



**Geer Cemetery** was founded in 1877 when three formerly enslaved men—Nelson Mitchell, Willis Moore, and John O’Daniel—purchased two acres from white landowners, Jesse and Polly Geer. Durham had no public burial ground where African Americans could be buried until Beechwood Cemetery opened in late 1928. A final resting place for many of the city’s African American founders, Geer Cemetery is a testament to the self-reliance of Black Durham in response to the injustice of Jim Crow segregation.

**The Friends of Geer Cemetery (FoGC)** is a grassroots organization of descendants and allies committed to the recognition, preservation, and respect of this space.

Founded in 2003 by R. Kelly Bryant Jr. and others, FoGC incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2020. In addition to the current exhibit, our work includes advocating for public support for perpetual care, coordinating volunteer cleanup efforts, celebrating the lives of those buried here through research and storytelling, and connecting with an expanding community of descendants.

We welcome your engagement and support!

@ friendsofgeercemetery@gmail.com

@friendsofgeer

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**1877–1945**  
Years of active use

**2,000+**  
Estimated burials

**1989**  
First documented action of Durham City Council to participate in perpetual care at Geer Cemetery

**200**  
Approximate number of identified markers

**3.769**  
Acres of land as currently surveyed



# IN PLAIN SIGHT

Reflections Past & Actions Present  
in Durham’s Geer Cemetery

**JANUARY 23 – APRIL 3, 2021**



800 Colonial Street  
Durham, NC

[DurhamInPlainSight.com](http://DurhamInPlainSight.com)

# Outdoor Exhibit Guide

*In Plain Sight* consists of ten exhibit panels arranged along Geer Cemetery's historic carriage track. They tell the story of this space as well as those of individuals buried here. While the first and last three panels as listed below follow a broad timeline, the exhibit can be experienced in any order.

- 1 Reconstructing Geer Cemetery History
- 2 Out of Slavery
- 3 Building Black Durham
- 4 Faith Communities
- 5 Economic Life
- 6 Educators & Students
- 7 Honoring Invisible Labors
- 8 The Crisis of Cemetery Upkeep
- 9 Geer Cemetery Activism
- 10 Seeds of a Movement
-  Information
-  Bench

## Related Programs

### Small-Group Tours

February 13, February 27, March 13, March 27  
10 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:30 p.m.

### Virtual Panel Discussion

With Vanessa Hines, William Sturkey,  
Angela Thorpe & Andre Vann  
February 20 | 11 a.m.

### Virtual Tour

Watch the video on our website!

» Register at [DurhamInPlainSight.com](http://DurhamInPlainSight.com)



*In Plain Sight* is made possible in part by a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council, a statewide nonprofit and affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Cemetery entrance sign

Colonial Street

GEER CEMETERY

Historic carriage track

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