Toco Cemetery and the McGhee Plantation Homesite, Monroe County, Tennessee: History, Biographies, Interpretation, and Cemetery Preservation Recommendations



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Prepared for Tennessee State Parks

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MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

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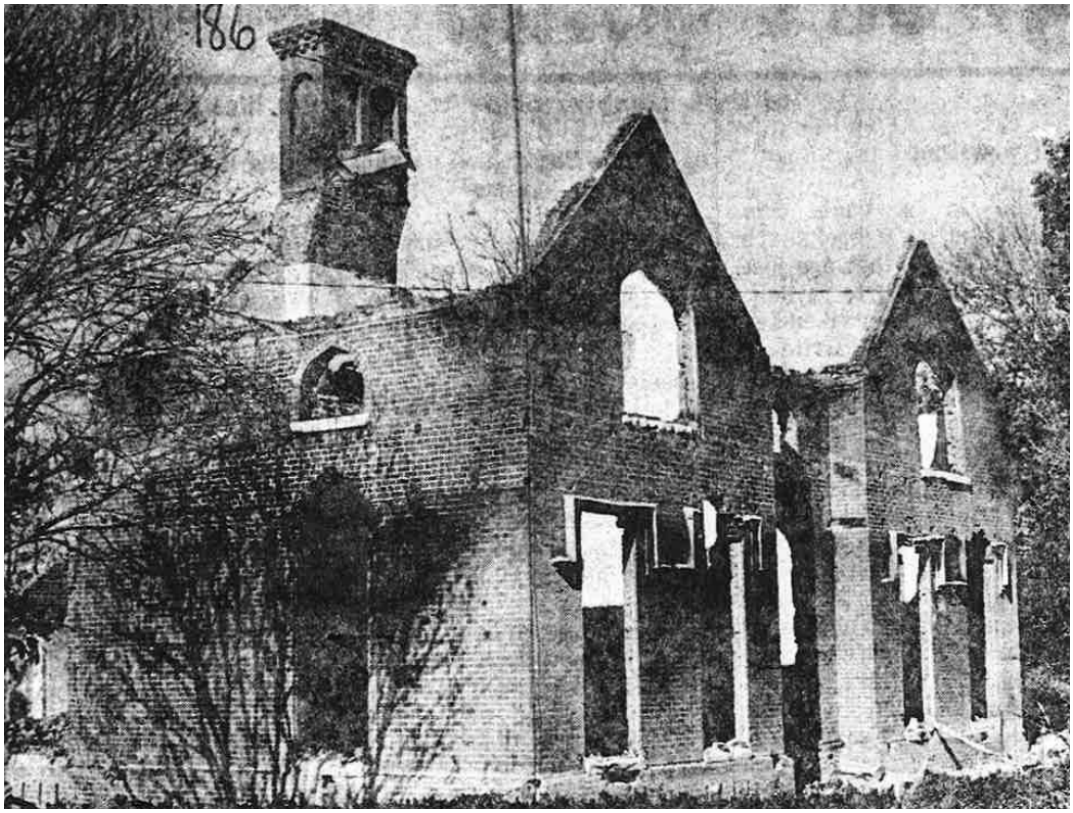
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Project Overview

The McGhee–Carson site—sometimes referred to as the McGhee–Callaway–Carson property, Tuskega, or Toqua—is a 475.5-acre property located in Vonore, Tennessee. The property has a long and complex history, spanning hunter-gatherer occupation as early as 7500 B.C., the Cherokee Overhill Towns of the seventeenth century, post-Revolutionary settlement, the enslavement of African Americans, tenant farming, and later ownership by both state and federal governments. Currently stewarded by the staff of Fort Loudoun State Historic Area (FLSHA) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), the McGhee–Carson site is slated to become a regularly interpreted site within the state park system.

The property consists of Cherokee lands, which were acquired by the McGhee family over the course of the early 19th century. At one point, the property reportedly spanned from present-day Vonore to Chota. The Tuskega property was sold by Charles McClung McGhee to Thomas H. Callaway in 1870, and after Callaway's death the same year, the land became the property of the Callaway-Carson family.



Photograph of the Mansion After the Fire. Sweet Water Advocate, November 15, 1984. Newspapers.com.

The property remained in the family for the next century until the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) arrived in the valley in the 1970s, where the agency gained ownership of the property. With the construction of the Tellico Reservoir in 1979, a majority of the property–save the higher elevated portions of the property–flooded. Ownership was transferred to the Tennessee Department of Conservation in 1980, with plans for adaptive-reuse of the mansion constructed under Charles for use by the State. However, when the Tuskega mansion burned down in 1984, such plans were abandoned. Today, the property is under the stewardship of the Fort Loudoun State Historic Area staff and the TWRA. In recent years, much research has been conducted on the site, with occasional history programs held at the homesite and cemetery.

In 2023, Richard R. Jones, PhD, and an archeological team from Lee University worked with park ranger Joseph Gamble to conduct an archeological survey of the McGhee-Carson property. The team provided a historical overview of the site, documented and assessed the condition of the property's archeological features, and mapped the homesite property, Carson-era farm fixtures, and Toco cemetery. In 2024, graduate student Miranda Barnett from Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) conducted research on the cemetery. In the Fall of 2024, Tennessee State Parks requested a site visit from the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (TCWNHA) to survey the condition of the log cabin at the Tuskega homesite and extant features on the property, including the Toco Cemetery. This report–authored by MTSU professor and director of the Center for Historic Preservation, Dr. Carrol Van West–recommended that for the plantation, park staff, "Continue to work with state park officials on interpretive products," as well as, "Explore possibility of partnership grant support for interpretive products focused on the cemetery."[1]

In the Fall of 2024, John Wallace, a graduate student in public history at MTSU, learned of the cemetery through courses with Dr. West. He later collaborated with the Ford Loudoun staff, the CHP, and TCWNHA to fulfill some of the recommendations made in West's CHP report: creating interpretive material for the cemetery. This report is the result of research and content created by John Wallace. Drawing from prior work done by Miranda Barnett, Joseph Gamble, Dr. Carrol Van West, and the Jones Report, this report provides a site history of the McGhee-Carson property and Toco cemetery, biographies of individuals buried at the cemetery, recommendations for how to interpret the site, and a preservation plan for the cemetery.

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[1] Carroll Van West, *Tuskega Plantation Assessment, Fort Loudon State Park, Monroe County* (Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, 2024), 15.

Site History

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *Due to the 2025 Project scope, this history focuses heavily on the McGhee family era, with particular interest in settlement, enslavement, the Civil War, Charles McClung McGhee, and the cemetery. This is in no way comprehensive, and this site history serves as a launching point for further research for programming. Recommendations on avenues for further research to expand this site's history can be found under "Further Research and Projects."*

Establishment of the McGhee Properties (1783-1809)

Following the Revolutionary War, the State of North Carolina passed the Land Act of 1783, opening its western territories for purchase and pension through land grants. This land consisted of territory that makes up a vast majority of the modern-day state of Tennessee, except for the Cherokee-owned Southeastern portions of the state and military reservations in the Cumberland River Valley. Among the land for sale were thousands of acres in the Little Tennessee River Valley area.[2]

Between 1782 and 1783, White families began settling in the area that makes up modern-day Blount County, Tennessee, a region that bordered Cherokee territory.[3] The McGhee family was one such family to settle in the valley, when Barclay I and Jane McClanahan McGhee emigrated–likely from Pennsylvania–to the region in 1787.[4] A year later, John "the Pioneer" Charles McGhee (1788-1851) was born to the couple near modern-day Maryville.[5] The family worked as merchants, with Barclay being licensed as early as 1794 to conduct trade with the Cherokee boarding the county.[6] He further worked as a contractor supplying the United States Army stationed at the garrison at the Tellico Blockhouse between 1797 and 1798.[7] The McGhee family also managed the Blairs Ferry, which was later renamed Lowery and finally Niles Ferry. It was located "... at the confluence of the Tellico and the Little Tennessee River…" near where

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[2] Tennessee Genealogy, "Early History of Blount County, Tennessee," July 25, 2022, Tennessee Genealogy, https://tennesseegenealogy.org/blount/early-history-of-blount-county-tennessee/; Irene M. Griffey, "Land Grants," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, published by the Tennessee Historical Society, October 8, 2017, https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/land-grants/; See the "History" section of *McGhee-Carson Survey Fort Loudoun State Park Vonore, Tennessee 2023* for an in-depth look at the pre-white settlement history of the site.
[3] Tennessee Genealogy, "Early History."
[4] William Joseph MacArthur Jr., *Charles McClung McGhee, Southern Financier* (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1975), 1;. Their daughter Rachel Elizabeth McGhee Wallace (1785-1845) likely emigrated along with the couple. It is unknown if their other child, Alexander McGhee (1787-1841) was alive by this point. Their other children, Matthew Wallace McGhee (1790-1836) and Sarah McGhee Purkey (1798-1880), were born after the family relocated.
[5] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 2.
[6] Alberta Brewer and Carson Brewer, *Valley So Wild: A Folk History* (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1975), 90.
[7] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 2.

Niles Ferry Bridge exists today. Treaties for the ferry indicate that it was in operation at least as early as 1791.[8] According to family tradition, Barclay purchased a large tract of land along the Little Tennessee River in modern-day Monroe County in 1803. This tract of land–alongside his many landholdings in Maryville–possibly made up the 640 acres of land from the State of Tennessee owned by Barclay that is mentioned in John McGhee's will.[9]

Enslavement and the McGhee Children (1809-1860)

In 1809, John McGhee established the McGhee Plantation property–commonly referred to as Toqua–with a land grant of 98 acres along the Six Mile Creek.[10] In the early 19th century, John used his position with the Cherokee Agency to acquire hundreds of additional acres of Cherokee land south of the Little Tennessee River, becoming one of the state's first and most significant landholders.[11] Family tradition claims John owned between 15 and 78 thousand acres in East Tennessee.[12] The author believes the number of acres is closer to 15 thousand, but the 78 thousand figure is not entirely impossible, considering the accessibility of land grants to a citizen of John McGhee's standing. By 1836, the property reportedly stretched from present-day Vonore to Chota, Tennessee.[13] John lived on the property in a "... two-story five-bay log house, with gable-end limestone chimneys. It was covered in a weatherboard with an unadorned one-story Greek Revival-influenced portico…" which was situated near the Tennessee River.[14]

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[8] Margaret Belding de Wetter, "The McGhee Family," in *Genealogy Containing Facts Relating to the Following Families: Niles, Humes, McGhee, Russell, McClung, Christian, White, McClanahan, Campbell, Gervais, O'Keefe* ([place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified], 1987), 2.

[9] *Will Books, 1825–1869, Monroe County, Tennessee*, prepared by the Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration (Salt Lake City, UT: Historical Records Survey, 1940), 52-56.

[10] West, *Plantation Assessment,* 2; Richard R. Jones and Joseph Gamble, *40MR761 McGhee-Carson Survey, Fort Loudoun State Park, Vonore, Tennessee*, Archaeology Permit no. 001404 (Cleveland, TN: Lee University, 2023), 6; Family tradition suggests that Barclay's 640 acre tract of land was the beginnings of the McGhee property, however, both West and Gamble propose John's 98 acre land grant was the starting point of the property.

[11] See the "History" section of *McGhee-Carson Survey Fort Loudoun State Park Vonore, Tennessee 2023* for a more detailed explanation of the earlier histories of the McGhee-Carson site.

[12] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 88.

[13] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 2.

[14] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 88; West, *Plantation Assessment*, 3; Photos of the home are under John McGhee's file in Sharepoint.



From Left to Right: Portrait of Margaret White McGhee Niles. "The McGhee Family" by Margaret Belding de Wetter, undated; Portrait of Barclay II McGhee. Unknown creator, undated. Findagrave.com; Portrait of Charles McClung McGhee. Unknown creator, undated. Fundagrave.[15]

John married Elizabeth "Betsy" Jones McClung, a member of the influential McClung family in Knoxville. John and Betsy had three children: Margaret White McGhee Niles (1821-1905), Barclay II McGhee (1823-1856), and Charles McClung McGhee (1828-1907). By the time the three children "were ready to be married," John gave each of his children a plantation property in proximity to his own, each with a name inspired by Cherokee place names.

"Tuskega" was given to Charles McClung McGhee and included much of the property encompassing the Fort Loudon site and the land that comprises the McGhee-Carson property today. Further upstream was "Toqua," which was given to Barclay II McGhee. Oral history suggests that "Toqua" is likely the original "Toqua" property owned by Barclay I McGhee, likely because Barclay I was John's eldest son.[16] Downstream and across from the river from the fort was "Tallequah," which was given to Margaret. This property included the aforementioned Niles ferry, with Margaret and her family managing the ferry for nearly a century.[17] When John died in 1851, the three children received the rest of John's landholdings and the people he enslaved. John was buried at the Niles-McGhee Cemetery near the Tellico Blockhouse and the site where the Saint Andrews Church was once located.[18]

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[15] de Wetter, "The McGhee Family," 2-3; "Barclay McGhee," *Find a Grave* memorial no. 73616527, accessed January 12, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/73616527/barclay-mcghee; "Charles McClung McGhee," Find a Grave memorial no. 8281257, accessed January 12, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/8281257/charles_mcclung-mcghee.

[16] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 91.

[17] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 90.

[18] "John Charles McGhee," *Find a Grave* memorial no. 73619544, accessed January 12, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/73619544/john-charles-mcghee.

The McGhee family utilized enslaved labor to work their respective plantations. The exact year the McGhees first enslaved people on their properties is unknown. Oral histories note John McGhee's utilization of enslaved African American labor "to work the fields" of John's land.[19] The earliest dated record of the McGhee family's enslavement of African Americans is the will of John McGhee, which was first created in 1849, in which John lists the names of 85 people that he would leave to his family in the event of his passing.[20] In the first slave schedules of 1850, Charles, Barclay, and Margaret–at that point Margaret Humes–are listed as enslaving 67, 40, and 31 people respectively.[21] John McGhee also appears in the 1850 census and is listed as enslaving 20 people. This number of enslaved people is a far cry from the 85 individuals listed in his will. Upon his passing in 1851, John left 26 enslaved people to Barclay, 30 to Charles, and 25 to Margaret.[22] Furthermore, John included a clause in his will to free two people he enslaved –James and Sally (Sallie) McGhee–to whom he gave two other enslaved individuals, Barclay and Sonafu.[23] By 1861, Charles enslaved 77 people and Margaret 17.[24] Margaret's second husband, J. W. J. Niles, first appears in the slave schedules in 1861, enslaving 6 people.



Portrait of Mary Keller Henley McGhee (1820-1888). Unknown creator, unknown date. FindAGrave.com.[25]

[19] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 89-91.
[20] Monroe County (Tennessee) County Clerk, *Wills, vols. 1–4, 1833–1922*, Will of John McGhee, 86–92, in *Tennessee, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1779–2008*, Ancestry.com database (Lehi, UT: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015), 89.
[21] *1850 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Monroe County, Tennessee*, Barclay McGhee, *Ancestry.com* database.
[22] If the will was fully executed as listed and no enslaved people escaped or otherwise passed away, this is the number by 1851 that each mcghee would have at one point enslaved: Barclay: 50, Charles: 97, and Margaret: 56.
[23] Monroe County (Tennessee) Wills, John McGhee, 86–92.
[24] Barbara Barnby et al., *Vonore: Yesterday and Today* (Vonore, TN: Vonore Historical Society, 1991), 60.
[25] "Mary Keller McGhee," *Find a Grave* memorial no. 73622116, accessed January 12, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/73622116/mary_keller-mcghee.

In his 1853 will, Barclay II expressed the following sentiment regarding the people he enslaved: “It is my desire that my negroes whom I view as human beings, should be kept in the family during good behavior and humanely treated.”[26] He further instructed that upon his death, those he enslaved be provided with farmland and that an agent be appointed to “attend to them.”[27] Although Barclay II claimed to view the people he enslaved as human beings and supposedly planned for their welfare after his death, he never freed them from enslavement and continued to profit from their forced labor during his lifetime. Barclay died in Chattanooga in 1856, and while public notices characterized his death as a suicide, the genealogical record of De Welter claims Barclay was “killed by ‘Bushwackers.’”[28] His property was left to his wife, Mary Keller Henley McGhee (1820-1888), and was divided amongst his children.[29]

Despite Barclay’s efforts, an 1861 advertisement shows that Barclay’s children pursued hiring out people they enslaved to the highest bidder. These people are described as “slaves belonging to the minor heirs of B. McGhee,” meaning there is a high probability these enslaved people were those also enslaved by Barclay.[30]



The “Still Standing” cabin at the Tuskega Homesite. Photograph by author, 2025.

[26] *Will Books, Monroe County, Tennessee*, 87–88.
[27] *Will Books, Monroe County, Tennessee*, 87.
[28] De Welter, “The McGhee Family,” 4.
[29] *Will Books, Monroe County, Tennessee*, 87.
[30] “Notice. - Negroes for Hire,” *The Athens Post*, September 13, 1861, 3.

The 1860 slave schedule for Charles McClung McGhee lists 15 “slave houses” at Tuskega.[31] While the exact location of all of these dwellings is currently unknown, oral histories suggest that a building where the “still standing” cabin on the property was once the spot of a cabin for the enslaved, specifically houseworkers. Dr. Carroll Van West, director of the Center for Historic Preservation, proposed the following about the cabin:

> “Since the building is positioned a few yards behind the stone remnants of a kitchen, it may have served as a dwelling for McGhee’s rapidly expanding number of enslaved workers.”[32]

While many easily-accessible records and material evidence exist highlighting the scale of the McGhees’ enslavement ventures, the type and scope of the plantations’ exports are not as evident. Only some general information is known about the farm’s businesses. Throughout the 1850s, both Barclay II and Charles posted advertisements in the Athens Post and Knoxville Statesman, respectively, for the sale of beef-related products. Barclay II advertised the sale of Durham calves, and Charles advertised the sale of beef fat.[33] When documenting the impressment of food and animals from the Tuskega plantation in 1863, W. H. Dawson describes soldiers impressing bacon, salted pork, wheat, corn, hay, potatoes, and mutton. The entry also mentions the impression of mules, hogs, and sheep.[34] With Charles later entering the meat-packing industry in Knoxville, it is possible that meat-related products were a major export of Charles’s plantation. Joseph Gamble, a previous Ford Loudoun ranger who researched the site before this project, proposed that the high number of enslaved individuals, especially young children, suggests that the profit of the property was less from agricultural exports, but instead the chattel sale of enslaved people.

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[31] *1850 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Monroe County, Tennessee*, Charles McGhee, *Ancestry.com* database.
[32] West, *Plantation Assessment*, 9.
[33] “Durham Stock,” *The Athens Post*, September 22, 1854, 3; “Best Fat Beef,” *The Knoxville Statesman*, November 11, 1854, 2.
[34] W. H. Dawson, diary excerpt, December 5, 1863, on McGhee’s farm, regarding impressment of food and animals by Federal and Confederate soldiers, *W. P. A. Civil War Records*, vol. 2, 190–91.



A 1935 Photograph of the Tuskega Mansion. Chattanooga Daily Times, March 10, 1935. Newspapers.com.

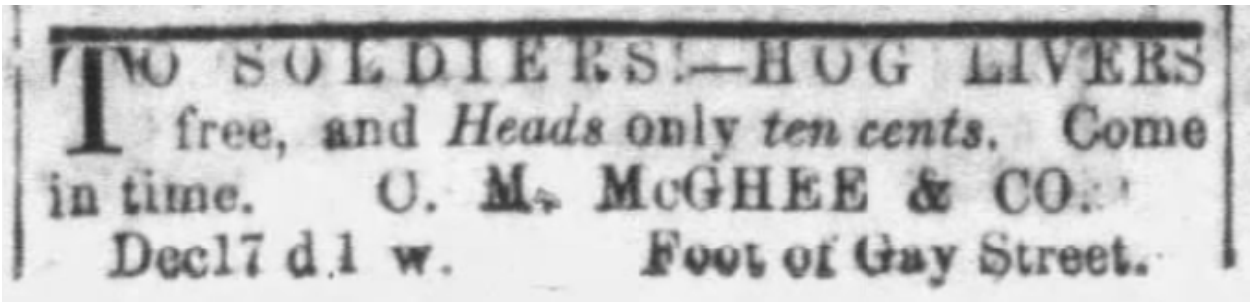
Beyond farm labor and animal husbandry, a portion of those enslaved by the Ghees were skilled in masonry and other skills pertaining to construction. Charles McClung McGhee contracted an unknown architect for the design of a Gothic Revival-styled mansion for the Tuskega plantation.[35] Charles forced the individuals he enslaved to create the bricks for the mansion and utilized enslaved labor for the mansion's construction, being built between 1856 and 1859.[36] Many of the mansion's bricks maintain the thumbprints of the enslaved people who made them. Similarly, Charles utilized enslaved labor for the construction of the chapel for the Saint Andrews Episcopal Church near the Tellico Blockhouse.

The McGhees and the American Civil War (1860-1865)

Like the majority of his fellow East Tennesseans, Charles initially rejected secession from the Union in 1860. Charles, amongst other constituents, signed a letter to Whig politician and later unionist Thomas A. R. Nelson from Northeast Tennessee to publicly respond to the secessionist speeches of Knoxville-based fire-eater and politician William Lowndes Yancey.[37] However, as discussed below, this loyalty would shift soon after.

[35] See Tuskega Plantation Assessment Fort Loudon State Park Monroe County by Dr. Carroll Van West for a more in-depth exploration of the mansion's exterior and interior description.
[36] Visible thumbprints are visible on many of the bricks used; "Historic John Carson Homeplace Sold L&N Official for $26,900," *The Knoxville Journal*, August 2, 1957, 8.
[37] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 13-22; The term "Fire-Eater" used here refers to a radical pro-secessionist.

With the Plantation mansion having only been completed roughly a year prior, Charles left Tuskega for Knoxville, Tennessee, ca. 1860.[38] It is possible that Charles moved to Knoxville for business opportunities, establishing a meat-packing business in 1861. Alternatively, historian William Joseph MacArthur Jr. proposes that the move was motivated by wanting to more closely manage his and his wife's existing real estate holdings in Knoxville.[39] But regardless of reason, whether by circumstance or choice, Charles would remain in Knoxville throughout the Civil War and for the rest of his lifetime.



TO SOLDIERS!—HOG LIVERS free, and *Heads* only *ten cents*. Come in time. C. M. McGHEE & CO.
Dec17 d1 w. Foot of Gay Street.



LABORERS WANTED.

WE ARE AUTHORIZED BY COL. BLAKE to say that all conscripts whom we employ at our pork house will be detailed. We will pay good wages and sell each hand ten pounds of salt at ten cents per pound every Saturday night. Hands from a distance will be furnished a good house to camp in.—They should bring blankets with them.
dec6dtf McGHEE & CO.

Left to Right: "To Soldiers!--Hog Livers" Advertisement. The Knoxville Register, January 10, 1862. Newspapers.com; "Laborers Wanted" Advertisement. The Daily Register, January 2, 1863. Newspapers.com. Both advertisements, like many, are specifically marketing towards and in direct collaboration with the Confederacy. Newspapers.com.

In June of 1861, when Tennessee succeeded and joined the Confederacy, Charles gained a commission as colonel in the Confederate commissariat.[40] With the secession cutting off access to Midwest-sourced meats, the Confederacy looked to Tennessee and Kentucky sources for

[38] West, *Plantation Assessment*, 3.
[39] West, *Plantation Assessment*, 6.
[40] While MacAuther purposes that "More probably the title "colonel" was bestowed upon him by the governor of Tennessee and did not signify true military rank." There is enough newspaper evidence of his direct involvement and sale of meat to Confederate forces at a discount to put both ideas into doubt.

supplying meats to their forces.[41] Thus, Charles was contracted to supply Confederate soldiers with meat and other supplies through his meat packing business, McGhee & Company.[42] He provided free livers and hogs' heads at a reduced price to Confederate soldiers in the first years of the war.[43] An 1862 article describing the production at the McGhee & Co. plant states, "... McGhee & Co. have [not] spared any labor or expense to fulfill their contract to the letter."[44] Two advertisements from 1862 and 1863 show that Charles was authorized to utilize Confederate-conscripted workers in addition to his labor workforce. Based on hiring advertisements from this time, it appears that Charles actively sought out African American laborers.[45]

Charles McClung McGhee is in many ways an outlier in terms of typical leadership amongst East Tennessee Confederates, while also serving as a prime example of the trends amongst East TN Confederate leadership. First, there is Charles's status as a member of the enslaver elite with substantial land ownership and a large number of enslaved people. In a demographic study by W. Todd Groce, Groce observes:

> "Despite the traditional assertion that East Tennessee's Confederate leaders were drawn from the planter class, none of the officers in this study can be classified as 'planters." As the leaders of a revolutionary movement committed to preserving the slave system, they were an unusually slave-poor lot…[46]

The mean average amongst slave holders in East TN was 5.5 enslaved persons per enslaver, whereas the mean amongst Confederate officers was 5.6, which Groce characterized both as "middling."[47] This is in direct opposition to Charles enslaving an estimated 77 people in 1861. Clearly an outlier to these numbers, Charles was closer in number of enslaved people to the upper crust of his Middle and West Tennessee peers than East Tennessee Confederate leadership. However, Charles did mirror his non-planter constituents in his non-agricultural business ventures.

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[41] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 13.
[42] Louise Deaderick, ed., *Heart of the Valley: A History of Knoxville, Tennessee* (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 1976), 42.
[43] "To Soldiers! – Hog Livers," *The Knoxville Register*, January 10, 1862.
[44] "Well-Cured Bacon," *The Daily Register*, April 16, 1862, 3.
[45] "Laborers Wanted," *The Daily Register*, January 2, 1863, 2; "Laborers Wanted," *The Daily Register*, November 16, 1862, 4.
[46] W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates, 1860–1870* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 53.
[47] Groce, *Mountain Rebels*, 53-54.

> Based on census data, Groce asserted that Confederate military leadership in East Tennessee came from the "rising commercial-professional middle class," not old elite families.[48]

While belonging to an old elite family class, he resembles the image of the commercial-professional middle class that emerged from farmers in East TN through his meat-packing investments in Knoxville. Groce observes, "Even those Southern commanders who gave farming as their occupation often pursued several business ventures in addition to working the land. It was not uncommon for entrepreneurs to invest in a variety of money-making projects…"[49] While Charles remained a planter throughout the Civil War, by 1861, he was well ingrained in the industrial scene in Knoxville, ventures that would only grow after the war. Additionally, Charles fits the portrait of a typical Confederate leader in terms of age, being ~32 years of age at the outbreak of the war, where the group studied by Groce largely ranged between 20-40 years of age.[50]

While it will likely be unknown whether Charles held any sense of personal loyalty to the Confederate cause, it is evident that he had much to lose in emancipation–a fear held by many enslavers following Lincoln's election. However, what is evident is that to the press and fellow Confederates, Charles was viewed–or at least propped up as–the model of a loyal Confederate patriot. After General Albert Sidney Johnson's death at Shiloh in April of 1862, Charles made a financial donation to the Johnson family. As an article covering the instance explained, Charles "... contributed with a liberality which is equal to his patriotism, $500 for the benefit of the family of Gen. A. Sydney Johnston–a noble example, which we hope will be emulated by many others in the Southern Confederacy."[51] Another article characterized the donation as being, "...for the benefit of the family of the hero who had so gallantly sacrificed his life for the independence of his country."[52] The donation was made to Confederate President Jefferson F. Davis to be distributed to the family. Davis's secretary, John H. Crozier, spoke for the President in a letter, hailing this donation as an act of "noble generosity and exalted patriotism"[53]

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[48] Groce, *Mountain Rebels*, 58.
[49] Groce, *Mountain Rebels*, 51.
[50] Groce, *Mountain Rebels*, 54-55.
[51] "Noble Liberality," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, May 10, 1862, 2.
[52] "A Prompt Act of Generosity," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, June 4, 1862, 2.
[53] "A Prompt Act of Generosity," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, June 4, 1862, 2.

In September of 1863, Knoxville fell under Union control after General Ambrose Burnside's forces took the city. About 5 months into federal control, an article in the Memphis Daily Appeal listed Charles M. McGhee amongst four people arrested in Knoxville. This article also referenced an earlier federal arrest, where he was held in Kentucky.[54] Despite these arrests and previous loyalty to the Confederate cause, Charles swore loyalty to the Union around this time and pursued business dealings with Union forces.[55]

Burnside's forces looked to local parties for bids to slaughter and supply the meat for the Union forces. One individual made an offer at a high price, being a meat packer who "had packed hogs for the Confederates in 1862."[56] Federal forces turned down this packer's offer due to its high price.[57] While there are no concrete records confirming this packer's identity as Charles, Charles is currently the only known meat packer supplying Confederates in Knoxville at the time, which lends credence that Charles at least attempted to work with the Union during the occupation. No further information has been identified as to whether or not Charles continues to pursue federal contracts.

During the Civil War, both Charles and Margaret maintained ownership of their respective Plantations Tuskega and Tellequah. At least until 1861, Barclay's descendants managed his prior investments, as seen by advertisements selling out the services of those he previously enslaved.[58] While managing his meat packing ventures, Charles maintained his enslavement interests at Tuskega. The 1860 slave schedules indicated Charles enslaved 77 people on the property.[59]

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[54] "From the Front – Knoxville Item," *Memphis Daily Appeal*, February 17, 1864.
[55] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 16.
[56] Palmer H. Boeger, "General Burnside's Knoxville Packing Project," *East Tennessee Historical Society Publications*, no. 35 (1963), 77.
[57] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 16.
[58] "Notice. - Negroes for Hire," *The Athens Post*, September 13, 1861, 3.
[59] *1850 Slave Schedule, Monroe County, Tennessee*, "Charles McGhee."



$5,000 REWARD.

RUNAWAY from the plantation of the undersigned in Monroe county, Tenn., on the night of July 10, 1863,

SIX NEGRO MEN,

taking with them two fine gray horses, a fine bay horse, a fine bay mare, and three fine mules.

The negroes, I cannot at this time, accurately describe.

I will give the reward above offered for the recovery of the negroes and animals; or proportionately for any of them.

The negroes were in company with twenty-five or thirty white men, and the negroes making for Parks' Ferry on the Holston River, and going towards Kentucky through Anderson county.

C. M. McGHEE.

july12-tf

C. M. McGhee Runaway Wanted Advertisement. The Daily Southern Chronicle, July 12, 1863. Newspapers.com.

Enslaved people repeatedly attempted to escape enslavement under Charles throughout the Civil War. Charles posted a $25 reward for the return of an enslaved man, Peter, in The Knoxville Register on December 31, 1861, promising to also reimburse any costs to return him to the plantation.[60] On July 12, 1863, Charles further posted a 5000 confederate dollar reward for the capture and return of six enslaved men and the four horses and three mules taken when they escaped enslavement on July 10, 1863.[61] No further records have been located to confirm if these men had achieved freedom.

In the summer of 1861, the “McGhee Invincibles,” a Confederate cavalry company, was formed out of Monroe County. The company of 98 men was named to honor Charles–despite having left for Knoxville a year prior.[62] This action suggests a local reverence for Charles and the McGhee family.

Both Toqua and Tuskega were at points occupied by both Confederate and Union forces. Under the command of General Sherman, Major Dobbs and Colonel Long’s cavalry occupied Tuskega and impressed large amounts of meat, produce, and animals. Confederate forces similarly

[60] “Twenty-Five Dollar Reward,” *The Knoxville Register*, December 31, 1861.
[61] “$5,000 Reward,” *The Daily Southern Chronicle*, July 12, 1863, 2.
[62] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 13; “Monroe All Right,” *The Athens Post*, July 5, 1861, 3.

impressed produce, killed animals for meat, and burned 1283 panels of fence.[63] Occupying forces reportedly smashed marble mantles inside the Tuskega Mansion, but has not been attributed to either Confederate or Union occupation.[64] Oral history suggests that a soldier injured during a local skirmish was brought to the Tuskega mansion of Charles McClung McGhee, dying on the porch. The soldier was supposedly buried in the garden proximity to the porch; however, the exact burial location is unknown.[65] There is no definite documentation of military presence in Tallequah.

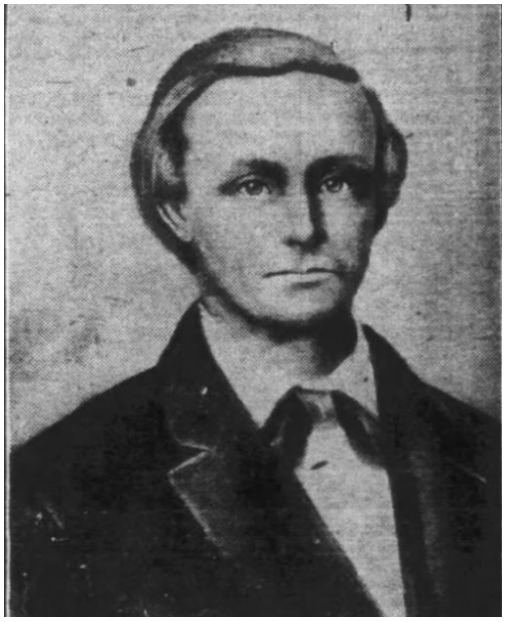
Tenant Farming and Changing Hands (1865-1969)[66]

Following the Civil War, emancipation forced the McGhee family to free all those they enslaved; however, Charles and Margaret maintained their landholdings in the valley. Margaret retained her ~3,300 acres of land at Tallequah. The property remained in the family into the early 20th century, with the family continuing to manage the Niles ferry. In 1920, the property was sold by Margaret's daughter, Betty Humes Haire, to an unknown buyer.[67] Between 1927 and 1930, the construction of a toll bridge across the Little Tennessee replaced the function of the ferry.[68]

Charles continued establishing himself in Knoxville's industrial scene, expanding into finance when he established The People's Bank in 1865 with John R. Branner, J. R. Mitchell, and most notably, Thomas H. Callaway. Charles later became the bank's president in 1866.[69] Wishing to further expand his stocks in the railroad industry, Charles traded his Tuskega property (roughly 4,000-5,000 acres) to Callaway in 1870 in exchange for Callaway's stocks in the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad.[70] In his dissertation on Charles's career in Knoxville, Joseph MacArthur Jr. writes, "The exchange symbolized McGhee's break with his Old South past and established the foundation for his fortune and for his career in the New South. McGhee became the company's largest single stockholder, and with Wilson, Jaques, and Jackson, he controlled East Tennessee."[71]

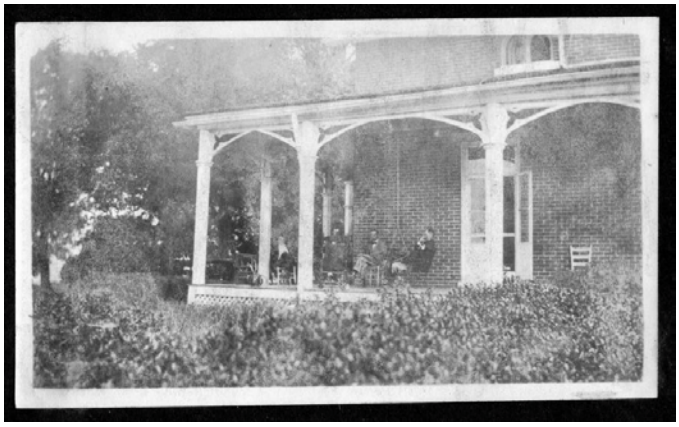
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[63] Dawson, diary excerpt, December 5, 1863, *W. P. A. Civil War Records*, 190; Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 161.
[64] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 161.
[65] Brewer, *Valley So Wild*, 161.
[66] This is a point in the property's history that John Wallace only limitedly researched. Especially if the staff intends to create interpretive content for the historic fixtures tied to the Callaway-Carson era of history, the author recommends further research on the management of the property following its purchase by Callaway and its acquisition by TVA.
[67] Tennessee Department of Transportation, *Tennessee's Toll Bridges, 1927–1947: A Context Study*, TDOT PIN# 100481.00, Project # 34003-1210-94 (2014), 113-114.
[68] De Welter, "The McGhee Family," 3-4.
[69] J. A. Dunn, "Seen and Heard," *The Knoxville Journal*, December 4, 1927, 26.
[70] De Welter, "The McGhee Family," 4; It should be noted that according to the 1860 census, Thomas H. Callaway is listed as enslaving 12 individuals.
[71] MacArthur, *Southern Financier*, 81-82.



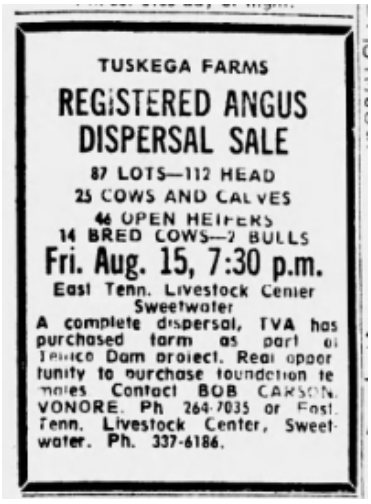
Portrait of Thomas Howard Callaway. Chattanooga Times, March 10, 1935. Newspapers.com.

One week after making the trade for the McGhee property, Thomas Callaway died, leaving the property under the management of his family. Like many post-emancipation Southerners who owned substantial farmland, the Callaway-Carson engaged in sharecropping and tenant farming with predominantly African American laborers and farmers. The McGhees, one of the many families enslaved by the White McGhee family, later became tenant farmers and laborers on the property. With the McGhees and other formerly enslaved people remaining on the property between the end of the war and Callaway-Carson ownership, it is possible that Charles also engaged in sharecropping on his land before its sale, and these farmers and laborers may have been grandfathered in under Callaway's ownership. However, no substantial evidence has been found to confirm this idea. The individual stories of these people are told in the "Cemetery Biographies" section.



Unidentified people–likely members of the Callaway-Carson family, sitting at the porch of Tuskega Mansion, Callaway Family Photos (Album B). Unknown creator, 1910s. Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection.

John M. Carson, grandson of Callaway, sold Tuskega to Louis Starritt, a L&N railroad card inspector in 1957, which included the mansion and cemetery.[72] Evidently, the Carsons either purchased or leased parts or the whole of the property back from Starritt, later opening a dairy and beef business on the property.[73] Read the 2024 Tuskega Site survey for a more in-depth overview of the Callaway, Hutchinson, and Carson ownerships of the property.


TUSKEGA FARMS

REGISTERED ANGUS DISPERSAL SALE

87 LOTS—112 HEAD

25 COWS AND CALVES

46 OPEN HEIFERS

14 BRED COWS—2 BULLS

Fri. Aug. 15, 7:30 p.m.

East Tenn. Livestock Center Sweetwater

A complete dispersal, TVA has purchased farm as part of Tellico Dam project. Real opportunity to purchase foundation females. Contact BOB CARSON, VONORE. Ph 264-7035 or East Tenn. Livestock Center, Sweetwater. Ph. 337-6186.

Registered Angus Dispersal Sale and notice of TVA sale. The Knoxville News-Sentinel, August 14, 1969. ProQuest News & Newspapers.

[72] *The Knoxville Journal*, Aug. 2, 1957, 8.
[73] "Tuskega Angus Farm First Production Sale," *The Knoxville Sentinel*, April 25, 1966, 25, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Federal and State Management (1969-Today)

In the 1960s, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) looked to construct the Tellico Reservoir in the Little Tennessee River Valley. For this project, TVA purchased the Tuskega property from Bob Carson in 1969. With the completion of the reservoir in 1979 and the subsequent flooding of the valley, large portions of the property–save the higher elevated portions of the property–flooded.[74] Tuskega Mansion, Toco Cemetery, and other auxiliary agricultural buildings were saved from flooding due to being at a higher elevation. The original access road to the property was flooded; however, a new road constructed by TVA–road project 7047–provided access to the property via highway 360.[75]

TVA maintained ownership of Tuskega for only a short time, transferring the property to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) in the 1980s. The TDEC acquired the property with plans for adaptive-reuse of the Tuskega Mansion.[76] However, the mansion burned down in 1984, with only the foundation remaining. Multiple causes have been attributed to the fire, ranging from electrical fire to arson. Regardless of the cause, this fire ended plans for adaptive reuse. Today, the property totals 475.5 acres and remains under the stewardship of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and Fort Loudoun State Historic Area staff. In recent years, the park has pushed to further preserve and interpret the site.

[74] *"Tellico,"* Tennessee Valley Authority, accessed January 12, 2026, https://www.tva.com/energy/our-power-system/hydroelectric/tellico.
[75] TVA, *Cemetery Land Map*, Fort Loudoun State Park, in physical file "Toqua Cemetery," 15.
[76] Report of the Charles McGhee House Committee, 1982, 1–2.

Cemetery Biographies

Toco Cemetery Overview[77]

In the first half of the 19th century, the McGhee family enslaved hundreds of African American individuals across their multiple plantation properties. On a portion of Tuskeega–the property owned by Charles McClung McGhee–the enslaved community established a burial ground to bury their dead.[78] These burials for enslaved people make up a majority of the Southern and some Eastern portions of the cemetery plot, consisting primarily of uncarved, uninscribed, and non-uniform slate fieldstone markers. It should be noted that unmarked slate markers were utilized in African American cemeteries into the early 20th century, beyond burials of enslaved people.[79] Thus, some of the unmarked burials and uncarved markers may also include burials following 1865.

Following the Civil War, the McGhee family, and later the Callaway and Carson families, employed both tenant farms and sharecroppers to work the farmsites. Some of these farmers, as well as their descendants, also buried their dead in Toco. Of the markers with visible inscriptions and associated death records, Toco includes many early 20th century burials and some late 19th-century burials, with the earliest inscribed marker being for F. McGhee, who died in 1885. Many of those buried were either previously enslaved by the McGhee family or were descendants of those enslaved. According to multiple articles on the site's history in the 1950s, John M. Carson supposedly "... offered to give the cemetery to descendants of those buried there, but his offer has never been accepted."[80]

In preparation for the construction of the Tellico Reservoir, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) purchased the Tuskega property from Bob Carson in 1969. TVA employees conducted a survey of cemeteries in the Tellico Reservoir to identify candidates for relocation, including Toco. With Toco's higher elevation, there was no risk of the cemetery being flooded by the reservoir's construction. Thus, the cemetery was untouched by TVA workers. The original access road to the cemetery was flooded, cutting the cemetery off from its original access point. A new road

[77] In researching this cemetery, John Wallace came across the following titles to refer to the cemetery and property: Toco, Toca, Tuco, Toquo, Toqua, Toqo, Callaway, Little Toqua, Old Toqua. Furthermore, it has been referred to as a burial ground, graveyard, and cemetery.
[78] "A Home With a Past," *The Knoxville Journal*, October 19, 1952, 37.
[79] Lynn Rainville, *Hidden History: Commemorating and Preserving Historic Black Cemeteries in Central Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 62
[80] "Connies' Corner Odds and End," *Morristown Gazette Mail*, October 20, 1952, 5.

constructed by TVA–road project 7047–provided access to the cemetery via likely highway 360.[81] Ownership was transferred to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation in the 1980s and is now under the stewardship of Fort Loudoun State Historic Site.

The exact number of those buried is unknown. The TVA survey of the cemetery conducted in 1974 listed 154 known burials.[82] According to a 1939 survey of Monroe County cemeteries, Toqua is listed as containing ~216 individuals.[83] From research conducted by Miranda Barnett, Joseph Gamble, and John Wallace, there are 30 known names of people buried in the cemetery. A majority of those known to be buried in Toco have the last name McGhee, with a section of the cemetery at the Northern central edge of the plot serving as a family plot for a family of McGhees. One such McGhee buried here, Floyd S. McGhee, received substantial news coverage, with articles indicating that he was buried at a "family cemetery."[84] Many of the proximate burials are related in some way to one another.

Below are biographies containing biographic information composed of public records, published cemetery surveys, newspaper articles, and other sources. Due to the number of individuals needed to be researched during the Summer 2025 project, the author opted to use primarily digital and easily-accessible sources to research as many individuals as possible (quantity over quality). Much more research can be conducted, especially in locating and contacting descendants of those buried at the cemetery.

Known Burial Biographies

Richard (Dick) Bradley McGhee (1858-1937)

Richard McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records* noted he was buried here and at one point had a stone.[85] Richard McGhee was born into enslavement on November 30, 1858 (1859 is listed in the 1900 census), on the McGhee plantation, and was enslaved by Charles McClung McGhee. In 1878, Richard had a daughter, Kittie (or Katherine) McGhee. The biological mother

[81] TVA, *Cemetery Land Map*, 15.
[82] *Toqua Cemetery No. 31, Tellico Reservoir*, Tennessee Valley Authority, Maps and Surveys Branch, November 1974, 65, MS 432A503-31 R.I.
[83] Dolores Allen, "Toqua," in *Checklist of Cemeteries and Graveyards*, February 27, 1939, McClung Historical Collection, East Tennessee Historical Society, 26.
[84] "M'Ghee's Body is Taken to Vonore," *Knoxville Sentinel*, August 15, 1912, 4.
[85] "Toco Cemetery," *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* 563.

of the child is currently unknown. Richard married America Missouri McGhee in 1879, and had four more kids over the course of twenty years: Floyd S. (1884-1912), Henry J. (1887-1906), Richard C., and Dallas McGhee.[86] The 1880 federal census lists Richard as “works on farm” in Loudon, Tennessee, suggesting he worked as a farm laborer.[87] At some point, he moved to Monroe County prior to 1900 and lived in the county until at least 1920. He later moved to East Cumberland Avenue, Knoxville, Tennessee, and worked as a servant and "general handyman" to Major William R. Webber. During his time in Knoxville, he was a member of Logan Temple Church–or Logan Temple AME Zion Church.[88] Richard died at his home from bronchopneumonia influenza on February 2, 1937, and was buried in Toco cemetery on February 5, 1937.[89] Richard is the most recent known burial at the site.



“Missouri McGhee” on the McGhee family memorial marker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

America Missouri Howard McGhee (1859-1912)

America Missouri Howard McGhee is one of the four people inscribed on the only family memorial in the cemetery. Missouri was born to Frank and Mary (or Mara or Mira) Howard on February 29, 1859 in Monroe County, Tennessee. There is a possibility she–like her eventual husband–was born into enslavement due to her county of birth and her father, Frank, possibly

[86] Richard McGhee, 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 12, Monroe County, Tennessee, sheet 6; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60887109.
[87] Richard McGhee, 1880 United States Federal Census, Piney, Loudon County, Tennessee; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6742/records/41742587.
[88] “Ex-Slave Dies at 78,” *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, Tue Feb 2, 1937, 13.
[89] Richard B. McGhee, Death Certificate no. 166, 2 February 1937, Knox County Clerk, Knoxville, TN.

being the “Frank” listed in John McGhee’s will.[90] She had a brother, Vero (or Nero) Howard, who is discussed below. Missouri married Richard Bradley McGhee in 1879 and had five children: Floid S. McGhee, Henry J. McGhee, Richard C. McGhee, and Dallas McGhee.[91] She was the mother of Kittie (Katherine) McGhee as well, but it is currently unknown if Missouri is her biological mother. At the time of her death, she was employed as a housekeeper to an unknown household. Due to having direct familial connections to the property, it is possible she was a housekeeper to the McGhee family, but no concrete records have confirmed this. Missouri died on August 6, 1914 from heart complications caused by an aortic regurgitation in Vonore, Tennessee and was buried at Toco cemetery the next day.[92]



“F. S. McGhee” on the McGhee family memorial marker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

Floyd (Floid) S. McGhee (1884-1912)

Floyd S. McGhee is one of the four people inscribed on the only family memorial in the cemetery. Floyd was born to America Missouri McGhee and Richard McGhee in December 1884. According to 1900 federal census records, Floid worked as a farm laborer at the age of 15. Floyd had four siblings, Kittie (or Katherine), Henry J., Richard C., and Dallas McGhee.[93] At some point, the George A. Fuller Company hired Floyd as a laborer for the construction of the Holston National Bank Building in Knoxville, Tennessee. On August 14, 1912, Floyd took a

[90] Will of John McGhee, 86–92.
[91] Floid H. McGhee, 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 12, Monroe County, Tennessee, sheet 6; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60887112.
[92] Missouri McGhee, Death Certificate, 6 August 1912, Monroe County Clerk, Vonore, TN.
[93] *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, February 2, 1937.

freight elevator at the construction site for the bank building. While the exact narrative is unknown, something occurred to cause the elevator to violently shift, causing Floyd to be thrown from the elevator, falling "...eight stories, landing on his face between the elevator shaft and the elevator engine."[94] He soon died at Knoxville General Hospital from a skull fracture as a result of the fall. He was buried the next day at a family cemetery in Vonore, Tennessee. The transportation and burial of Floyd were managed by the Knoxville-based undertaking firm E. B. Mann Undertaking Company. E. B. Mann Co. was one of the largest undertaking businesses in Knoxville and East Tennessee at the time, and later became Rose Funeral Home.[95] Richard McGhee later filed a suit against George A. Fuller Company for $10,000 in damages. During initial research, the author failed to find whether the family succeeded in the lawsuit, but the substantial financial gain from the suit may explain the relatively larger family memorial marker.[96]



"Henry McGhee" on the McGhee family memorial marker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

Henry J. McGhee (1887-1906)

Henry McGhee is one of the four people inscribed on the only family memorial in the cemetery. Census records indicate that Henry J. McGhee was born to America Missouri Howard McGhee and Richard Bradley McGhee in March 1887; however, his birth date on the memorial is March

[94] "Elevator Accidents Cause of Law Suits," *Knoxville Sentinel*, March 22, 1913, 5; the narrative of Floyd's death is based largely on the account presented during the lawsuit due to likely being the one present by the family during the lawsuit.
[95] Floyd George McGhee, Death Certificate no. 5463, 14 August 1912, Knox County Clerk, Knoxville, TN.
[96] "Circuit Court," *Knoxville Sentinel*, August 20, 1912, 10.

12, 1890.[97] Henry died on September 12, 1906. Depending on whether the date on the marker or the census record is inaccurate, his age upon death could be between ~16 and 19.



"McGhee" on the McGhee family memorial marker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

McGhee

A solitary "McGhee" is inscribed on the only family memorial in the cemetery. It is the belief of the author that this inscription is not for a specific individual, but a designation of the memorial and surrounding burials as being for the McGhee family. It is included here for the sake of thorough documentation.

Vero (Nero) Howard (ca. 1849-1914)

Vero (or Nero) Howard does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records* noted he was buried here and at one point had a stone.[98] Furthermore, his familial connection to Missouri suggests he is very likely buried here. Vero was born to Frank and Mary (or Mara or Mira) Howard, ca. 1849, in Monroe County, Tennessee. He was the brother of America Missouri McGhee, discussed above. At the time of his death, he worked as a farmer, but where and in what capacity is currently unknown. There is a possibility then that Vero worked as a tenant farmer on the (possibly the Callaway

[97] America M. McGhee, 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 12, Monroe County, Tennessee, sheet 6; https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60887110.
[98] Charles Steed, "Toco Cemetery," in *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records* (Vonore, TN: Vonore Historical Society, 199?), 563.

Farm) or purchased land for cultivation in Monroe County, Tennessee. Vero died on August 16, 1914, in Vonore, Tennessee and was buried the following day in Toco cemetery.[99]



"F. McGhee" grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

F. McGhee (1881-1885)

F. McGhee was born on January 17th, 1881, and died on April 23, 1885. Due to his young age, only having a single initial listed on his stone, and being between census decades, there is currently no further information on the individual buried here.

[99] Nero Howard, Death Certificate, 16 August 1914, Monroe County Clerk, Vanore, TN.



"Robert McGhee" grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

Robert McGhee (ca. 1864-1894)

Robert McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted a "Robert McGhee" was buried here and at one point had a marker. It is the belief of the author that the Robert McGhee listed on the stone is the same Robert McGhee who was the brother of Missouri America and Vero Howard. Because newspaper articles covering F. S. McGhee's death referred to Toco Cemetery as a "family cemetery" and Robert's stone's proximity to the family memorial marker, it is likely that Robert was related in some way to Missouri, F. S., and Henry McGhee. Robert McGhee was born at some point between 1864 and 1867 to Franklin Howard and Mary (or Mara Howard), likely in Monroe County, Tennessee.[100] The 1880 census confirmed that Robert was the brother of Missouri America Howard. This census record also included a Frank Howard, who was the grandson of Franklin and Mary at 9 years old, whereas Robert and Missouri were 16 and 12 respectively.[101] The earlier 1870 census also lists George, Nancy, Dallas, Nera, Momone, and Mary Howard as being within the same household. The exact relation of these individuals to

[100] Franklin Howard, 1870 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7163/records/12082888; Robert Howard, 1870 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7163/records/4786979; Its likely that Robert was born closer to 1864 due to being listed as 16 in the 1880 census.
[101] Robert Howard, 1880 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6742/records/10870248.

Robert is currently unknown.[102] According to his grave maker, Robert died on February 25, 1894, making him roughly between 27 and 30 at the time of his death.



Aretta McGhee, Sam C. McGhee, and Infant Children of J. L. and Bulah McGhee grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

Children of John Luther and Beulah McGhee (1906-1919)

Evidently, John Luther and Beulah Tate repeatedly experienced tragedy throughout the first decades of the 20th century. Over the course of 13 years between 1906 and 1919, the couple lost five children, the oldest reaching 9 months of age, and one child passing the day in which they were born. The couple lost two unnamed infant daughters on April 27, 1906, the same day they were born. They lost another daughter, Aretta McGhee (December 27, 1908-January 21, 1908), their son Sam C. McGhee (August 11, 1910 - October 27, 1910), and another son, John McGhee (August 1918 - May 10, 1919). The *Monroe, Tn Cemetery Records* by Charles Steed notes that the children's parents, J. Luther McGhee and Beulah Tate McGhee, were both buried in the same cemetery as their children. This is incorrect, however, with the couple being buried at the Hammonds Cemetery in Athens, Tennessee.[103] There is a possibility that the couple was relocated.

[102] Robert Howard, 1870 Census.
[103] "Beulah T. McGhee (1884–1958)," memorial no. 27277569, *Find a Grave* database, Hammonds Cemetery, Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27277569/beulah-t-mcghee.



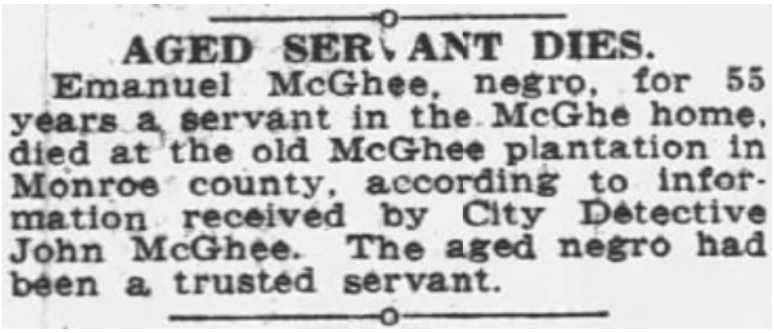
J. McGhee grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

J. McGhee (1886-1894)

J. McGhee has a headstone in the cemetery. J. McGhee was born on October 6, 1886 and died on February 4, 1894. No further information is currently known about J. McGhee.

Thomas McGhee (1890-1911)

Thomas McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted he was buried here and at one point had a marker. Thomas McGhee was born on November 13, 1890. Thomas died on May 28, 1911, and was presumably buried soon after. No further information is currently known about Thomas McGhee.



AGED SERVANT DIES.

Emanuel McGhee, negro, for 55 years a servant in the McGhe home, died at the old McGhee plantation in Monroe county, according to information received by City Detective John McGhee. The aged negro had been a trusted servant.

"Aged Servant Dies." The Knoxville Journal and Tribune Tue, Aug 05, 1924. Newspapers.com.

Emanuel McGhee (1852-1924)

Emanuel does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted he was buried here. Emanuel (or Manuel) McGhee was born to James and Sarah McGhee in Monroe County, Tennessee in 1852.[104] He married Betty (or Bettie) McGhee at some point before 1910, and the couple had one daughter, Frankie McGhee, and three sons: Charley McGhee (1898-1917), Barclay McGhee, and John B. McGhee (1878-1963).[105] The 1910 census listed Emanuel as a farm laborer who lived in a rented house.[106] His occupation would later be changed to farmer on his death record, possibly indicating that he became a tenant farmer instead of a laborer later in life.[107] Because Emanuel died on the "old McGhee plantation in Monroe county," it is likely Emanuel was one of the tenant farmers on the Callaway estate. Emanuel died from Tuberculosis on August 1, 1924 and was buried the next day at Toco cemetery.[108]

Charlie (or Charley) McGhee (1898-1917)

Charlie McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, his death certificate lists his burial place as "Callaway cemetery," which likely refers to the Toco cemetery or, at the very least, a cemetery on the property.[109] Charlie McGhee was born to Emanuel McGhee and Bettie McGhee in Monroe County in 1898.[110] At the time of his death, he worked as a day laborer. He died on August 6, 1917, and was buried the next day at Callaway Cemetery. The undertaker on record was listed as Sheets Bros.[111]

Moses McGhee (1883-1919)

Moses McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco Cemetery; however, his death certificate confirms his burial took place at Toco. Moses McGhee was born on October 25, 1883 or 1886 to John Lowe and Alice McGhee in Monroe County, Tennessee. The 1900 census listed Moses as living with an uncle, Robert Jefferson "Jeff" McGhee, in Monroe County.[112] At this time, Jeff lived

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[104] Emanuel McGhee, Death Certificate, 1 August 1924, Monroe County Clerk, Vonore, TN.
[105] Manual McGhee, 1910 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7884/records/27377722; John B. McGhee, Death Certificate, 22 February 1963, Monroe County Clerk, Vonore, TN.
[106] Manual McGhee, 1910 Federal Census.
[107] John B. MeGhee, Death Certificate.
[108] "Aged Servant Dies," *The Knoxville Journal and Tribune*, August 5, 1924, 15.
[109] Charlie McGhee, Death Certificate, 6 August 1917, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.
[110] Charley McGhee, 1910 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7884/records/143611095.
[111] Charlie McGhee, Death Certificate.
[112] Moses McGhee, 1910 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60890546.

in a rented home with his mother, Pollie McGhee, niece Violet McGhee, and nephew David McGhee.[113] It is currently unknown how Violet or David is related to Moses. Like Jeff, Moses worked as a farm laborer in the county. Later, Moses's WW1 draft registration card noted that Moses lived at 617 South Broad Street in Knoxville, Tennessee, with Jeff McGhee listed as his "closest relative."[114] He worked as a laborer for W. J. Savage Co. Inc., which manufactured heavy machinery for a multitude of industries.[115] Moses died on June 25, 1919 from tuberculosis of the lungs in Vonore, Tennessee, and was buried the next day at "Toco burial ground." The undertaker on record was listed as K. B. Robinson.[116] Jeff McGhee is listed as the informant of death.



"Son of Charity McGhee" Grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

Shurman McGhee (1896-1911)

The marker above is for a S. McGhee or "the son of T. and Charity McGhee." The stone has largely faded, and the exact inscriptions are unknown. The author initially interpreted the text of the stone as such: "S— Son Of T— Charity McGhee Born Nov 1 1896 Died May 28 1911 Gone but not forgotten." After researching Shurman and other McGhees buried in the cemetery, it is the confident belief of the author that this stone belongs to Shurman McGhee. Shurman

[113] Mollie McGhee, Death Certificate, 5 August 1919, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.
[114] Moses McGhee, World War I draft registration card, order no. 4238, serial no. 2706, September 12, 1918, Local Board (division unknown), Knoxville, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6482/records/21951694.
[115] "W. J. Savage Company, Inc.," *Knoxville Sentinel*, September 30, 1912, 25.
[116] Moses McGhee, Death Certificate, 25 June 1919, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.

McGhee is listed in the TVA cemetery relocation database as being buried in the “Toqua” cemetery. Furthermore, the names T. and Charity McGhee align with Shurman’s parents, Texas and Charity McGhee. Texas would later marry Sallie Henley Kerr McGhee.[117] Both Texas and Sallie McGhee are buried at Solomon’s Temple Cemetery.[118]

Sherman (or Shurman) McGhee was born to Texas and Charity McGhee in Tennessee on S. McGhee was born on November 1, 1896 (however, census records list 1889 and 1891). Sherman had three siblings: Nelson, Henry, and Kate McGhee.[119] According to the 1900 census, Sherman was a student at an unknown school, and by 1910, census records list Sherman as having “Attended School” and being able to both read and write. According to the 1910 census, Sherman worked as a “laborer” on a “home farm,” with his father being listed as a farmer on rented land in Monroe County. This likely means Texas was a tenant farmer with Sherman working as a laborer under him.[120] Sherman died on May 28, 1911.[121]



“Robert Son of Henry” Grave maker at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

[117] “Texas McGee (1848–1928),” Ancestry Family Trees, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/38423071/person/210081198390/.
[118] “Sallie Henley McGhee (1866-1920),” memorial no. 90507584, Find a Grave database, Soloman's Temple Cemetery, Monroe County, Tennessee, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/90507584/sallie-mcghee; “Texas McGhee (1850-1928),” memorial no. 101534650, Find a Grave database, Soloman's Temple Cemetery, Monroe County, Tennessee, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/101534650/texas-mcghee.
[119] Sherman McGhee, 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60884959.
[120] Sherman McGhee, 1910 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7884/records/143603591.
[121] “Texas McGee (1848–1928),” Ancestry Family Trees.

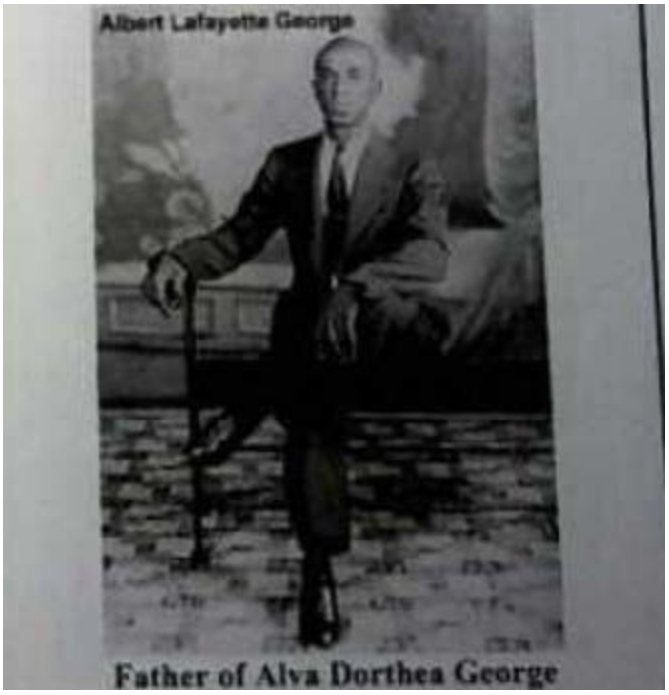
Robert McGhee (NO DATES)

Robert, son of Henry, has a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, it is broken, with much of the text relating to his familial connections and likely dates of birth and death missing. There are a number of Roberts that may potentially be this "Robert son of Henry." To me, the most likely candidate is Robert Jefferson McGhee, uncle of Moses McGhee and son of Robert Henry McGhee and Pollie Sants. Robert Henry McGhee possibly went by Henry, thus being listed as Henry for Robert's marker. However, due to the lack of concrete evidence, the author recommends that further research be conducted to identify Robert. Additionally, Robert McGhee listed above had a brother named Henry, and a nephew through American Missouri McGhee named Henry. There is also Robert Jefferson McGhee, uncle of Moses McGhee, who was the son of Robert Henley McGhee. Furthermore, there is a Robert Howard, son of Franklin Howard.

John McGhee (ca. 1918-1919)

John McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Miranda Barnett proposed that he was buried here.[122] The author is inclined to agree with this assessment, due to the rest of Bulah Tate and John Luther McGhee's children being buried in the cemetery, as well as his death certificate listing "Toco" as the place of burial. According to his death certificate, John McGhee was likely born in August 1918 in Monroe County, Tennessee, to John Luther and Beulah Tate McGhee. John died from acute gastroenteritis on May 10, 1919, and was buried the next day at Toco cemetery. The undertaker on record was listed as Sheets Bros.[123]

[122] Miranda Barnett, "Toqua Burial Ground: Revealing Lives of African Americans Buried in the McGhee-Carson Wildlife Area" prepared for Fort Loudoun State Historic Area, 9.
[123] John McGhee, Death Certificate, 1 August 1918, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.



Photograph of Albert Lafayette George, Husband of Mollie George. Unknown creator, unknown date. Ancestry.com.

Mollie George (1886-1919)

Mollie McGhee–later Mollie George–does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery, nor is she listed in Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted she was buried here; however, her death certificate lists "Toco" as the place of burial. Mollie McGhee was born on January 20, 1886, in Monroe County to Sam McGhee and Maggie Isbill. According to the 1900 census, Mollie had four siblings: Luke McGhee, Ned McGhee, Susie C McGhee, and Samuel McGhee.[124] On May 19, 1905, Mollie McGhee married Albert Lafayette George in McMinn County, Tennessee.[125] The couple had seven children: Lafayette George Jr. (1907-), Agatha George (1908–1929), Samuel George (1909-), William George (1911–), Alva Dorthea George (1914–1977), Luther Nelson George (1916–), and Leonard George (1918–1919).[126]

By 1910, Mollie lived in McMinn, Tennessee with her brother, John Isbell, along with her brother-in-law, nephew, niece, and a boarder.[127] At the time of her death, Mollie worked as a house worker; however, where and to what capacity is currently unknown. Mollie died from

[124] Mallie McGhee, 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7602/records/60890702.
[125] M L McGhee, Marriage Record, 19 May 1905, McMinn County, TN, ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/1169/records/6280321.
[126] This information was based on a family tree on Ancestry.com that is no longer accessible.
[127] Mollie George, 1910 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7884/records/129544521.

tuberculosis of the lungs on March 5, 1919 in Monroe County and was buried the next day at Toco Cemetery. The undertaker on record was listed as Sheets Bros.[128] Like Leonard George, Sam Callaway is listed as the informant of death, which is a potential point of further research.

Leonard George (1918-1919)

Leonard George does not have a marker at the Toco Cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted he was buried here. Leonard was born on August 1, 1918 to Albert Lafayette George and Mollie George McGhee in McMinn County, Tennessee. Leonard died from Spanish Flu on January 20, 1919 and was buried the next day at Toco. The undertaker on record was listed as Sheets Bros.[129] Sam Callaway is listed as the informant of death, which is a potential point of further research.

Known Burials that Need Further Research

Louella Lowe (NO DATES)

Very little information has been identified about Louella Lowe. The only potential connection found thus far is that Moses McGhee's father was listed as John Lowe. The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

Marvin McGhee (NO DATES)

Marvin McGhee does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted he was buried here. No definitive records could be located to identify Marvin McGhee.

F. M. (NO DATES)

F. M.–likely F. McGhee–has a footstone at the Toco cemetery; however, there is no clear matching marker. The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

Bell McGhee (NO DATES)

[128] Mollie George, Death Certificate, 5 March 1919, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.
[129] Leonard George, Death Certificate, 1 August 1918, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.

Bell McGhee shares a grave marker with an individual with the first initial J. and someone with "Hope" as either a first, middle, or last name. The legibility of the stone makes it difficult to discern. At its current state, no further information could be gleaned from the headstone. The author proposes two potential candidates for Bell McGhee. The first candidate is Bell McGhee, who is the sister of a Texas McGhee. Texas appears in the 1870 census alongside Bell and four other siblings.[130] This Texas is not the same as Sallie Henley Kerr McGhee's husband; however, the similar name potentially connects Texas to the McGhee family of the property. If this connection is correct, this would connect his sister, Bell McGhee, to the property. According to the census, Bell was born in 1865 to unconfirmed parents.[131] This Bell McGhee may be the Belle McGhee who was born abt. 1860 and died on March 20, 1909 in Knoxville, Tennessee. No place of burial was included in the death record.[132]

The second candidate is Sallie Belle McGhee, who was born sometime between 1909 and 1911 to Robert Nelson and Nannie McGhee in Tennessee.[133] Robert Nelson was the son of Texas and Sallie McGhee, so there is a more direct, confirmed connection to the McGhee-Carson property. Additionally, Sallie Bell married Raymond Latimore on April 9th, 1933 in Monroe County, Tennessee.[134] With Julia and "Auntie" Latimore being known to be buried at the site, it is possible that John is the connecting point between the McGhees and Latimores. Furthermore, Sallie Belle has a sister, "Della Mae McGhee." While not a confirmed connection, Della Mae could be Della Bobo, who is also known to be buried at the site, but there is no concrete connection as of writing this report.[135]

Della Bobo (NO DATES)

Della Bobo does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted she was buried here. Della Bobo died in 1912.[136] A Chattanooga resident, Della M. Bobo, shares a similar name; however, cannot be

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[130] Bell McGhee, 1870 United States Federal Census, Civil District 15, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7163/records/4786869.
[131] Bell McGhee, Federal Census; The record does not distinguish if anyone in the household is a parent to Sallie Bell McGhee; "Sallie Bell McGhee (1910-1989)," Ancestry Family Trees, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/38423071/person/28679297587/facts.
[132] Belle McGhee, Death Certificate, 20 March 1909, Knox County Clerk, Knoxville, TN.
[133] Sallie B McGhee, 1920 United States Federal Census, Civil District 2, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/6061/records/99991079; Sallie Belle McGhee, Marriage Record, 9 April 1933, Monroe County, TN, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/1169/records/6609026 .
[134] Sallie Belle McGhee, Marriage Record.
[135] "Robert Nelson McGhee (1884-1964)," Ancestry Family Trees, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/38423071/person/28679297050/facts.
[136] Steed, "Toco Cemetery," 563.

the same person due to being born around 1908 and being alive by 1950.[137] Della Mae McGhee, as explored above, is another candidate; however, her death is listed as 1922.[138] Thus, no concrete candidate has been identified.

Hope (NO DATES)

Due to only having part of a name from a broken, faded stone, no information has been gleaned about Hope. The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

Nellie George (NO DATES)

Nellie George does not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted they were buried here. No further records have been found for a Nellie George. In my research, Nellie George, Nillie R. George, and Nellie Mae George have been identified in Tennessee as possible candidates for Nellie George; however, all of these individuals are white and lack any known connections to the McGhee-Carson property. It is also possible that Charles Streed, in the creation of his survey, misread/misunderstood the aforementioned name "Mollie George" as Nellie George when researching past surveys, oral histories, or public records.[139] The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

Julia "Auntie" Latimore (ca. 1890-1912)

Julia Latimore and "Auntie Latimore" do not have a marker at the Toco cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted she was buried here. Steed's survey lists these individuals as separate; however, after researching public records, it was found that both shared the same death date, and thus are almost guaranteed to be the same individual. A Find A Grave entry exists for Julia at Big Toqua Cemetery; however, no marker has been identified to confirm this.[140] This cemetery was established in 1932. Unless Julia was relocated at a later date, it is unlikely that Julia is buried here. Julia was likely born in 1890, due to be 22 years of age upon her passing, and died on March 25, 1912 in Monroe

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[137] Della M Bobo, 1950 United States Federal Census, Hamilton County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/62308/records/104150423.
[138] "Della Mae McGhee (1908-1922)," Ancestry Family Trees, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/family-tree/person/tree/38423071/person/28679297590/facts.
[139] Mollie George, Death Certificate.
[140] "Julia Latimore (1890-1912)," memorial no. 57959304, Find a Grave database, Toqua Cemetery, Toqua, Monroe County, Tennessee, accessed January 16, 2026, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/57959304/julia-latimore.

County, Tennessee.[141] The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

"Auntie" Latimore (NO DATES)

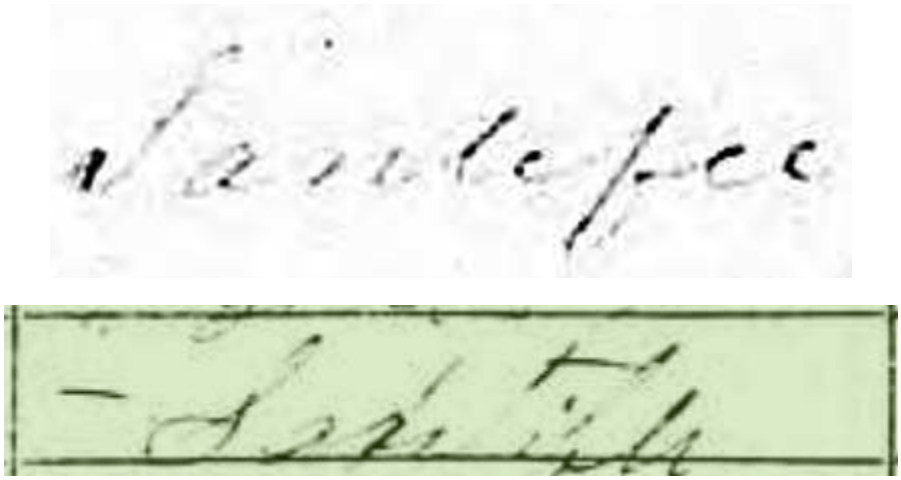
"Auntie" Latimore does not have a marker at the Toco Cemetery; however, Charles Steed's 1990s publication, *Monroe County, TN Cemetery Records,* noted she was buried here. "Auntie" Latimore died on March 25, 1912.[142] The author proposes that "Auntie" and Julia Latimore are the same due to sharing the same date of death. The author was unable to fully investigate this individual beyond preliminary searches.

People Possibly Interred at Toco and People Connected to Property/Cemetery

Sallie McGhee and Santefee McGhee

Sallie–or Sally–McGhee was born ca. 1797 to unknown parents and was enslaved by John Charles McGhee. John McGhee wrote Sallie McGhee into his will, directing his descendants to release Sallie and her husband James upon his death, outfitting them with a horse, saddle, bridle, a cow, a calf, and $500 and further financial assistance as dictated by the judges of the will. He additionally transferred ownership of two "young" enslaved people: Barclay and Santefee, to the couple.[143]

[141] Julia Latimore, Death Certificate, 24 March 1912, Monroe County Clerk, Monroe County, TN.
[142] Steed, "Toco Cemetery," 563.
[143] Will of John McGhee, 91; The name Santefee/Santifee is the best educated guess by the author. Transcripts of John McGhee's will proposed the name Sontafu and census records explored below propose the name Santifle. The author is not confident in any of these name choices.



John McGhee's Will, 1849. Ancestry.com; 1870 Census. United States Census Office, 1870. Ancestry.com.

The Sallie listed in McGhee's will may be the same Sallie McGhee who appears in the 1870 census. This is supported by the fact that a member of Sallie's household is "Santifee."[144] By 1870, Santifee is listed as 27 years old, making her around 6 years of age by the writing of John McGhee's will, making her relatively "young" as Santefee is described. The author believes that Santefee and Santifee are the same person, staying with Sallie McGhee post-enslavement.



Photograph of Pearl and Linda. Callaway Family Album B, undated. ETHS History Center.

[144] Sallie McGhee, 1870 United States Federal Census, Civil District 2, Monroe County, Tennessee, https://www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7163/records/4787029.

Pearl and Linda

In the Callaway Family Album B stored in the McClung Collection at the ETHS History Center, a photograph–as seen above–was found depicting two African American individuals in a wooded landscape dated to the 1910s. While it's possible these individuals lived at Mt. Nebo, a location the family vacationed to, the fact that these individuals are named on the photograph directly suggests familiarity with the family. Another photograph depicts Pearl separately outside what appears to be a residence.[145] Due to being included in a family album, further research should be conducted to try to identify these people and their relation to the family.

[145] "A Couple Standing in a Wooded Landscape," photograph, in *Callaway Family Photos (Album B)*, unknown photographer, ca. 1910s, C. M. McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library, accessed January 16, 2026, https://cmdc.knoxlib.org/digital/collection/p265301coll9/id/1756/rec/2.

Interpretation Recommendations

This section addresses recommendations for the use of the McGhee-Carson property as an interpretive site, including recommendations for the interpretive signage and future programs at both Toco Cemetery and the Tuskega homesite. The content for the interpretive and commemorative signs will be submitted independently of this document under the “Interpretive and Commemorative Signs” folder under “McGhee-Carson Research Files” on the State Parks SharePoint. By the time of writing this section, feedback on the signage has yet to be finalized. While there is overlap between the recommendations for the two locations, this section addresses each location separately and focuses more on the cemetery due to some site-specific considerations for each.

The author recommends that the site operate primarily as a self-guided historic trail, with occasional programs centered around key interpretive themes as discussed below. The author recommends that FLSHA staff utilize the existing parking area surrounding the picnic shelter on the property as the parking area and primary point of access to guests. Additionally, continue to block off vehicle access to guests on the McGhee-Carson with the existing gate. In the parking area, erect clear signage to signify the site and, if developed, offer pamphlets covering the history of the property, homesite, and cemetery.

From the parking area, guests will take a short trail to the Tuskega homesite and the Toco Cemetery.[146] The trail itself should consist of the current access road to the Tuskega homesite and the branch path to the cemetery, naming them something within the realm of “Tuskega Trail” and “Toco Branch” or “Cemetery Branch” would be appropriate. Both the main road and branch path should be developed to account for both guest walkability and staff driving. While the Carson-era farm ruins fell outside the scope of this project, the Carson-era fixtures could signpost a future “Carson Loop” expansion of the trail, using structures such as the Dairy House, Milking Barn, Silo, and Barn to further explore the Callaway and Carson eras of the site and expand the length of the hike. If possible, take advantage of State Park’s trial week to develop and later expand the site’s paths. Day-to-day interpretation will consist primarily of the interpretive signs developed in the 2025 Summer project and digital app content.

[146] In social media and otherwise public descriptions of the site should reinforce that while it is a “trail” it is very short, very easy, and focused more on the destinations than the property hike.

Key Interpretive Themes

With an audience of descendants communities of the cemetery, local community members, national and international travelers, and genealogists in mind, conduct programs which accomplish the following: 1) Leave visitors with an understanding of the experiences of enslavement, sharecropping, and tenant farming in East Tennessee, 2) Inform the public of the importance and challenges of preserving and researching historic African American cemeteries, 3) Call visitors to action through sharing oral histories, support through volunteering at clean up events, and advocate for the protection of historic African American cemeteries. These interpretive goals are based on the current existing research on the site, and further research should be conducted to expand these goals, especially in exploring other aspects of African Americans' experiences at the McGhee-Carson site.

As seen by the interpretive goals above, as well as all interpretive recommendations below, the author strongly recommends that slavery, the experiences of those enslaved, and African American experiences should be explored consistently and purposefully throughout all of the site's interpretation. The author *strongly* advises against segregating the interpretation of the experiences of White and Black residents of the McGhee-Caron property (I. E., only exploring enslavement in a single program). Nearly all programs, as recommended later in this section, can and should include discussion of the site's African American residents.

The author identified four interpretive themes to anchor future interpretation and programs at the homesite and cemetery, which align with the proposed interpretive goals.

- ***Enslavement and Resistance:*** Anchored by the enslaved burial sections of the cemetery and the homesite ruins, explore stories of the lives of the enslaved community, their work in agriculture, animal husbandry, brickmaking, house service, and other crafts/trades, and their resistance through taking steps towards self-emancipation.

- ***East Tennessee Enslavers and Confederates:*** Anchored by the homesite ruins, explore stories that explore the McGhee family's somewhat unique status as wealthy enslaver elites in East Tennessee. Highlight how their wealth came from both land acquisition through the Cherokee Agency and the system of enslavement. Furthermore, explore Charles McClung McGhee as an emerging industrialist, Confederate, and attempt to work with Union forces.

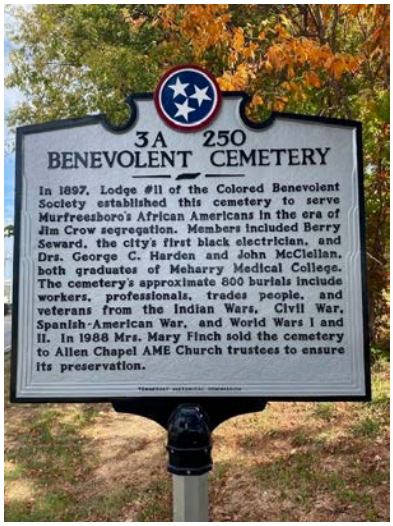
- ***Sharecropping, Tenant Farming, and the Work of African Americans During Reconstruction and New South Eras:*** Anchored by the “still standing” cabin and McGhee sections of the cemetery, explore stories of African Americans’ transition from enslavement into systems of sharecropping and tenant farming, with a particular focus on the Black McGhee family.

- ***African American Death, Burial, and Rememberance:*** Anchored on the Toco Cemetery as a whole, explores stories of hardship and dignity through the lives, deaths, and burials of those buried in the cemetery. Explore how enslaved communities and tenant farmers memorialized their loved ones despite living within oppressive systems. Also highlight ongoing efforts to research and preserve African American cemeteries.

These interpretive themes are based on the current existing research on the site, and further research should be conducted to expand these goals, especially in exploring other aspects of African Americans’ experiences at the McGhee-Carson site.

Cemetery Commemoration Sign

The author believes that both an interpretive panel and a sign commemorating the cemetery as a sacred sight are both important to the site’s interpretation and preservation, serving different roles. The commemorative sign serves to mark the transition between sacred and non-sacred grounds and to inform the public of the cemetery if the interpretive panel were to be removed or changed at the request of descendants. The commemorative sign provides a brief overview of the site’s creation and use, acknowledgement of enslavement on the site and the demographics of those buried there (enslaved African Americans, tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and their families), and a list of the known family names buried there. Below are two potential approaches to the style of the sign: 1) a Tennessee Historical Commission (TCH) historical marker style sign or 2) a stone commemorative sign.





Benevolent Cemetery Historical Marker by the TN Historical Commission, The Historical Marker Database, 2022; Wheat Community African Burial Ground Commemorative Marker, African American Registry, unknown date.[147]

Some organizations, such as the CHP and Allen Chapel African Methodist Episcopal, opted to erect a TN Historical Marker for the Benevolent Cemetery in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. These signs are highly visible, durable, and easily recognized by guests as designators of historic sites. Other sites, such as the Wheat Community African Burial Ground in Roane County, Tennessee, utilize a stone sign to commemorate the burial grounds. Stone commemorative signs are generally less aesthetically intrusive and can more easily be added to. This is particularly desirable for Toco if further research is conducted and more family names are uncovered. Both approaches would be appropriate for this site; however, the author is inclined to lean towards a stone commemorative sign. If a stone sign is chosen for the site, consult and work with William Edwards from the park's maintenance team for his experience and expertise in stonework. The current drafts of the commemorative panel have been submitted to Hobart Akin for editing.

Interpretive Signs

Even though the site will be tied to a historic hike, the park staff should consider accessibility for the greatest number of guests. The author recommends a low, angled sign for the greatest degree of accessibility. The style of interpretive panel standard across most park sites is appropriate for the cemetery and homesite.

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[147] "Benevolent Cemetery," Historical Marker Database, Tennessee Historical Commission, Marker No. 3A 250, erected 2021; revised April 19, 2024, HMdb.org, https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=186061.



One of the interpretive panels at South Cumberland and Savage Gulf State Parks. Friends of South Cumberland State Parks, 2024.

To maintain the historic integrity and aesthetic character of the cemetery, as well as to recognise the sacred nature of the space, the interpretive sign for Toco should be placed to obstruct as little of the cemetery as possible and should not be placed amongst the burials. The author recommends that the sign be placed outside the wooden fence enclosure. It can be placed either in the corner of the enclosure where the guests will first enter the plot area or centered to the enclosure. Similar considerations should be given to the commemorative panel. The author recommends that the commemorative panel be placed more centrally to the outside perimeter of the cemetery, while the interpretive sign is placed at the corner once you enter the cemetery. The current drafts of the interpretive panels have been submitted to Hobart Akin for editing.

Digital Content

The author believes digital interpretation is critical for the exploration of the individual stories of those buried at Toco, as well as an important avenue to engage with the public to gather further information on the site and contact descendants. Due to the scope and limited timeline of the original project, dedicated digital content was not developed by the author. However, the Site History and Cemetery Biographies sections of this document can be edited to produce digital interpretive content. Utilize the State Park trails app and/or an online web page to link guests to these histories. Each biography should have a disclaimer stating the following:

“These biographies were authored based primarily on census records, death certificates, and other public records; thus, our current understanding of the lives of those interred at the

cemetery is limited. If you have any additional information on those buried at the cemetery, please contact Fort Loudoun staff at placehold@email.gov."

If the park wishes to reinforce the desire to work with the public to better research and interpret the site, staff could ask specifically for "relevant oral histories, photographs, or records" instead of just "information."

Program Idea Outlines

For Season Interpretive Rangers, Park Law Enforcement Rangers, interns, or otherwise interpreting staff, I have provided ideas for public programs that align with the "Key Interpretive Themes and Resources" above.

1) McGhee-Callaway Carson Plantation History Hike

- ***Themes:*** Cherokee in the Little TN River Valley, white settlement, enslavement, Civil War, tenant farming & sharecropping, Carson era dairy farming, federal and state management.
- ***Scope:*** 17th century-Modern Day
- ***Sites/Stops:***
    - Homesite
    - Cemetery
    - Dairy Farm fixtures
    - Homesite (Ending spot, ending program discussing fire and modern use)
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - John McGhee land grants, will, etc
    - Mansion Photographs
    - McGhee family portraits
    - Newspaper articles and advertisements
- ***Overview***:
    - This hike serves as the long-form "sampler platter" of the property, similar to the Fort Tour at the main Fort Loudoun site. Beginning at the parking lot, staff will walk-and-talk about the history of Cherokee presence in the Little Tennessee Valley, the immigration of the McGhee family, John McGhee's land acquisitions through the Cherokee Agency, and the establishment of the plantation. At the homesite, highlight the enslavement of African Americans, the construction of the

Tuskega Mansion and St. Andrews Episcopal Church with enslaved labor, the life of Charles McClung McGhee, and the site's role during the Civil War. Then, explore the transfer of the property to Thomas Callaway, his death, and the estate's succession to the Callaway and later Hutchison/Carson families. At the cemetery, staff will discuss its origins as an enslaved community burial ground, the continuation of burials by tenant farmers and sharecroppers, and the lives of those interred—especially Richard B. McGhee, Beulah and John L. McGhee's children, Floyd McGhee, and Moses McGhee. Concludes with the property's sale to TVA, the construction of Tellico Reservoir and subsequent flooding, the burning of the mansion, and the site's modern management and preservation goals.

2) Settling the Little Tennessee Valley Historic Hike

- ***Themes:*** Cherokee presence, North Carolina Western territories, Tellico Blockhouse, Revolutionary War, land grants, immigration, Barclay I, and John C. McGhee
- ***Scope:*** 17th century-1830s
- ***Sites/Stops:***
    - Tuskega Trail
    - Carson Loop (Later)
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Photograph of Barclay I McGhee's home and John C. McGhee's log cabin.
    - John McGhee land grants
    - John McGhee Cherokee Agency materials
- ***Overview:***
    - This program would be complementary to any programming done at the Tellico Blockhouse site. It will explore Cherokee presence in the Little Tennessee River Valley, the Cherokee Overhill Towns, the migration of white settlers to the Western territories of North Carolina post-revolution, the issues of defining borders and the Cherokee Agency, the McGhees' trading with the Tellio Blockhouse, and will even discuss the folklore regarding John McGhee's acquisition of the island property. For this program, be sure to consult the 2023 Archeology Report for a more in-depth overview of Cherokee history in the region and the McGhee-Carson site.

3) McGhee Plantation During the Civil War Program

- ***Themes:*** Enslavement, Charles McClung McGhee, protecting personal investments vs. loyalty vs. opportunism.
- ***Scope:*** 1850-1865
- ***Sites/Stops:***
    - Tuskega Homesite
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Portraits of Charles McClung McGhee
    - Runaway Advertisements
    - Photos of Tuskega mansion
    - Articles discussing Charles during the war
- ***Overview:***
    - More of a stationary lecture/talk-style program that focuses largely on the site's connection to the Civil War. Use the homesite as the main talking point, with its construction with enslaved labor, its occupation by both Union and Confederate soldiers, the impressment at both Tuskega and Toqua, and the folklore of the soldiers being killed and buried on the property. Charles is a great central figure to focus on, discussing his status as an East TN confederate, enslaver and industrialist, Confederate colonel, and later failed supplier for the Union.

4) Life and Survival Under Enslavement at McGhee Plantation Historic Hike

- ***Themes:*** Enslavement, Survival, Hardships, Burial and Community Building
- ***Scope:*** 1850-1865
- ***Sites/Stops:***
    - Homesite
    - Homesite (Cabin)
    - Predominantly enslaved burial section of the cemetery
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Runaway advertisements
    - Cemetery prints
    - Saint Andrews Episcopal Church photographs
    - Advertisement of Barclay's children hiring out those he enslaved

- ***Overview:***
    - This hike would be a more detailed look at enslavement at the McGhee plantation, looking at the numbers of people enslaved by Barclay I, John C. McGhee, Margaret White McGhee, Barclay II McGhee, and Charles McClung McGhee. Explore the forced work those enslaved by the McGhee did (agriculture, horticulture, chattel sale, brickmaking, construction labor, etc). Explore the stories of Sallie and James McGhee, as well as Barclay and Santefee (research further), and others confirmed to have been enslaved by the McGhee family (Richard B. McGhee). Address the steps people took towards self-emancipation during the Civil War. Discuss Barclay II's complex relationship with those he enslaved, while acknowledging that he both took steps to ensure that they are cared for following his death, reinforce the fact he never freed those he enslaved during his lifetime, he personally benefited from their focused labor throughout his entire life, and that his children seemingly went against their father's wishes and continued to hire out those he enslaved. Explore the cemetery itself, the establishment of the cemetery by those enslaved, how the plain markers reflect the limited access to materials for burials for the dead, the remote nature of the cemetery, and the importance of cemeteries to enslaved communities, and the importance of preserving cemeteries such as Toco.

5) Callaway-Carson Era Historic Hike

- ***Themes:*** Emancipation, tenant farming, sale of property, living conditions of Tenant farming
- ***Scope:*** 1870-1969
- ***Sites/Stops:*** Tusekga Dairy farm fixtures, homesite, "still standing" cabin
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Tuskega Farm advertisements
    - Portraits of Thomas H. Callaway
    - Portraits of Carsons and Hutchisons
- ***Overview:***
    - If FLSHP were to expand the length of the trail to reach the historic fixtures representative of the Carson-era beef and dairy industry, staff could offer a guided hike focusing on the transformation of the plantation during Reconstruction and the New South. Interpret the transition from enslavement into

systems of tenant farming and sharecropping, the sale of the property to Thomas Callaway, and the later management of the farm by the Carson and Hutchison families. At the homesite and along the Carson Loop, discuss the operation of the beef and dairy farm, labor systems, and how African American families continued to live and work on the property well into the 20th century.

6) "Lives of the Cemetery" Ranger-Guided Tour

- ***Themes:*** Slavey, Emancipation, tenant farming, family, death, hardship
- ***Scope:*** ca. 1800s-1937
- ***Sites/Stops:***
    - Markers in the cemetery about each biography being explored
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Floyd S. McGhee articles
    - Richard B. McGhee death notices
- ***Overview:***
    - This program would be less frequent than the programs listed above due to limited foot traffic, but still engage the public with the cemetery. Staff will use the cemetery and the markers within to tell the stories of those buried at the cemetery. The number of stories told will depend on how long you want the program to be; however, here are a few select biographies:
        - Richard B. McGhee
        - Missouri America McGhee
        - Floyd S. McGhee
        - Moses and Uncle Robert
        - Beluah Tate, John Luther McGhee, and their children

      Also discuss what the markers themselves can tell us about the lives of those buried there, with particular focus on the McGhee family memorial, its role in signifying the family plot, and the possibility of being constructed with money awarded from the lawsuit. Also, potentially discuss Yucca plants, their significance to burial grounds in African American communities in the South and Appalachia.

8) Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the Little Tennessee Valley Program

- ***Themes:*** Preservation, displacement, environmental/property change, modern management
- ***Scope:*** 1933-Present
- ***Sites/Stops:*** Homesite, Cemetery
- ***Supplemental Prints:***
    - Articles discussing the sale of the property and the construction of the reservoir
    - Tellico Reservoir construction photographs
    - Portions of the TVA cemetery relocation index
- ***Overview:***
    - This program will explore the history of TVA and TVA's presence in the Little TN Valley with a particular focus on the acquisition of historic sites, homes, and cemeteries in the Little Tennessee Valley, focusing on McGhee-Carson. Explain the common relocation of cemeteries to higher ground areas, with Toco Cemetery being untouched due to its higher elevation. Bring awareness of both the visible and invisible historic environments impacted by the reservoir, the changes of the natural landscape, and provide a nuanced view of the *impact* of TVA

Cemetery Preservation Recommendations

Condition Assessment

The author agrees with the conclusion made in the archeological survey conducted by Lee University in 2023, “The overall condition of the cemetery is poor.”[148] There are a few primary points of concern, with special consideration given to using the cemetery as a publicly accessible historic site. The first point of concern is the **lack of clear signage**. As of now, the cemetery and site as a whole lack clear signage to inform visitors of the cemetery’s history, rules, and hours. Such signage can also help in deterring guests from unintentionally damaging the headstones and grounds, as discussed above.



The Toco Cemetery lot, lacking any enclosure. All visitors currently have complete unobstructed access to the cemetery. Photograph by author, 2025.

The second point of concern is a **lack of permanent enclosure**. There is a lack of a built enclosure for the cemetery, such as an encompassing fence or wall. This allows anyone access to the cemetery grounds, with or without supervision or permission. With the poor condition of the cemetery and the sacred nature of the space, an enclosure is required to prevent further damage to the cemetery. Limiting access through an enclosure will prevent unnecessary contact with the tombstone transcriptions, ensuring the stone’s longevity. Additionally, the ground that the cemetery is built upon is soft, especially during humid conditions. With the soft ground, foot traffic could cause further damage to the burials and headstones. The soft, uneven ground may also be dangerous to guests. Furthermore, with evidence of past vandalism and disturbance of burials, an enclosure will at least deter further vandalism to the site. For these reasons, the author recommends the construction of an enclosure to limit foot traffic outside of staff-guided tours and family visitation.

The third point of concern is the **lack of regular maintenance** of the cemetery grounds. While a majority of the grounds consist of dirt, leaf litter, and branches, there are sections of the

[148] West, *Plantation Assessment,* 8.

cemetery where grass, vines, and other foliage grow. This overgrowth conceals visibility of burials and can contribute to the degradation of headstones over time. Members of the Fort Loudoun Association conduct semi-regular light clean-ups of the site. This includes picking up branches and pulling weeds; however, there are no systems or regular communication of what work is done, what work needs to be done, and what work should not be done. For the long-term preservation of the cemetery, a carefully considered maintenance plan should be created and communicated with the park's maintenance team and volunteer groups.



Photograph of a gravestone fragment leaning against another upright and broken stone. The upright stone is an example of obvious breakage of the stones and the practice of leaning fragments against upright stones. Photograph by author, 2025.

The fourth concern is **damage to individual markers.** Most evidently, there are a considerable number of broken headstones and headstone fragments throughout the entire cemetery. Most of the fragments are concentrated at the northernmost "McGhee" section, which holds a majority of the McGhee family burials near the access road. Some fragments remain in proximity to their original burial; however, others are completely removed from their original context. Furthermore, many of these fragments are leaned against their base stone of origin, potentially leading to further leaning of the upright stones, causing further damage.

If opened to visitors, these fragments could be further broken or stolen, further damaging the historic and sacred integrity of the cemetery. See the folder titled "Marker Fragments" under

“Cemetery Preservation” for photographs of all known headstone fragments. Many headstones–both standing and fragments–are covered in biological growth, as well as dirt, dust, and other materials. Both organic and inorganic build-up decrease the legibility of certain stones and contribute to the degradation of the stones’ integrity over time. See the folder titled “Overgrowth Examples” under “Cemetery Preservation” for photographs of examples of overgrowth and build-up in the cemetery. Furthermore, a number of headstones and the McGhee family memorial stone are leaning. While none appear to be at risk of breaking from leaning, the staff may consider resetting the stones identified in “Leaning Stones” under “Cemetery Preservation.”

In order to ensure the historic and structural integrity of the cemetery, the author has outlined a preservation plan in two phases. Phase 1 covers the immediate, critical preservation needs of the cemetery. These are projects that will immediately help maintain the site’s historic integrity in the short term. Phase 2 covers continuous maintenance practices, which will help maintain the site’s historic integrity in the long term.

Phase 1: Immediate Preservation Projects

1) Cleaning Markers

The author recommends a periodical cleaning of the markers in the cemetery. This includes cleaning individual headstones with water, a cleaning agent, and scrubbing with soft-thistle brushes. To accomplish this, work with the Fort Loudoun Association (FLA) to organize a volunteer event to clean the cemetery once every 3-5 years, and collaborate with the THC and CHP to advertise the event. Because cemetery cleaning requires a decent amount of training, preparation, and guidance by park staff, being able to maintain a regular, returning group of volunteers would be ideal, so reach out to past cleaners. This event–including pre-cleaning training, site set up, and cleaning of headstones–should be guided/supervised by at least one park ranger. Due to his personal and professional experience, the author recommends working/consulting with William Edwards from the State Park’s maintenance team for training and supervising volunteers.

The cleaning agent should be a mild, non-ionic cleaning agent. The author strongly recommends D-2 as the cleaning agent of choice due to its effectiveness against biological growth, being gentle on most stone materials, and being biodegradable. If D-2 is not selected as

the cleaning agent, consult with the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP) or other preservation resources (listed below) as to what alternative cleaner would be appropriate for use in the cemetery.

Sandblasting, high-pressure water washing, and the use of bleach are completely inappropriate methods for cleaning the headstones at Toco. These techniques can erode the surface of the markers and accelerate their deterioration. Likewise, chlorides, salts, and acidic cleaners must never be used. All of these harmful practices will cause irreversible damage to the stones and should never be used by staff or volunteers.

Steps for Cleaning Headstones

Before cleaning any headstone, always run a test spot on the stone you wish to clean to ensure the stone is structurally sound enough for cleaning. Pick a small spot, preferably one that is not easily visible. Follow the steps below, but keep isolated to the single spot. Once the test spot has confirmed that cleaning will not damage the stone, follow the steps below for the entire stone.

1. Take a “Before” photograph of the marker about to be cleaned.
2. Remove dry and easily removable materials such as moss, vines, and other organic growth from the headstone and adjacent grounds.
3. Wet the stone’s surface with clear water using a non-pressurized hose or low-pressure sprayer.
4. Scrub the wet stone surface with a soft-bristle brush. Brush from the bottom up to prevent streaks.
5. Rinse the stone with clear water.
6. If more intensive cleaning is needed beyond water, staff and volunteers can then clean using D-2:
    a. Wet the stone surface using clean water.
    b. Spray the headstone with generous amounts of D-2.
    c. Once applied, scrub the stone with the soft-bristle brush. (For more intensive biological growth, let the solution sit for 5-15 minutes before scrubbing. During this time, spray additional cleaning solution or water to ensure the cleaning solution does not dry during this process).
    d. Once scrubbed, rinse the stone again with the hose or sprayer.

    e. As needed, repeatedly wet the stone with water, scrub with the bristle brush, and rinse until the surface is clean. In this step, do use a cleaning agent.
7. End the cleaning processes by thoroughly rinsing off the stone's surface. For more ingrained biological growth that wasn't cleaned by the steps above, staff and volunteers may want to lightly spray the entire stone (just enough to have a thin layer on the entire stone but not enough to cause streaking). Let this layer remain on the stone and expect to see changes in appearance after a few weeks.
8. Take an "After" photograph of the marker that was cleaned.

Things to Consider Before, During, and After Cleaning Markers:

1. Consider the time of year, weather, and temperature before planning a cleaning event. Whenever possible, schedule cleaning for cooler, overcast days in the fall. On hot or sunny days, cleaning agents can dry too quickly and cause staining. Likewise, avoid cleaning during freezing conditions, as water or cleaning solutions can freeze within the stone and cause additional damage.
2. Inform volunteers on how to safely and considerately navigate the cemetery grounds. Note the softness of the ground during humid conditions, identify how to avoid stepping on unstable or dangerous ground, and how to safely position themselves while cleaning each headstone.
3. Ensure volunteers wear appropriate attire, including latex gloves, closed-toed shoes, and pants, discouraging open-toed shoes and shorts.
4. Avoid cleaning headstones that are flaking, crumbling, have fractures, or otherwise appear to be structurally unstable. Staff can identify headstones too structurally unstable for cleaning during the spot test with flags, similar to those used in the archeological survey. Cleaning these stones as listed above can lead to further damage.
5. Do not let cleaning agents dry on the headstones. To prevent this, be aware of the weather conditions on the day of cleaning, the size of the stone you're attempting to clean, and how fast the cleaning agent dries. It may be beneficial to only clean sections of the stone at a time or avoid overly hot days. Also, be sure to repeatedly wet or spray additional cleaning agents to prevent drying.
6. As instructed in the steps above, photograph the stone before and after each cleaning to 1) track the condition of each stone over time and 2) document which stones have been cleaned at each cleaning event.

See Strangstad's guidebook *A Cemetery Preservation Primer* for more in-depth recommendations for tombstone cleaning, as well as the CHP's resources on cemetery preservation at https://www.mtsuhistpres.org/cemetery-resources, especially the "Intro Guide to Cemetery Cleaning" for a more in-depth overview of everything to consider when organizing a cemetery clean-up day.

2) Repairing / Resetting Markers

Before any work is done to repair, reset, or in any way alter the markers of the cemetery, consult with a gravestone conservationist or preservation professional on the repair and resetting of grave markers. The author recommends contacting the CHP or THC for additional resources for marker repair, as well as guidance in choosing a professional for consultation or hire. See the end of this section for recommendations for identifying consultants and additional resources.

This section is an overview of what repairing and resetting headstones will likely entail and does not provide actionable recommendations for the repair of the cemetery.



Two examples of headstones with fragments in proximity to their original headstone. Avoid leaning fragments against stones. This can lead to instability of the marker over time. Photographs by author, 2025.

Several headstones need repair. This will primarily consist of returning and affixing stone fragments to their original headstone. This will likely entail surveying the cemetery to identify and document all known fragments and matching stone fragments to their original headstone. Conducted by or with consultation with a cemetery preservationist professional, a headstone is typically repaired by using epoxy or otherwise appropriate historic mortar compound to affix

fragments to the original marker and clamping the fragment to the original stone using wooden splints until the epoxy solidifies fully.

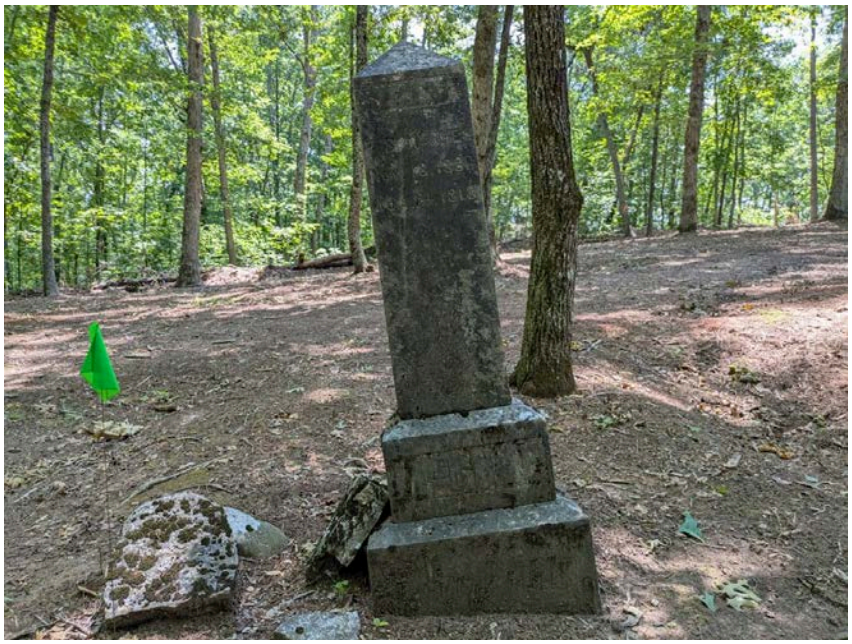
Resetting leaning stones can help prevent further deterioration for some headstones, especially if the stone is already cracking, flaking, or showing signs that it might break from the lean. It can also improve the visibility of text or entire stones that have sunken over time. However, resetting headstones–especially older or fragile stones–can potentially do more harm than good.

Resetting or stabilizing gravestones should only be considered in specific cases: fully sunken stones, stones that have text that is partially or fully obscured by their sunken state, or stones that are leaning in a way that puts them at risk of damage. Each stone comes with unique considerations due to differences in material, stability, and construction. Thus, resetting any of the stones should ideally be conducted by a trained gravestone conservationist and crew, especially for stones that appear fragile.

As previously mentioned, none of the stones in the cemetery appear to be in critical need of resetting or stabilization; however, I have listed two examples below of stones that park staff continue to observe and consider resetting in the coming years if lean worsens.



“Robert McGhee” grave maker shown above is one of the stones with the greatest lean at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. The author recommends documenting the lean in the coming years to track any worsening leaning. This is the most likely candidate for resetting in the future. Photograph by author, 2025.



The McGhee family memorial marker shown above is the second stone with the greatest lean at Toco (Toqua) Cemetery. The author similarly recommends documenting the lean in the coming years to track any worsening leaning. Take particular notice of the base of the stone. If any ground becomes disturbed by the stone's lean, it will likely need to be reset. Photograph by author, 2025.

In previous preservation plans for other historic cemeteries, the center has recommended the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) for their online resources on tombstone repair via YouTube videos or articles on their website at https://cemeteryconservatorsunitedstandards.org/. For in-state resources, the author recommends contacting Graham Perry, the cemetery specialist with the Tennessee Historical Commission, for resources and recommendations on preservation practice, laws, and funding. Additionally, contact the CHP for guidance on finding professional conservationists. See Strangstad's guidebook, *A Cemetery Preservation Primer,* for more in-depth recommendations and risks associated with tombstone repair and resetting.

3) Storing Headstone Fragments

If the cemetery is opened for regular park use prior to fragments being reattached to their original headstones or consultation with a preservationist professional recommends against the repairing of certain stones, the author recommends temporary storage of fragments. This recommendation extends *only* to fragments that are reasonably at risk of damage or theft. This

includes only small, fully detached fragments that could be reasonably taken or further broken by visitors. If this course of action is taken, be sure to do the following:

1) **Field Documentation:** Thoroughly recording the original location of each fragment before removal. Place a survey flag at the exact spot where the fragment was found. Photograph the fragment in situ, ensuring the image includes clear and identifiable points of reference—such as nearby stones, trees, or landmarks—so that staff can later return the fragment to its original location.
2) **Accession:** Assign each fragment a unique call number. This number may be as simple as “1, 2, 3,” or more specific, such as “Toco2025.1, Toco2025.2, Toco2025.3,” depending on existing naming systems. Save the photograph of each fragment taken in the first step, with the file name matching the newly-assigned call number. Place these image files into a dedicated folder.
3) **Catalog:** Catalog each fragment in an Excel spreadsheet. Each entry should include the assigned call number, a transcription of any legible text on the fragment, and a note on where the fragment is physically stored. This catalog will serve as the central reference for the collection.
4) **Containment:** Place the fragments into sealed, acid-free storage containers. If multiple fragments are stored together, use acid-free tissue paper or another buffering material to create separation between the stones and prevent further damage.
5) **Label Containers:** Clearly label each storage container with the project name and box number (for example, “Toco Cemetery Removed Fragments 2025, Box 1”), along with a list of the call numbers of each fragment contained inside the storage container. The label should also include instructions on where to locate the aforementioned Excel spreadsheet catalog.
6) **Documentation:** Photograph the fragment inside the box, and create a folder containing said photograph, with the file named the same as the call number of the fragment.
7) **Storage:** Store the containers in a cool, dry space that can be secured/locked during and after regular park hours. For short-term storage, the room behind the welcome desk in the visitor center is sufficient.

The author strongly advises against interpreting or placing such stones on exhibit in the museum without explicit permission from descendant family members. Furthermore, the author recommends against permanent removal of stores and only recommends short-term storage. If

fragments are removed, take active measures to repair, secure, or otherwise allow the fragment to be returned to the cemetery without risk of damage or theft.

4) Enclosure

The author recommends that the cemetery be fully enclosed along the perimeter, giving at least 10 feet of clearance from any burial and/or marker. The enclosure should be a low wooden fence that accounts for visibility and accessibility for the most guests possible, and to be the least obstructive of the aesthetic of the cemetery as possible. The 3 and ½ foot tall wooden fence outside the visitor center would be a good model for a new cemetery enclosure. The author recommends against using stone, due to the cemetery's unlikely having ever been enclosed fully in stone. Additionally, if any connections are made with descendants, having the flexibility of a non-permanent fence would minimize waste and work to undo any enclosure.

The enclosure should include at least one large access gate that accommodates both pedestrians and guests using mobility aids. This gate will additionally provide access for maintenance staff and appropriate equipment. To prevent entry without staff accompaniment or permission, the gate should be equipped with a lock.

Lastly, while this would delay regular use of the cemetery as a historic site, the author recommends pursuing a GPR survey before any enclosure is erected in order to establish the perimeter of the enclosure (see “Further Research and Projects” Section for additional recommendations).

5) Cemetery Signage

Without detracting from the aesthetic of the site, the author recommends that park staff add visible signage near the site that informs the public that entry into the enclosure is prohibited without staff accompaniment or permission. Emphasize the fragile nature of the grounds and the markers, the danger of traversing the grounds, and provide contact information for park staff. This signage is separate from the interpretive and commemorative signage explored in the “Interpretive Recommendations” section.

Phase 2: Continued Maintenance

Lot Maintenance

Thoughtful and purposeful maintenance of the cemetery is key to the cemetery's longevity.

1. **Timeline:** As previously discussed with Park Manager Eric Hughey, maintenance of the cemetery plot will occur weekly as a part of pre-existing weekly maintenance of the broader McGhee-Carson wildlife area. Weekly maintenance, which is described below, would be more than appropriate for the cemetery.

2. **Mowing and Weed Eating Equipment:** For regular maintenance of the grounds, the author advises against using ride mowers to maintain the site. While there are large stretches where no visible markers are present, there is a high likelihood that there are many burials without markers throughout the entire plot, and markers not easily seen on the surface. Work with maintenance staff to identify areas of the plot where the use of a push mower is appropriate if a GPR survey is conducted to locate all burials. If a mower is ever used, avoid mowing right against headstones, and always use a rubber blade guard to prevent the mower blades from damaging headstones. To cut foliage around individual headstones and burial spots, the author recommends using grasscutters/weedeaters with a soft nylon trimmer line. Additionally, do not use commercial herbicides, especially those that contain salts or acidic fluids. Such herbicides can cause damage to headstones over time as the chemicals are absorbed into the stone.

3. **Foliage Management:** Each week, trim grass and other low-growing foliage that grows near headstones. Trimming the entire plot weekly is not necessarily required; however, the author recommends a full plot trim in preparation for ranger-guided tours of the cemetery grounds. As they appear, remove or prune bushes and shrubs that grow large enough to obscure or threaten the historic integrity of headstones. Be careful when removing larger/well-established shrubbery in proximity to burials. Root removal can potentially damage burials.

Yucca plants grow all throughout the cemetery, especially in the Northern and Northeastern sections around the more modern markers. Take particular care **not to** damage or remove these plants. Families commonly planted yucca in cemeteries as burial markers, symbols of remembrance, and boundaries for the burial ground property.[149] While the original plants likely no longer exist, these plants are likely descendants of yucca planted for the aforementioned purposes.



Example of Yucca plant growing in close proximity to headstone. Plants such as these should not be removed unless absolutely necessary for the preservation of a stone. Photograph by author, 2025.

To respect the likely original purpose of the plants, avoid removing any yucca plants from the cemetery unless it is absolutely necessary to prevent damage to the headstones. The general rule of thumb is to prioritize the preservation of headstones over the conservation of foliage. However, there are no evident signs of damage to any of the stones caused by the yucca.

Public Communication

The author recommends that any social media posts covering the histories and programs of the site include a short disclaimer that informs guests that entry into the cemetery without staff guidance is not permitted. Emphasize that even non-malicious traversal of the grounds touching the headstones can unintentionally cause harm. Here is an example:

“To help Fort Loudoun State Historic Park staff maintain the historic integrity of this sacred site and guarantee the safety of all park guests, do not enter the cemetery enclosure without permission from or accompaniment by park staff. Contact us at ###-###-#### for questions regarding cemetery rules and hours.”

[149] “#PlantOfTheMonth: Yucca,” *McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture*, February 25, 2021, accessed January 16, 2026, https://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/2021/02/25/plantofthemonth-yucca/; Rainville, *Hidden History:* 133.

Further Research and Projects

General Site History Research

There is still an immense amount of research left to do on this site. Due to the 2025 project's focus on enslavement, the Civil War, and the cemetery, research on other facets of the site's history was limited. Further research can be conducted on Thomas H. Callaway, the Callaway family, the Hutchisons, and the Carsons. The work of TVA in the Little Tennessee River Valley and its impact on the property are similarly important avenues to pursue. Additionally, better introduce Joseph Gamble's research into indigenous history into the site's history to make the history more comprehensive.

Further Biographical Research

As discussed in previous sections, there are names on headstones, cemetery records, and genealogical research that have yet to be concretely identified or fully researched. Additionally, the author identified late into the research and editing process a photo collection of the Tuskega mansion, mansion interior, members of the Callaway and Carson families, and photographs of two unidentified African American individuals, Pearl and Linda, that are connected to the Callaway family in some way. The author recommends that staff conduct further research to find more information on the individuals not explored in the 2025 project.

The will of John McGhee contains roughly 85 first names of people enslaved by John McGhee at the time of the will's creation in 1849. Due to the limited time of the original 2025 research project, there was not enough time to fully investigate these names, instead focusing on researching names that were known to be connected directly to the cemetery and with information beyond just a first name. That said, this is a critical thread of research, and it is required to tell the site's full story and make connections to descendant groups.

Beyond the names explored above, Miranda Barnett identifies these non-McGhee names: Robert Smith (son of Hilery and Violet Smith born April 6, 1907, and died April 20, 1907), and Maggie Lula Humphreys (daughter of W.M. and S.H. Humphreys born June 28, 1908, and died March 17, 1909).31 There are also a few McGhees listed that I am unable to confirm or find records of: Samuel McGhee (son of Sam H. and Maggie McGhee born November 21, 1896, and died July 4, 1909), Sarrah McGhee (born April 4, 1824), and Pollie McGhee (died March 26, 1909 age 60, which would put her birth year around 1849).32 As stated in previous sections, I

found little to no records about these individuals, so I am unable to confirm or deny if they are buried in this cemetery." Further research should be conducted to identify these people and their relation to Toco Cemetery.

Ground Penetrating Radar Survey

The author strongly agrees with the conclusions in both the 2023 Archeology Report and Dr. West's survey: the park needs to pursue conducting a GPR survey of the cemetery to accurately map out the cemetery in its entirety, including every burial location, document the actual number of people interred at the cemetery, and identify buried headstones to be uncovered, enabling park staff to gain new information on those buried and to restore burials in their entirety. **The author very strongly recommends conducting a GPR survey before erecting any enclosure to avoid damaging unmarked burials.**

Genealogical Research and Identifying Descendant Families

With the limited scope of the project and failure to appropriately allocate time for the intensive process of building family trees of those interred and locating descendants of those buried, John Wallace failed to locate any descendants with publicly available contact information. For future guidance and feedback for the interpretation and preservation of the park's resources, the park should look into setting up a dedicated project to conduct further genealogical research on the individuals explored in the "Cemetery Biographies" section. The author identified a few potential threads that should be further researched. In the footnotes of Texas McGhee, Sallie Belle McGhee, Robert Nelson McGhee, and Della Mae McGhee's biographies, the author identified family trees located on Ancestry.com that extend into the modern day. **Further search into these family trees and identifying reliable contact information for these descendants should be a priority for State Park Staff.**

Recommended Readings[150]

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MacArthur, William J. "The Early Career of Charles McClung McGhee." In *The Annals of Tennessee of the End of the Eighteenth Century*, no. 45, edited by Stanley J. Folmsbee

[150] This is not a comprehensive bibliography of sources used throughout the entire report. These are resources the author identified as potentially important for Seasonal Interpretive Rangers and other FLSHA staff to utilize for further research and preparing historical programming at the McGhee-Carson site.

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