Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol4/iss2/8
**Lay Down Body: Living History in African American Cemeteries**


This volume is concerned with African-American cemeteries: their significance in African-American culture, their importance in genealogical studies, their place in African-American history, and their associations with prominent African Americans.

The authors are both attorneys by profession with a deep interest in African-American history and culture. In addition, Hughes is general manager of the Detroit Memorial Park Association. Dr. Michael L. Blakey, Director of the African Burial Ground Project, prepared the Forward, and Westley W. Law, a Savannah civil rights and historic preservation activist, contributed the Preface.

The volume's first section is the one that will be of greatest interest to readers of *A-A A*. Entitled "Sites, Superstition, and Stories," it is principally concerned with the history of African-American burial, discussing archaeologically-investigated cemeteries and Africanisms among burial customs.

The bulk of the book presents what might be called a travel-log of African-American, and African-Canadian, cemeteries, most in current use. The location, setting, and prominent occupants of each is discussed. The final three sections address genealogy for beginners, burial societies and lodges, and contemporary funeral and burial customs, respectively. The genealogy section includes a chapter on preserving historic cemeteries that offers a wealth of practical advice on documenting and protecting cemetery sites.

This is a volume full of interesting, and sometimes surprising, cultural and spiritual information.