

Griffin Burchard never forgot the decaying Virginia cemetery. It's named after one of the most famous African-Americans of the 19th century.

Griffin first spotted Douglass Memorial Cemetery while with his Boy Scouts troop three years ago. The grave site is named for Frederick Douglass. Douglass was a famous African-American speaker and writer. Douglass escaped slavery and later fought to end it.

Griffin's job was removing **wreaths** on graves inside the well-maintained Alexandria National Cemetery in Alexandria, Virginia. Yet his eyes were drawn to the run-down **plot** down the street.

"Unlike all the other cemeteries in the complex, it was not being kept up," said Griffin, age 16. "There were fallen leaves, signs of flooding and trees with limbs hanging so far over you couldn't even read the sign that says 'Douglass.'"

On August 15, Griffin stood in that same cemetery, now all cleaned up, and smiled as he watched a fellow Boy Scout whip away a black cloth to display a brand-new sign for the plot. It was the conclusion of a months-long restoration project Griffin undertook to become an Eagle Scout. It was timed with the 400th anniversary of enslaved Africans' arrival in Virginia.

Douglass Cemetery contains about 600 headstones. However, records show at least 1,900 people, all African-American, were buried there between the 1890s and 1975, said archaeologist Benjamin Skolnik. Some were likely enslaved, and many are almost certainly descendants of slaves, according to Skolnik.

Feeling Inspired To Be A Great Citizen

In addition to detailing a brief history of the cemetery, Griffin's marker quotes Douglass: "Without a struggle, there can be no progress." The quote is printed in yellow script on a brown background.

City officials, local faith leaders, historians and members of Boy Scouts Troop 4077 all admired it as they crowded into the plot on August 15. They listened to speeches from Griffin and a local priest.

Donald Fest, the pastor of St. Joseph's Church, called Griffin's work "an act of graciousness and honor." Griffin said he hopes the restoration celebrates those buried in Douglass Cemetery — and Douglass himself.

"He was a great example of a citizen who impacted his community ... our nation and our world through his lifelong and tireless work," Griffin said. "This project has made me want to be a great citizen."

He'd completed the physical restoration that morning, working with several members of his Boy Scouts troop — as well as a few Girl Scouts — to rake and clear the land. His parents also chipped in, helping trim the trees **framing** the cemetery.

Griffin paid for the sign, which cost around \$200, by recycling extra metal siding from his house.

Griffin Did Some Historical Research

"We're extremely proud of him," said Griffin's father, Anthony Burchard. "Four hundred years in, this history needs to be recognized."

Griffin felt that way, too. As he worked to polish the cemetery's present, he dove into its past.

He contacted the City of Alexandria, which helped him **obtain** a permit for the clean-up and guided his research. He also headed to the Barrett Library in Old Town Alexandria, where he learned the cemetery once served as a popular picnicking spot. Local legend says George Washington dined there, Griffin said.

In 1895, a group of African-American residents converted the park to a burial site named for Frederick Douglass. There's no evidence Douglass knew about or visited the cemetery, Griffin said.

The plot's all-black burials and dedication to Douglass were typical of the time, said University of Virginia professor Caroline Janney. Cemeteries in America were generally segregated back then. Douglass' death in February 1895 inspired people across the country to name places in his honor, she said.

Griffin drew on the research of Virginia historian Wesley E. Pippenger, who has **documented** the names of some buried at Douglass Memorial. Griffin also used old newspaper clippings.

Money To Honor The Unnamed Dead

Black cemeteries across the U.S. face the same fate Douglass Cemetery did, said Jacqueline Copeland, who leads the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African-American History and Culture. Many state governments don't **devote** money to maintain black grave sites, she said. They fade into the past.

Griffin said Douglass Cemetery fell into **disrepair** over the years because no Alexandria church or nonprofit cares for it. Often, cemeteries are maintained by congregations.

Skolnik said the city allocates some money for the cemetery's upkeep but admitted the site needs more. Sparked by Griffin's efforts, city officials a few weeks ago obtained a roughly \$10,000 grant from the state to determine how many people are buried there.

Officials can then honor the unnamed dead with markers, Skolnik said.

Griffin hopes the restoration will inspire a more permanent caretaker to step forward.

"I commend him for honoring and memorializing these individuals whose stories and names might otherwise be lost," Janney said.

Griffin has been a top student in history at St. Anselm's Abby, his high school. Yet he never really loved the subject. He wondered why someone might spend hours combing through old documents, or devote their career to digging up someone else's dusty secrets. Then he began restoring the cemetery.

"I've learned it's important, to know who we are, and where we came from," Griffin said.

1. Select the paragraph from the section "Feeling Inspired To Be A Great Citizen" that BEST demonstrates that much of the community was involved in the Douglass Cemetery dedication.
 - a) In addition to detailing a brief history of the cemetery, Griffin's marker quotes Douglass: "Without a struggle, there can be no progress." The quote is printed in yellow script on a brown background.
 - b) City officials, local faith leaders, historians and members of Boy Scouts Troop 4077 all admired it as they crowded into the plot on August 15. They listened to speeches from Griffin and a local priest.
 - c) Donald Fest, the pastor of St. Joseph's Church, called Griffin's work "an act of graciousness and honor." Griffin said he hopes the restoration celebrates those buried in Douglass Cemetery — and Douglass himself.
 - d) "He was a great example of a citizen who impacted his community ... our nation and our world through his lifelong and tireless work," Griffin said. "This project has made me want to be a great citizen."
2. Which section of the article BEST explains that Griffin's project helped highlight a need for more of the same work to be done?
 - a) Introduction [paragraphs 1-6]
 - b) "Feeling Inspired To Be A Great Citizen"
 - c) "Griffin Did Some Historical Research"
 - d) "Money To Honor The Unnamed Dead"
3. Which of the following MOST influenced Griffin's decision to restore Douglass Memorial Cemetery?
 - a) the fact that it was the only cemetery on the street that was not maintained
 - b) the fact that he needed to do a project to become an Eagle Scout
 - c) the fact that he is passionate about the history of Virginia
 - d) the fact that the City of Alexandria offered him a \$10,000 grant to do it
4. How did Griffin's project affect his parents?
 - a) They were eager to support him and paid for a new sign for the cemetery.
 - b) They were interested in the new information he discovered about Frederick Douglass.
 - c) They were proud of him and helped him complete the restoration.
 - d) They were surprised but happy with his sudden interest in history.