



10 September 2018

Bill Martin
Texas Historical Commission
1511 Colorado Street
Austin, TX 78711

RE: Progress Update and Notice of Completion of Exhumation of 95 Burials and One Empty Coffin at Site 41FB355, 23-acre James Reese Career and Technology Center-TAC Permit #8197 Fort Bend Independent School District, Sugar Land, Fort Bend County, Texas

Dear Mr. Martin:

The purpose of this letter report is to notify the Texas Historical Commission that excavations proposed under the Scope of Work dated 1 June 2018 under Texas Antiquities Committee Permit #8197 were completed on 1 September 2018. The Scope of Work dated 1 June 2018 called for continued excavator scraping to identify additional burials; removal of human remains; analysis of human remains and associated funerary items; and preparation for reinterment at a site to be determined by Fort Bend Independent School District (FBISD). The historic cemetery is located on the 23-acre (9.3-hectare) James Reese Career and Technology Center that is currently under construction by the FBISD and located approximately 2,756 feet (840 meters) south of the intersection of State Highway 6 and United States Highway 90 in Sugar Land, Texas. The scope was based on need arising from the results of the accidental discovery of human bones on 19 February 2018, subsequent exploratory excavations at site 41FB355, field assessment by Dr. Catrina Whitley, and numerous discussions with Texas Historical Commission (THC) personnel. All work has been or is being conducted under existing Antiquities Permit #8197, issued by the THC and sponsored by FBISD, for the 23-acre complex containing archeological site 41FB355.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Goshawk's research team is currently conducting archival research at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Archives, the Texas State Library, the Texas Prison Museum Archives, the Fort Bend County Courthouse, and numerous other repositories to identify the true nature of the Ellis Camp #1 Cemetery excavated at the James Reese Site and to identify those individuals interred there. So far, six individuals have been identified as having died and almost undoubtedly buried at Ellis Camp #1. Numerous geo-referenced historic aerials and other important historic map resources have been supplied by the Fort Bend Historical Commission. It should be noted that historic aerial photography indicates extensive reshaping of the land. Bullhead Bayou was re-channelized by the local Drainage District and moved to the north forming a large arc around the project site. This reshaping appears to be responsible for destruction of one of the historic structures indicated on earlier aerials and maps, and likely caused the displacement of burials.

BURIAL EXHUMATION

An Order to Exhume human remains located at the James Reese Site for the purposes of further historical investigation was granted by the District Court on 4 June 2018. Crew and equipment were brought to site 41FB355 on 5 and 6 June 2018 and exhumation was initiated the following day on 7

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June. Goshawk provided a 100 percent presence of crew during the exhumation process. Crew ranged between four and 14 crew members at any one time. Excavation of each identified location was conducted by trained Physical Anthropologists and Archeological Technicians, leaving all remains and artifacts in-situ for an initial assessment by the Bioarcheologist and her assistants. Excavation of each burial was completed by hand by two-person or three-person crews. All grave fill removed during excavation was dry screened. Each interment was documented by complete mapping of each exposed burial and completion of a standardized burial excavation form packet. Once each burial was exposed, the remains were photographed in plan view. In the case of articulated or nearly articulated burials, digital photogrammetry was utilized to create three-dimensional imagery of each burial.

Once all in-ground documentation was completed, each burial was delicately extracted from the ground by the Bioarcheologist or Physical Anthropologists and relocated to the on-site field laboratory in a temporary vessel. All remaining grave fill was removed after skeletal extraction and was wet screened. Spatial control was maintained with the use of a total station, compass and tape mapping, sub-meter GPS mapping, and aerial photography by drone.

The exhumation and over-dig phase was completed on 1 September 2018, a total of 87 crew days from start to finish. Once all burials were extracted, mechanical excavation was continued to a depth of 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 centimeters) deeper than the bottom elevation of the grave shafts and out to the edge of the Administrative Cemetery Boundary (15-meter buffer around graves) to be certain that any remaining interment within the excavation block was found. Once all over-dig excavations were completed and all burials had been exhumed, a total of 95 interments and a single empty coffin were removed from the ground.

BURIAL ANALYSIS AND PREPARATION FOR REINTERMENT

Once moved to the on-site laboratory, Dr. Catrina Whitley (Bioarcheologist) and her assistants washed and analyzed each individual set of remains. **This process is approximately 70 percent complete as of this writing.** These non-destructive laboratory investigations have included bone measurements, x-rays, and comparative studies to determine ethnicity, sex, age at death, stature, pathological conditions, musculoskeletal stress changes, health profiles, and cause of death in a few cases. Sediment samples were collected to study parasitic loads and to assist in the determination of sanitary conditions. Approximately 20 of these sediment samples will soon be analyzed by an outside laboratory. In a very few situations, dental calculus (plaque) has been collected to assist with diet reconstruction. Detail photographs are being taken of all human remains with pathology. Once analysis is complete, burials will be prepared for reinterment in permanent burial vessels.

Permission for collection of material from each burial for isotope and full spectrum DNA analysis has been requested from the THC. These techniques are considered destructive or invasive. None of these methods will be employed without written permission from the Texas Historical Commission and the State Archeologist. As of this date, authorization for invasive analysis has not been obtained. We propose that two molars and one incisor be collected, for future scientific analysis and for possible other studies not included in this scope.



Burials will not be removed from the construction site at 12300 University Boulevard for any reason other than temporary removal for radiography or proposed special analysis until permission is granted by court order for reinterment. **Radiographs have not yet been taken as of this writing but should be accomplished in the coming weeks.**

ARTIFACT ANALYSIS AND RECORDS CURATION

Goshawk is in the process of analyzing all artifact assemblages (including nails and coffin wood) associated with each burial. Except in the case that special samples are permitted for destructive analysis, all materials will be returned to each burial for reinterment. Artifacts from a secondary context are being cleaned and analyzed by Goshawk and may be prepared for curation at an appropriate registered repository. Paperwork including forms, maps, sketches, and photographic logs will be curated in an approved and regionally appropriate curation facility. Any collected field paperwork and photography will be prepared for curation in accordance with the Antiquities Code of Texas and the provisions of TAC Permit #8197.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Goshawk has collaborated with FBISD to provide opportunities for interested parties to learn about the exhumation and analysis processes employed during the project. Interested parties have thus far included residents, students, stakeholders, avocational archeologists, members of local historical societies, agents of the media, and other political groups. Presentations concerning the project have been given numerous times at the request of the stakeholders. Goshawk Archeologists now serve as advisors on the Sugar Land City Manager's Task Force for the Memorialization and Reinterment of the burials found at the James Reese Site.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION

A full report of archeological investigations, following CTA reporting standards, will be prepared and submitted to the THC in accordance with the requirements of TAC permit #8197. The report will document all fieldwork conducted within the 23-acre James Reese Career and Technology Center site, human skeletal remains and funerary item analysis, and interpretations. Once the report is accepted and finalized, a minimum of 24 copies of the report will be produced and submitted to approved repositories and interested parties in compliance with the provisions of the TAC permit.

SUMMARY

At this time, 95 interments and a single empty coffin have been exhumed and are currently in analysis on the James Reese Site. All four boundaries of the cemetery have been determined. A 50-foot (15-meter) buffer has been established along the west, north, and east cemetery boundaries. The old channel of Bullhead Bayou was determined as the south boundary. Once analysis is complete and a court order is obtained for reinterment, the remains will be reinterred in a timely manner at a location to be determined. As was indicated in the Scope of Work dated 1 June 2018, this letter report of investigations was prepared upon completion of fieldwork (exhumation and over-dig) for submittal to the THC for concurrence. After THC concurrence, permission for FBISD to resume construction activities within the boundaries of the cemetery will be sought. This process entails filing a petition





of the District Court to lift the designation of abandoned cemetery from the FBISD site and to approve reinterment at the Imperial Prison Farm Cemetery, owned by the City of Sugar Land, located approximately a half-mile west of the James Reese Site.

Please call me on my cell (512-419-8424) or contact me by email (rclark@goshawkenv.com) for any discussion, clarification, or further requests for information regarding this Notice of Completion for this portion of the project and overall Progress Update.

Reign Clark

Reign Clark
Cultural Resources Director
Goshawk Environmental Consulting, Inc.

CONCUR	
by	<i>William A. Muth</i>
for Mark Wolfe	
State Historic Preservation Officer	
Date	<i>9/10/18</i>
Track#	

