The Barrenness of a Cemetery

Examining Patterns of the Fragmented African-American Community in Broadway, Virginia

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Former barns lay crumpled in ashes, weeds crept into neglected crops, and mothers grieved the loss of their husbands and sons in the once picturesque Shenandoah Valley in Virginia at the close of the Civil War. And yet in this decimated valley, slaves stood free – free to walk to town, free to sit and chat, suddenly free. Yet in a sense, these freed slaves were still bound. With limited educations, job skills, and few material possessions, they faced the monumental task of establishing roots. African-Americans had little time to rest. Initially, they needed work for basic necessities in order to support their newly formed households. Several of these transitioning freed peoples settled along Central Street in the small town of Broadway, Virginia. Here the Allen family, the Madden family, James Lewis and others struggled to adjust and become self sufficient. As the years progressed, these first generation freed people succumbed to hardships and old age, and loved ones laid them to rest in the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery. Much like the burials of their enslaved parents, they were honored with prayers, and little else. They did not have the money for engraved stones. Today, a long narrow plot blanketed by grass, lies almost barren within the limestone walls of the cemetery, forgotten with the passage of time. Fortunately, four isolated stones offer clues which unlock the mysteries of a race that first experienced freedom. Last-generation slaves transitioning to first-generation citizens set priorities by first seeking basic needs and then building a community in Broadway, Virginia; yet, just like the almost barren African-American burial ground in the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery, their descendents moved on, and their traces have practically vanished.

More than 2000 marked stones reside in this currently active churchyard of the Linville Creek Church. The original section A lies in an L-shape to the West of the main entry point, located directly behind the church. The largest, main section B, including the segregated plot of

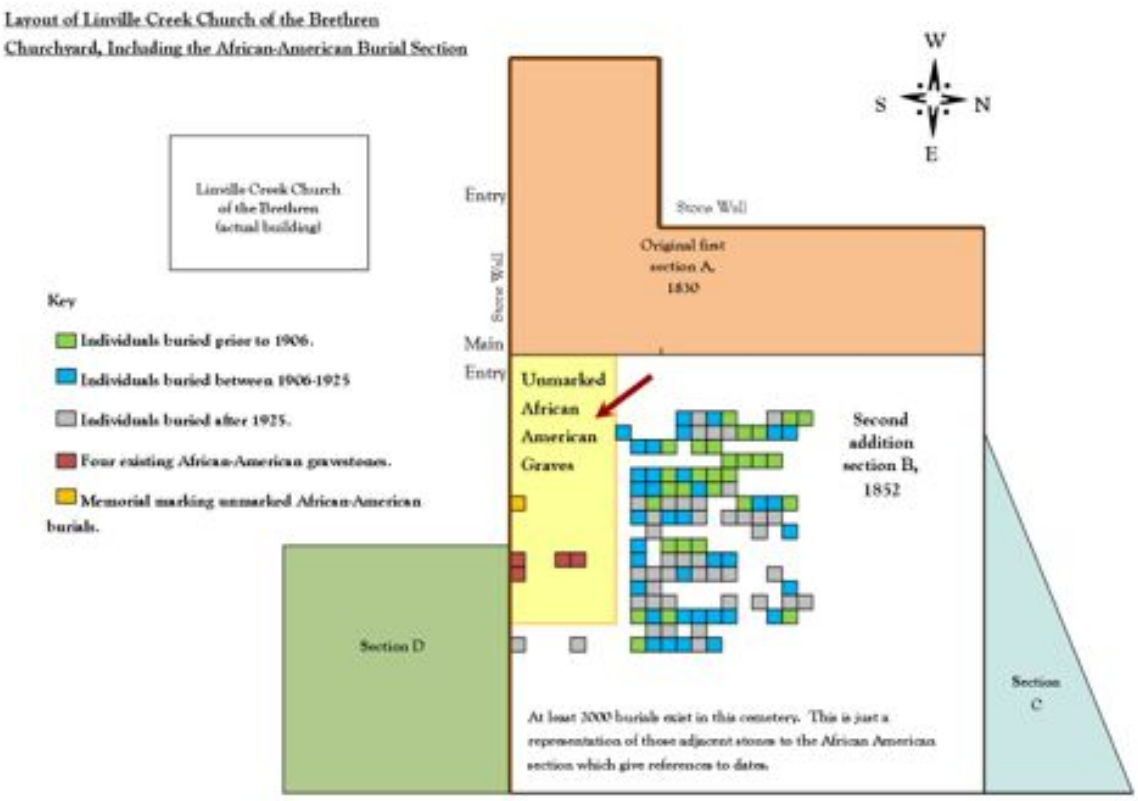

Figure 1

African American graves, forms a large square and adjoins the entire East side of the original plot. Both of these sections, A and B, are bordered by a limestone rock fence, although differences exist between the top of the original wall and the second wall bordering the larger section. Sections C and D seem to serve a haphazard expansion of the cemetery (see Figure 1). While J.R. Swank, from the Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical Society, attempted to create a list by rows of every marked stone in the cemetery,[1] the 57 rows do not necessarily follow a direct line due to gaps in burials and added sections. Historian David Charles Sloane, in his

[1] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery," Recorders Martha Lee and Nettie Lee, last modified October 18, 2004, Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical Society, accessed November 2, 2010, http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~varockin/HRHS/cem_index.htm.

study of American cemeteries, documented the rise of churchyards in the seventeenth to twentieth centuries. Residents of towns needed burial plots, and many believed a grave near a church offered "closeness to heaven."[2] Though usually no larger than several acres, he determined that the plots did not necessarily follow neat lines or rows and the "layout, monuments, and management" of these cemeteries resembled each other, regardless of faith or denomination.[3] The Linville Creek churchyard depicts the average cemetery.

The excellent condition of the dated stones, along with written works, provides sufficient history of the cemetery. In 1830, Elder John Kline donated one-and-one-half acres for the "erecting of a meeting house" – known today as the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren.[4] The original stone wall was constructed in the 1830s, followed later by the lot expansion of two more acres, in 1852, for the purposes of extending the cemetery. This large addition, with the new stone wall, includes the African-American section, though no specific African-American burial rights materialize in this deed.[5] Swank's records also show that "12 Kline stones," some of the earliest dated stones, including the earliest marked "Samuel Kline, 1811" were relocated to this churchyard in 1972. Though these stones currently stand in section A of the cemetery, the move eliminates the probability of a previous existing Kline family burial plot on the lot prior to the building of the first church. Only one random stone, Andrew Spitzer's of 1822[6], reflects a date prior to the church. Benjamin Yount and Peter Van Trump's stones date 1831 and 1834,

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[2] David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 4,17.
[3] David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 20.
[4] *Rockingham County, Virginia Burnt Deed Book,* 9 (Harrisonburg, VA: Rockingham County Courthouse), March 1, 1830, 384-385. Originally identified themselves as Tunkers or German Baptists.
[5] *Rockingham County, Virginia Burnt Deed Book,* 24, April 30, 1852, 146-147.
[6] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery."
There is no proof this actual stone stood here in 1822. It is possible that a family member placed in later in order to honor a beloved ancestor.

respectively. Sallie Rhode's stone provides an early burial date of 1835.[7] By the early 1830s, sufficient standing stones reflect the beginnings of the official churchyard, concurrent with the construction of a new church.

Just to the right, or due east, of the main entry gate of the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery lays the long, shallow grassy area, about one hundred and twenty-five feet long by twenty feet wide, denoting burials of the African-Americans. About ninety feet into this plot, stands four gravestones parallel to the remainder of stones. The stones, which vary in height and design, are depicted as follows:

1. A slightly arched stone on a ground level base, 19" high, engraved "ALICE MADDEN; BORN; Dec. 25, 1842; DIED; May 10, 1906; Age 63 yrs 4 mos; & 16 ds. The back of the stone has an additional engraving "JOHN MADDEN; DIED; Apr. 1885; 4 mos 6 ds," (see figure 2). The stone is almost illegible, information determined by etching.
2. A slightly arched stone with caps standing on a raised base resting on another rough concrete foundation, 27" high, engraved with a top floral design reading "JAMES; LEWIS; DIED; SEPT. 23, 1925; ABOUT; 80 YEARS OLD" (see figure 3).
3. A rectangular stone with angled edges and a slightly raised rough base, 28" high, engraved at the top with a scroll and leaf design reading "JAMES G. ALLEN; BORN; Oct. 18, 1830; DIED; Nov. 6, 1914; Age 84 yr. 18 ds.; a loving father" (see figure 4).
4. A rectangular stone with angled edges on a large base, though not firmly planted in the earth, 38" high, engraved with a top border with corner, inverted sunbursts reading "ALLEN; JACOB A.; 1850-1909; DOCIA ALLEN NICKENS; 1860-1924, AT REST" (see figure 5).

These stones reflect neoclassical revival designs popular in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.[8] A modern granite monument, parallel to the stone wall and perpendicular to all of the other gravestones, stands about midway along the south wall in this plot. Its inscription reads

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[7] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery."
[8] M. Ruth Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), p. 21,13. The guidelines for determining shape and evaluating designs are based on Little's models.

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

"IN GRATITUDE TO THE CHURCH FATHERS WHO DEDICATED THIS PARCEL OF LAND FOR THE BURIAL OF BLACK PEOPLE. MARKER PLACED BY M.R. ZIGLER & S.D. LINDSAY 1980." Other than an occasional scattered remnant of a worn ribbon or fragmented plastic flower likely blown there by the wind, the ground lies barren – free of any other visible markers.

Trying to identify cultural clues of these African-Americans by examining the design and structure of these stones exclusively as individual objects would be mistake for two distinct reasons. First and foremost, researcher M. Ruth Little, who interpreted cultural history from North Carolina gravestones, explained that by the early twentieth century, stones had become widely varied and lost cultural significance due to technology and German influence. Concrete markers and marble yards provided more affordable and generic stones. Transported by railway, people purchased gravestones through mail-order catalogs and some preachers even commonly sold stones. Furthermore, German influences transformed the landscapes of cemeteries. According to Little, their stones did not follow any set patterns of specified symbols, like the deathsheads of the English.[9] In fact, devoutly religious German settlers constituted seventy-five percent of the residents in Shenandoah Valley of Virginia by the nineteenth century. The Brethren denomination of Linville Creek directly descends from German roots and their cultural influences strongly impacted Rockingham County. Likewise, the county's slave population remained low. In 1840, it only equaled eleven percent of the population.[10] These last generation slaves had roots in North America for many years and much of their ancestors' cultures had already been lost to creolization. Furthermore, upon comparing the four African

[9] Little, *Sticks and Stones*, 25, 19, 230-31, 24.
[10] John W. Wayland, Ph.D., *The German Element of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia* (Bridgewater, VA: C.J. Carrier Company, 1964), 181, 185.

American stones with other stones that have similar dates still standing in the cemetery, no set pattern of design or shape exists. Even time periods do not reflect a particular style or design. Headstones with footstones, obelisk stones, ledgers, and neoclassical revival stones pay tribute to ancestors in this churchyard. Some contain only names and dates while engraved intricate designs adorn other stones. Most appear in excellent condition, yet some are barely legible. Overall, the study and comparison of the stones would not produce any particular cultural values.

Secondly, far more unmarked African-American burials exist in this cemetery than the four existing stones. M.R. Zigler, Brethren leader and missionary born and raised in Broadway, Virginia, remarked that according to cemetery chairperson Carson Holsinger, "there could have been as many as forty persons buried in that plot."[11] Additionally, Zigler, one of the two Brethren who placed the memorial (fifth stone placed in 1980) honoring these African Americans, stated that he donated funds for the stone marked "Alice Madden."[12] The stone marked "James Lewis" also probably resulted as a gift by Euro-American community members since his obituary in the Daily News Record lists no family and reports Lewis as "Broadway's only colored resident."[13] Since two of the four stones more than likely reflect values of Euro-Americans, no significant clues can be gleaned concerning these African-Americans, other than names and dates, and German influences.

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[11] M.R. Zigler, *Tunker House Proceedings*, Edited by Joseph B. Yount, III (Transcript of services held July 16-23, 1972 at Broadway, Virginia), 145. In this particular note, this article acts as a secondary rather than primary source.
[12] Donald F. Durnbaugh, *Pragmatic Prophet: The Life of Michael Robert Zigler* (Elgin, Il: Brethren Press, 1989), 2. It is not known whether Zigler purchased the stone, or simply had Madden's name engraved on the reverse side of her son's stone, John Madden, who preceded her in death.
[13] "'Uncle Jim' Lewis Dies; 80 Yrs. Old," *Daily News Record*, September 24, 1925, 1.

A much greater story surfaces once the cemetery is mapped and studied as one unit (see figure 6). If the churchyard originated in the 1830s, when did the African-American section originate? Sloane explains that few marked stones of slaves exist. Slaves also had little if any privileges, including burials, and they "were interred in either separate sections or completely segregated burial places."[14] The Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical Society's cemetery index reveals that the vast majority of known slave graveyards in Rockingham County were family plots. Several remembered slave cemeteries in the Plains area including the Baxter's cemetery of Singers Glen, the Swank place's cemetery in Edom, and the John Q. Winfield homestead's burials in Broadway. Of the three, only one partially legible stone from the Winfield cemetery remains, among other unmarked graves.[15] Local historian Agnes Kline, also reported a slave cemetery on the Sites plantation in the Linville Creek area.[16] The majority of slaves in Rockingham County, a rural and agricultural community, were probably buried on Masters' plantations. With few oral histories and little if any existing traces, these cemeteries have gone unnoticed.

Figure 6

Since area oral histories cite the use of plantations for slave burials, the unmarked graves in the Linville Creek's section would suggest that they post-date the Civil War and represent

[14] David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 15-17.
[15] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery."
[16] Agnes Kline, *Stone Houses on Linville Creek and Their Communities: Rockingham County, Virginia* (Harrisonburg, VA: Campbell Copy Center, 1971), 29-30.

some of the first freed African-Americans. In addition, the Brethren leaders clearly documented their opposition to slavery. The General Mission Board of the Church of the Brethren published their annual minutes from 1778 to 1909. In seven different instances, dating from 1797 to 1863, Brethren leaders, including those local leaders, especially Elder John Kline, who attended these conferences, made known that "no brother or sister should have negroes as slaves."[17] Since the church leaders so vehemently opposed slavery, the vast majority of members did not own personal slaves. Additionally, the African-American section lies within the section added after 1852. Their graves would post-date this period since the church did not have prior possession of this land, and the deed never addressed pre-existing burials. Likewise, no stones adjacent to the African-American section predate the Civil War period.

Lastly, when compared to neighboring African-American graveyards still in existence, similar patterns emerge. The Athens Cemetery (all "negro"), located northeast of Harrisonburg, has many unmarked graves with the earliest marked grave dated 1893. Unmarked graves also exist in the Linville Cemetery with the earliest stone dated 1908. Likewise, the Old Athens Church Cemetery (all "negro"), located in Zenda, also contains unmarked graves with the earliest stone dated 1874.[18] Yet, no stones in Zenda belonged to slaves since African-Americans did not settle the region until 1869.[19] It is quite plausible that freed African-Americans, no longer having access to land for family burials, first buried loved ones without engraved stones. As they adjusted to their new living arrangements, some became more financially secure and

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[17] The General Mission Board, compiler, *Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the Church of the Brethren* (Elgin, IL: Brethren Publishing House, 1909), 18-19, 31-32, 85, 135-36, 142, 163, 207, 219.
[18] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery"
[19] Nancy Bondurant Jones, *An African American Community of Hope, Zenda: 1869-1930* (McGaheysville, VA: Long's Chapel Preservation Society, 2007), 20.

purchased stones. Sufficient evidence implies that the African-American section of the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery more than likely originated during the post-Civil War era.

Of course, cultural object studies without definite answers only lead researchers to propose further questions. Archaeologist and historian Leland Ferguson conducted various studies of African-American artifacts. Ferguson argues that historians complete a "more intimate" landscape of people and their cultures because they "construct their picture of the past from written words, oral accounts, drawings, paintings, and photographs."[20] An archaeological dig on a presently active churchyard would not be morally ethical or acceptable. Yet, by combining the evaluation of the burial plot with available written evidence, better analysis and interpretation can take place about the unknown African-Americans buried within the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery and their role in Broadway. Documentation of the opposition of slavery by the Brethren, as well as the Lewis obituary and Rockingham County deeds, has already provided much needed information about the site. By using added clues from the four known gravestones, numerous traces begin to surface revealing a remarkable African-American community that once resided in Broadway, Virginia.

The Allen family, denoted by three of the standing stones in the cemetery, first materialized in the 1870 U.S. Census records. Since they do not appear on prior census records, it is assumed they were enslaved. However, tracing their exact roots as slaves proves near impossible. Several references provide hints; but, none produce conclusive results. The most

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[20] Leland Ferguson, *Uncommon Ground: Archaeology and Early African America, 1650-1800* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 1992), Introduction, xliv – xlv.

likely theory presented by local historian Agnes Kline, researching early stone homes in the Linville Creek area, references the Sites plantation as the former owners of "Nancy and her tribe of children."[21] George Sites assumed ownership of his father's farm in 1839.[22] Both the 1850 and the 1860 U.S. Federal Census Slave Schedules list Sites as owning seven and fourteen slaves, respectively.[23] Additionally, James Allen's obituary in the *Daily News Record* refers to his upbringing on the "old Sites homestead."[24] The 1870 and 1880 U.S. Census records reflect the estimated ages of Nancy, and her sons Jacob, Lee, Joseph, and James to relate somewhat to that of the Sites' slaves (see figure 7).[25] Ages were estimated for freed slaves, who had few, if any, birth records. Furthermore, census records constantly reflect conflicting ages.

1870 U.S. Census	*Estimated* Ages less year differences	Age & Sex of Allen family households in descending order according to 1860	Site's Slaves, 1860 U.S. Census
Nancy Allen (Head of Household)	60 – 10 yrs. = 50	50 F	60 F
Jacob Allen*	21 – 10 = 11	28 M	30 M
Mary Fitzwater	19 – 10 = 9	22 M	28 M
Lee Allen* (Head of Household)	32 – 10 = 22	19 F	22 M
Margaret	29 – 10 = 19	15 M	18 F
Belle	10–10 = could have been less than 1 yr	11 M	16 M
1880 U.S. Census		9 M	12 F
James* Allen	48 – 20 = 28	< 1 F	11 M
Joseph* Allen	35 – 20 = 15		9, 7, 4, 3, 2, 1 (all females)**
*known sons of Nancy Allen	**Female teenage girls may have already been married or working as servants in households after emancipation.		

Figure 7

However, the Winfields, also residents of the Broadway area, emerge as possible sources of ownership. Dr. Richard Winfield appears on the 1850

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[21] Kline, *Stone Houses on Linville . . .*, 29.
[22] United States Department of the Interior, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory: Sites House*, VLR-10/17/78, NRHP – 4/3/79 (Harrisonburg, VA: Rockingham County Courthouse), under Statement of Significance.
[23] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1850 U.S. Federal Census: Slave Schedules*, *Rockingham County, Virginia*, District 56 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 23, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1860 U.S. Federal Census: Slave Schedules*, *Rockingham County, Virginia,* District 1 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 23, 2010, http://www.ancestry.com.
[24] "Death at Broadway," *Daily News Record*, November 7, 1914, 6.
[25] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, *Plains, Rockingham, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Broadway, Rockingham, Virginia,* District 81 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com.

U.S. Census Federal Slave Schedule with seven slaves. Since his name directly follows that of George Sites on the census schedule, they may have been neighbors.[26] Furthermore, Dr. John Q. Winfield, a doctor who graduated from Washington College, and then Lexington and Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, was the son of Richard. He served as a captain in the confederacy; however, he returned home to Broadway due to illness.[27] John's name surfaces on the 1860 slave schedule with nine slaves. John Winfield, after the war, sold property to the Allen and Madden families. Additionally, the Winfields previously lived in nearby Mt. Jackson, and various Allen families of Mt. Jackson and Edinburg, appear on the 1860 slave schedule. Slaves, without surnames, sometimes adopted that of their owner upon emancipation and often resided close by.[28] Quite possibly the Winfield family had some connection to the white Allens. Hence, Nancy Allen and her family settled in Broadway after emancipation. Though no absolute evidence links Nancy Allen's family to any one slave owner, considerable oral histories confirm that they were long time residents of the Broadway/ Linville Creek region.

Regardless of slave ownership, in 1870, at about the age of sixty, Nancy Allen finally achieved the due respect of matriarch. Her son Jacob and Mary Fitzwater, relation unknown, resided in her household. Jacob worked as a laborer while Mary was a servant. Then, in February of 1875, Nancy paid J. Q. Winfield and J. W. Ligget twenty-five dollars for a lot, opposite of "E. Knipple's [sic] Shop," in the town of Broadway. Though she signed the deed with an "x," the property became her own and they built a house.[29] By 1880, Nancy's household

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[26] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1850 U.S. Federal Census: Slave*. . .
[27] Wayland, *A History of Rockingham County*. . .134.
[28] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *1860 U.S. Federal Census: Slave . . .Shenandoah County, Virginia, Edinburg and Mount Jackson.*
[29] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 11 (Harrisonburg, VA: Rockingham County Courthouse), February 15, 1875, 450.

included Jacob, her son Joseph, her daughter-in-law Maria, and her sister Milly Gordon. It is not clear who Maria married.[30] Obviously, slavery and sudden emancipation in the mid nineteenth century disrupted lives. As African-Americans sought to fulfill the basic necessities of life, households constantly adjusted in order to provide support for each other. Yet, finally Nancy had a place to call home.

Nancy grew older and made some surprising financial plans. In January of 1891, Nancy sold her property for one dollar to "Eudocia Allen wife of Jacob Allen and Ella Allen daughter of Jacob and Eudocia," and acknowledged her "natural love and affection" for Eudocia and Ella. This deed granted lifetime rights to Eudocia and ultimately bestowed ownership of her property to her granddaughter, Ella.[31] Nancy does not surface in the 1900 U.S. Census, and it is predicted that she died sometime within this period. Jacob and Eudocia, "Docia," maintained the home with their daughter Ella, and Jacob's sister-in-law, Annie S. Brack. Jacob had become a silversmith, repairing watches and clocks while Docia worked as a laundress.[32]

Nancy's son, Lee established his own household by 1870. Initially a day laborer, he married Margaret. At this time, they had five children: Belle, Jacob, Nancy, Lucy, and McClellan.[33] Lee and Margaret both marked their "x," in February 1875, when they purchased land in Broadway for twenty-five dollars.[34] Once again the Winfields sold property to Lee Allen. Lake's Atlas of 1885 confirms the Allen properties adjacent to each other fronting

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[30] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census* . . . District 81.
[31] *Rockingham County Deed Book*, 39, January 8, 1891, 385. Eudocia's name first appears on the deed. Her name is constantly misspelled on census records including Theodoria, Dosia, Dosha, and Doria.
[32] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Plains,Rockingham County, Virginia,* District 63 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com.
[33] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, *Plains, Rockingham, Virginia.* Lee/ Lee G./ Legrande/ all seem to represent the same person. Early records usually cite a Lee Allen while records use Legrande Allen. By matching children's ages on census records, it is assumed they are one in the same.
[34] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 11, February 12, 1875, 487.

Central Street at the corner of Miller St.[35] By 1880, Lee and Margaret had added five more children to their family including Minnie, Emily, Elizabeth, Elmer, and Maggie. At this time, Lee had become a barber.[36] Twenty years later, the 1900 U. S. Census listed Lee as a widower and only his daughter Elizabeth, and her son Clarence, resided in the home.[37]

The last Allen, James, bought a home from the Winfields in July, 1879, for seventy-five dollars. James built a blacksmith shop beside his home which stood diagonally from that of Lee and Nancy's on Central Street.[38] He and his wife, Virginia, had four surviving daughters: Bertha, Lula, Mabel, and Ethel. When he first purchased his home, Maria Gorden, relation unknown, also resided with the family.[39] Just six years after settling on Central Street, James would grieve the deaths of his son and wife. Thomas Allen died in 1881 after living only five days. Virginia died of consumption in 1885.[40]

Not only did Lee Allen buy a home and create a life for his large family, but a deed dated November 20, 1875 cited Lee as a trustee, along with Edmund Carter and Samuel Branner, both African-Americans, for the building of the Broadway Colored United Brethren Church located in Broadway, Virginia. Again, the Winfields sold this property, for one dollar, and the deed designated it for church and school purposes.[1] The Lake's Atlas also confirms this site located on the corner of Central Street and Rock Street.[1] Additionally, the Plains District School Board recorded another land purchase for a "one-room colored school" in 1882.[41]

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[35] J.M. Lathrop and B.N. Griffing, *An Atlas of Rockingham County, Virginia* (Strasburg, VA: GP Hammond Publishing, 1995), 33. This atlas is also referred to as *Lake's Atlas*.
[36] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census* . . . District 81.
[37] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census* . . . District 83.
[38] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 16*,* July 18, 1879, 430.
[39] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census* . . . District 81.
[40] *Register of Deaths 1870-1894*, (Harrisonburg, VA: Rockingham County Courthouse), 2.
[41] "Broadway Colored School," *History of Rockingham County Public Schools*, Accessed December 2, 2010, http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/RCPS_history/RCPSHistory.html.

Several important points can be drawn thus far. First, the diligence, to develop trades and own homes, demonstrates the Allens' successes at achieving self-sufficiency. Secondly, the building of a church and school reveals the desire for community ties and education. The 1880 U. S. Census documents that Nancy's grandchildren learned to read and write.[42] Since Nancy and her children never had the opportunity to attend school as slaves, they understood education led to greater freedoms. However, the Allens and other African-Americans also experienced racial segregation. The state of Virginia mandated segregated schooling by 1870.[43] Broadway opened a grade school in the 1870s and the first high school opened in 1882.[44] However, neither school welcomed African-American students forcing them to open a school of their own.

The Allens struggled to develop a community, though they did not remain settled. A deed, dated October 22, 1907, determines that Jacob and Docia Allen purchased property in Harrisonburg, Virginia.[45] Jacob's tombstone denotes his death in 1909. Docia's name changes to Nickens by the 1920 U.S. Census yet it states she is "widowed," and living in Harrisonburg with her daughter Ella Givens.[46] She probably remarried and her second husband also preceded her in death. Broadway resident Harold Wood, who wrote about his childhood memories in this rural town, remembered that his parents first rented a home from Docia Nickens upon moving to Broadway. Wood posted a copy of a cancelled check, payable to Docia Nickens for rent on October, 1914, in his memoirs.[47] Docia's gravestone dates her death in 1924. Though Ella had

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[42] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census* . . . District 81.
[43] Jones, *An African American . . .,* 15.
[44] "Broadway School," *History of Rockingham County Public Schools*, Accessed December 2, 2010, http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/RCPS_history/RCPSHistory.html.
[45] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 81*,* October 22, 1907, 151.
[46] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Harrisonburg Ward 1, Harrisonburg (Independent City), Virginia,* District 102 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com.
[47] Harold W. Wood, *Remembering Broadway* (Harrisonburg: Campbell Copy Center, 1998), 251.

rights to the home in Broadway, she never returned. To date, a vacant asphalt lot covers the area where the home once stood.

Likewise, Lee Allen turned his property over to his son, Jacob A. Allen (not to be confused with Jacob Allen, Lee's brother, married to Docia) in 1903. Then, in 1908, Jacob secured a five hundred dollar note against the property. Evidently he could not meet the payments. On January 15, 1910, Jacob sold his father's property to George S. Aldhizer for five hundred dollars. Two days later, he fulfilled the obligation of the note.[48] After 1910, Jacob A. Allen had also left the Broadway area, and his whereabouts are unknown. It is not known why Lee relinquished his property to his son, although he relocated to New Market, Virginia. The 1910 U.S. Census shows that he remarried and had three more children.[49] The obituary of James Allen, 1914, also confirms this move.[50] Lee never returned to Broadway and the 1920 U.S. Census reflects his wife as a widow.[51]

By 1910, the only Allen remaining in Broadway was James. He lived alone. His obituary in 1914 stated that he died at age eighty-four. It noted he "led a very quiet life," as a blacksmith and a member of the Methodist Church. His daughter Mary Luelia Willis still resided nearby, but the other three had relocated out of state.[52] However, at some point, Mary Luelia disappeared from Broadway too. Like the homes of Lee, Nancy, Jacob and Docia, an asphalt parking lot now replaces James Allen's former home. Between 1870 and 1910, at least twenty-eight African Americans passed through these three homes on Central Street in

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[48] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 88, January 15, 1910, 143. *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 83, January 17, 1910, 100.
[49] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910, Lee, Shenandoah, Virginia,* District 91, (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com.
[50] "Death At Broadway," 6.
[51] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census . . . Lee, Shenandoah, Virginia*, District 102.
[52] "Death At Broadway," 6. The Methodist Church was formerly known as the United Brethren.

Broadway, Virginia, yet no descendents would remain. Since Nancy Allen and her family worked so hard to establish a community, it would be probable to assume they occupy some of the unmarked graves at the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery. It would only seem fitting that a family tied geographically together in life, would also be tied together in death.

Alice Madden, and her son John, mark another stone still standing in the African American section of the cemetery. Alice, with her husband Edward and children, moved to Broadway from Page County sometime in the 1880s.[53] Again, John Winfield sold them property, in 1886, adjacent to the Broadway Colored United Brethren Church on Central Street.[54] However, by 1890, Alice and her husband, Edward, sold this property[55] and rented a log home from the parents of M. R. Zigler for one dollar a month.[56] The Madden's transient lifestyle creates a more fragmented story than that of the Allens. Most knowledge comes from M. R. Zigler. It has already been mentioned that he contributed personal money to honor the memory of Alice Madden. In fact, he also dedicated a portion of the Tunker House Proceeding speeches to his relationship and friendship with the Madden family. Zigler orally recounted these childhood memories sixty one years after his departure from the Broadway area. Born in 1891, he left the area at the age of eighteen. He first described Alice, a servant in their household for about ten years, and her marriage to Ned, "a real old man with a white beard and hair like cotton."[57] Zigler fondly recalled that Alice loved to entertain her son Sam and himself with numerous stories from her past. Then he detailed his close friendship to Sam, close in age, and

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[53] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census . . . Marksville, Page, Virginia*, District 62. Edward is interchangeable used with Edmond.
[54] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 29, July 29, 1886, 175. They were living at the same location in 1885, according to the *Lake's Atlas*. It is possible that they first rented the home.
[55] *Rockingham County Deed Book,* 39, September 29, 1890, 219.
[56] Zigler, *Tunker. . .,* 147.
[57] Zigler, *Tunker . . .,* 154.

their adventures playing and working together. The 1900 U.S. Census documents both Edmund (Edward) and Alice residing with eight other family members, including Sam and four extended family members.[58] Yet between Alice's death in 1906, and the 1910 U.S. Census, the Madden family no longer resided in Broadway.

James Lewis' stone exists as the last clue. He also represented the last African-American resident from that era of Broadway history. Few records give details about Lewis. His obituary cites his origins in Augusta County and that he lived about forty-five years in Broadway. For years, photographs of the said "Jim" Lewis hung in the local grocery store until it closed (see figures 8 and 9). Though residents readily recognize the picture, few remember little other than he worked for the Rhodes' funeral business driving a horse-drawn hearse.[59] His life resembled so many other African-Americans who, with no families of their own, lived as paid servants following emancipation. Zigler explains that "these Negro people were terribly in need of cash," expressing the challenges of the entire African American community living in Broadway. Liz Canady, another African-American living in the Linville Creek area, also worked her entire life as a servant in the Zigler home, never having her own family. She too, is supposedly buried

Figure 8. Photo courtesy of A.W. Whitmore Broadway Photo Collection c/o Richard Cullers.

[58] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Plains,Rockingham County, Virginia,* District 63 (Washington, D.C.), Accessed November 17, 2010, http://search.ancestry.com.
[59] Wood, *Remembering Broadway*, 191.

in the church cemetery.[60] Many times, these individual African-Americans lived undocumented and forgotten, just like the unmarked graves in the cemetery.

The stories of the Allen and Madden families, along with James Lewis, represent the transitioning and adjustments required by African Americans in the subsequent years after emancipation in the 1860s. By 1870, the first recorded census followed their journey. At the time, a total of 160 African-Americans lived in the Plains Township District of Rockingham County, Virginia. 40 percent of these were listed as servants residing with their employers.[61] Ten years later, only 14.5 percent of African-Americans still lived with their employers. Additionally, the 1880 U. S. Census reflects only sixty-two total African-Americans in the Plains area, a reduction by more than one-half. Thirty-two of these lived in Broadway. Out of these thirty-two residents there were six heads-of-households, and three denoted the Allen families.[62] By 1900, Broadway only had seventeen African-American residents, four heads-of-households with two representing the Allens.[63] Then the 1910 and 1920 U.S. Censuses reduced the black population to three men and one man, respectively.[64] The vibrant African-American community had vanished.

The nearby African-American community of Zenda also followed a similar declining pattern from 1910 onwards.[65] Additionally, just like the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren, the last marked stone in Zenda dates to 1925. The Old Athens Cemetery does not have any

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[60] Zigler, *Tunker House Proceedings*, 147, 156.
[61] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*, *Plains, Rockingham, Virginia.*
[62] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census . . .,* District 81,82.
[63] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census. . .* District 63.
[64] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census . . . , Plains,Rockingham County, Virginia,* District 76. U.S. Bureau of the Census*, Fourteenth Census . . .*, District 92.
[65] Jones, *An African American . . .*114.

stones dating later than 1930.[66] Historian Thomas C. Reeves remarks that as Reconstruction halted in 1877, segregation and "Jim Crow" laws emerged. The United States Supreme Court ruled on the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson case resulting in "separate, but equal."[67] Reeves reaffirms that the rural Broadway's decline of the African-American population resembled the transformation occurring in America. African-Americans sought refuge together in urban areas for both work and support. As they left, their cemeteries became dormant.

Even M.R. Zigler acknowledged that the Brethren church, that once preached abolition, fell short upon emancipation. Blacks sat on the back rows and could not fully participate in communions.[68] It seems that while Brethren beliefs and leadership, along with well-intentioned community members like John and Sallie Winfield, extended a welcome to freed slaves resettling in the Broadway community, it came with conditions and limits. Furthermore, not only did Virginia laws segregate schools, but local county regulations stipulated that schools needed "20 students to warrant hiring a teacher."[69] Jacob and Docia Allen left Broadway and relocated to Harrisonburg. Lee Allen moved to New Market. So too, the grandchildren of Nancy Allen left Broadway for other regions. As African-Americans migrated from the Linville Creek area, the Broadway Colored School closed sometime in the early 1900s.[70] It most likely lacked the necessary numbers to facilitate a teacher. Ultimately, Broadway no longer had anything to offer the African-American community. And though not violent in Broadway, the

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[66] "Rockingham County Tombstones by Cemetery."

[67] Thomas C. Reeves, *Twentieth-Century America: A Brief History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16-18.
[68] Zigler, *Tunker House Proceedings*, 156-58.
[69] Jones, *An African American . . .*, 115.
[70] "Broadway Colored School," *History of Rockingham . . .*

KKK became active in the area by the 1920s.[71] This certainly did not send inviting messages to an already declining African-American community.

When slaves first discovered freedom in the 1860s, they suddenly found themselves facing a new predicament – no home, no money, no transportation, and few possessions. Freedom first meant responsibility to secure basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Some, like Jim Lewis, worked as paid servants the remainder of their lives. Lewis was honored with a stone, yet his funeral took place in his room on Central Street.[72] His freedom, like many other freed slaves, just never traveled far beyond his basic needs. Upon their deaths, the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren kindly accepted their burials, without charge. Without families, these African-American servants were frequently forgotten.

Others, like the Allens and Maddens, represented makeshift families. As slaves, they had little opportunities for organizing. Once freed, they too, prioritized life by necessity. Often relatives beyond the immediate family lived together. The Maddens, whose lives intertwined with the Brethren, only temporarily resided in Broadway. With little or no education, the Allens achieved homes and trades; yet, their families never developed intimate connections to local landscapes. Upon freedom, freed slaves geographically located out of necessity, not desire. This first generation of Allens merely served as a bridge – a passage for the next generation to obtain education and seek a better life elsewhere.

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[71] Plains District Memorial Museum, *KKK Display* (Timberville, VA), Accessed November 19, 2010.KKK Outfit and cross explains their rise in Broadway in 1920.
[72] "Uncle 'Jim' Lewis Dies; 80 Yrs. Old."

One-by-one, these freed slaves of Broadway passed away. And with each death, James Lewis must have carried his neighbors in the horse-driven hearse to the churchyard for burial. Then, children moved away and identities of those beloved buried were lost. Finally, someone other than Lewis carried him to the graveyard. A community of African-American citizens, arriving like immigrants, had ceased to exist in Broadway, Virginia. Today, the Linville Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery bears the scars left by that first generation of freed African-Americans who constantly struggled, at times as uninvited guests, in small southern towns. Their memories lie hidden beneath the grass that grows each summer along the old stone wall of the churchyard – almost forgotten. Yet historian and archaeologist James Deetz remarks that "almost every person who lived in America left behind some trace of their passing. Perhaps a personal possession, now broken and buried, or a slave cabin in the forest covered with Virginia creeper, or a gravestone tilted by time but speaking to us across the centuries . . . it is all there, and we must not disregard it."[73] It does not need to be positively determined if Nancy, and her children and grandchildren, or Alice's husband, or Liz have reserved spots in this cemetery. The names simply do not matter as

Figure 9. Photo courtesy of A.W. Whitmore Broadway Photo Collection c/o Richard Cullers.

[73] James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 212.

much as the actions of people: those freed slaves who worked diligently against odds to build a community so that future African-American generations might someday cross segregated barriers, and the efforts of the few neighborly Euro-Americans, like the Brethren church members and confederate captains, who kindly embraced fellow humans in need. Those four African-American "tilted stones" serve as a monument for all that was both right and wrong with humanity, and the generation that won the right to search for freedom.

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