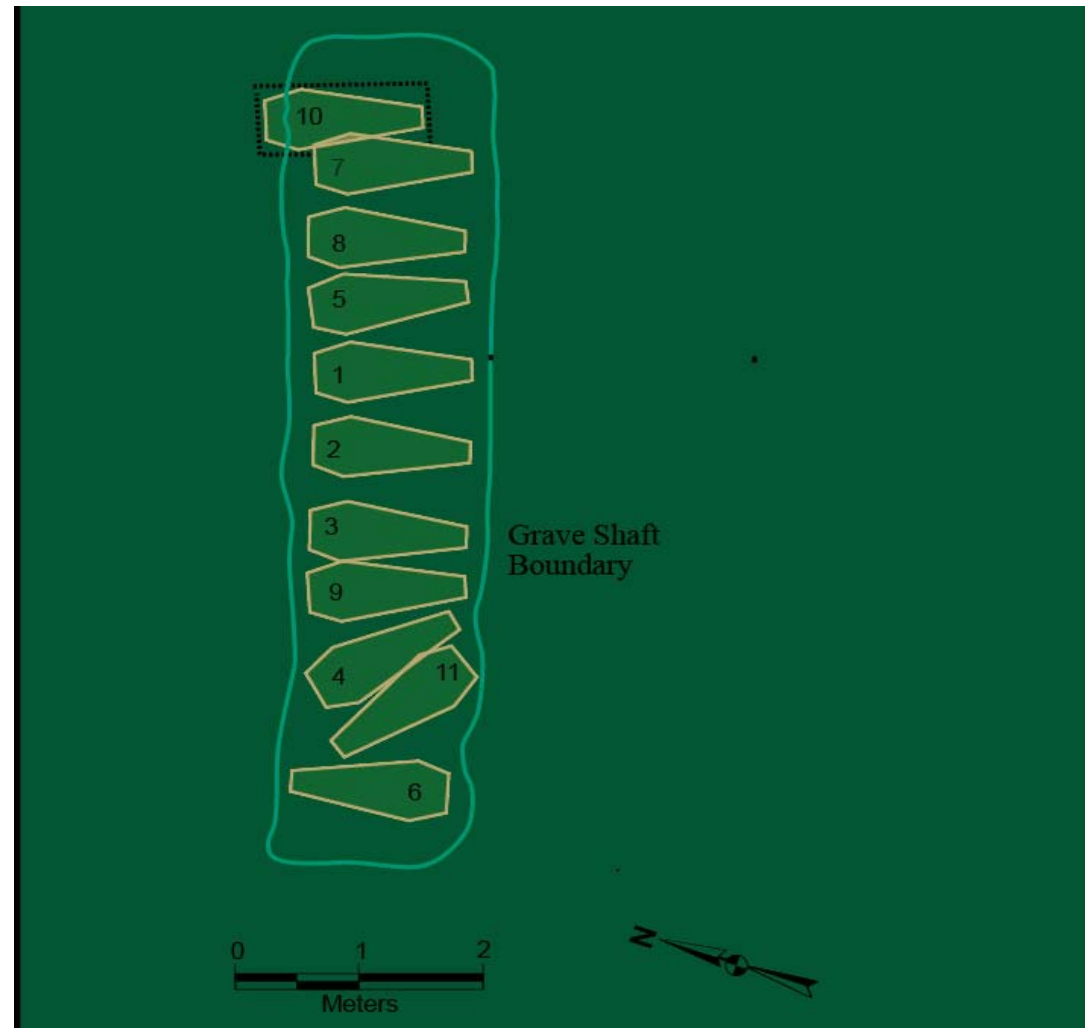
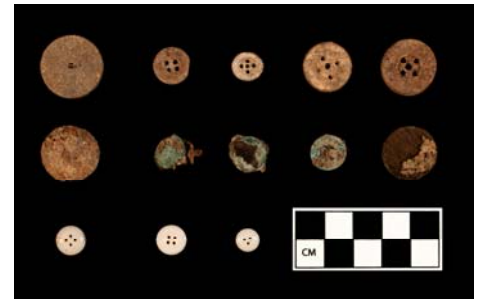
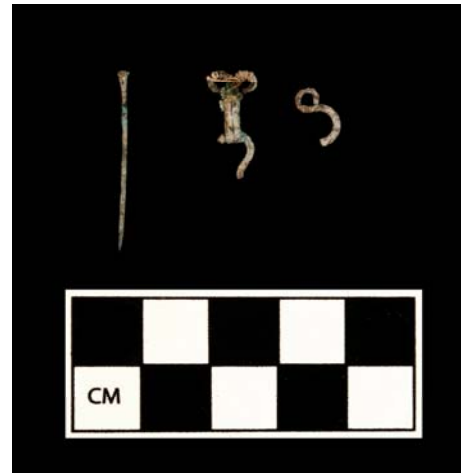
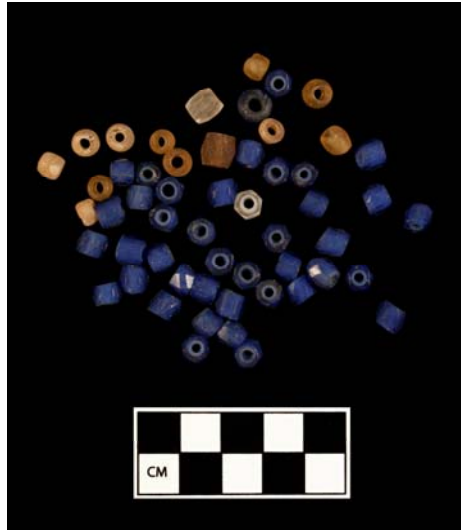


Image courtesy of David Pollack and Greg Maggard,  
Kentucky Archaeological Survey

# Coffin Nails



Images courtesy of David Pollack, Kentucky Archaeological Survey



# Examples of Personal Adornment

Images courtesy of David Pollack, Kentucky Archaeological Survey

# How You Can Help...

- What might your loved one have been wearing the day that they died?
  - Typical attire
  - Suspenders
  - Jewelry
  - Belt with a distinctive buckle
  - Hair combs
  - Pocket knife



# Additional Geophysical Survey: Clyde Eddy Area

