

Living Heir and Public Notifications:

Identifying & Notification Plan

During the initial stages of researching the grave sites, Hutton, Brea Warnstaff, genealogist with Heirtrackers, and Hugh Matternes, Principal Investigator and Senior Mortuary Archaeologist with New South Associates, generated a plan for identifying and notifying the descendants of those buried or believed to be buried on the property located at 11305 White Bluff Road Savannah, Georgia. The first step was an on-site investigation performed by New South Associates to determine that the graves were in fact still located on site. This did determine that 4 of the graves remained on the property. This process has all been noted in the New South Associates' report labeled "Archaeological Investigations to Locate Densler Family Cemetery along White Bluff Road in Savannah." Next was to have Brea perform extensive research through vital records, obituaries, historical articles and many other methods to confirm who was buried at these gravesites and if there were any living heirs. It was determined that the graves belonged to Michael Densler, Ann Densler, David Densler and John Densler and the only living heir that could be located is Dr. James Densler in Atlanta. This research has all been noted in the Brea's report labeled "Descendants of Michael and Ann Densler." The final step was to notify any known living heirs and to reach out various local medias in an attempt to have any others who may have any knowledge of these graves or any other potential living heirs. Hutton legal prepared and submitted notification statements to the only known living heir, Dr. James Densler. Hutton is prepared to notify and provide any information if any new information is developed about potentially other living heirs.

Dr James Densler

The only living heir that could be located is Dr. James Densler in Atlanta. His ancestor was a slave on the plantation and carries the surname. It is unknown if he is a genetic heir. After speaking to Dr. Densler, he did confirm that his family lived of White Bluff in Savannah, and that his father did live there, but that the father left the family when he was young, and he doesn't know much about that side of the family. Dr. Densler also stated that he had no objection with us relocating the graves and would do anything, if needed, possible to help the process. We also sent Dr. Densler a letter on January 25th notifying him of our intentions and requesting any information any other potential living heirs. He did not provide any additional information on other relatives but during phone conversations he did confirm that all his siblings had passed.

Local Media

Hutton has spoken to several local news outlets. Amanda LaBrot with WTOC posted 2 articles about the graves on site at 11305 White Bluff Road. First one after speaking with Julie McClean with the city of Savannah and Victoria Love with Hutton Development on 3/20/19. Amanda later did a follow up story on 3/26/19. The original story was shared on the official WTOC Facebook page which discovered the possibility of another potential descendant of Michael and Anne Densler. Julia Rodgers stated that herself and father. Julian Rodgers might be related to Michael and Anne. Brea Warnstaff contacted Julia and Julian who were able to compare the descendant lines, but it was determined that there was no direct connection and Julia could not find a Michael or Anne in her book of "Dantzler Descendants. Their conversation can be seen below:

Breya: Julia, this is Breya Warnstaff, I'm the genealogist working on the Densler heirs. Are you related to Michael and Ann or his parents? Michael 1750-1808 and Ann 1767-1836. I have found living heirs on his parents Heinrich & Katherina not Michael and Ann other than descendants of their slaves. The property off White Bluff in question should be descendants from Michael & Ann. Please call me at your convenience. 469-734-8142. I'm in Pooler, Ga but have a Texas number

Julia: Hi! I'm at my Dad's now and just pulled out his book. Looking now... will call when we have some specific info on hand. I think my Dad said we were related to a different line... that this line were cousins. But his book is 2" thick - he says a copy of it is in the Orangeburg SC museum or something... and may be that not all the info has been entered online. Are you just researching for this case, or also a relative?

Julia: [REDACTED]

Julia: He's still looking.

Breya: No just Michael and Ann's line since they were the original landowners, but the land with graves had been sold quite a few times

Julia: Well, they don't appear in his book. But no, Michael and Anne are the Savannah Densler's and Dad says we're the Orangeburg Denslers. But I'm going to print your email doc now to show him.

Breya: Did you find any connections?

Julia: Sorry! Got distracted. Found a broken window on the garage.

Julia: No, we didn't. Our connection to that line is pretty far back.

Lee Cope with Hutton Development spoke with Eric Curl with Savannah Now on 3/26/19 and Briana Trusty with Fox 28 Media on 4/3/19. Once the permit application and supporting documents were submitted to the City of Savannah, all public and media had access to all of Hutton's findings and reports. Links to all these articles can be seen below.

Links to Articles:

<https://www.wtoc.com/2019/03/20/graves-found-under-construction-site-white-bluff-road-savannah/>

https://www.wtoc.com/2019/03/26/family-members-identifies-graves-found-under-construction-site-savannah/?fbclid=IwAR211x1pr_sJReWSkezVzP_iR-38v6ubzrc3ymHqgF5n2m_sANnQZnnTkY8

<https://www.savannahnow.com/news/20190402/developer-plans-to-relocate-19th-century-graves-found-at-savannah-worksite>

<https://fox28media.com/news/local/developer-hopes-to-relocate-19th-century-graves-discovered-on-savannahs-southside>