Missouri Historic Resources Survey

Form

D. Address / Location
2640 South Blue Ridge Boulevard
E. City: Kansas City
B. County: 095 Jackson

Gl. Owner's Name / Address (If Different)
Highland Sales Investment Company

H. Acreage: 23.2

Legal Description

A. Historic Name
Blue Ridge Lawn Memorial Gardens

Use, Historic
07 Funerary

C. Other Name

Use, Present
07 Funerary

2M. Resource Type
Site

2L. No. of Ancillary Structures

2A. Architect / Builder
George B. Post & Sons
Charles D. Woodward

2B. Architectural Style
N/A

2C. Vernacular Type
N/A

2J. Historic Function
07 Funerary

2K. Historic Sub-Function
07A. Cemetery

2Q. Other Materials
N/A

2P. Wall Materials
N/A

2Q. Other Materials
N/A

2V. Porch Type
N/A

2R. Roof Shapes
N/A

2S. Roof Materials
N/A

2T. Roof Features
N/A

2U. Foundation Materials
N/A

2W. Plan Code
N/A

2X. Description of Property-Continuation Sheet

2Y. Description of Environment and Outbuildings-Continuation Sheet

Q. Areas of Significance/Contexts

130 ETHNIC HISTORY / Black
280 Social History

2Z. Sources


S. Significant Date(s)
1925
1964

T. History / Significance-Continuation Sheet

R. Significant Person(s)
See Continuation Sheet

N. Ownership

X Private
Local
State
Federal
Mix

Survey Report
Blue Ridge Boulevard African American Cemeteries

Preparer
Sally F. Schwenk

Organization
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

Date
June 2001

Photo Roll and Frame Number

X
Blue Ridge Lawn Memorial Gardens
Jackson
2640 South Blue Ridge Boulevard

T. History / Significance

Established in 1925 and advertised as a "Park Plan," the 23.2 acre Blue Ridge Lawn Cemetery reflects the shift in the early twentieth century in cemetery design to the memorial park plan. The development team for the cemetery included both Caucasians and African Americans. The marketing plan targeted Kansas City's African American community and stressed the benefits of perpetual maintenance. The cemetery is the only one of the three African American cemeteries on Blue Ridge Boulevard to have an endowment. Developed by United Cemeteries Company, the landscape designers are the New York architectural firm of George B. Post and Sons and landscape architect Charles D. Woodward of the engineering firm Tuttle-Ayres-Woodward. Officers of the company were: president, Dr. J. E. Stevens, a Kansas City native "well known in Republican political circles;" general manager, James A Hodges, former manager of the Hollywood Mausoleum and Cemetery of Los Angeles; H. D. Payne, a Kansas City lawyer; vice president and treasurer, F. A Mayes of the Chase Manhattan Bank; and general sales manager, Charles O. Gossard, formerly with Mt. Moriah and Memorial Park cemeteries. Over 4,700 burials occurred between the year of its founding and 1950. Like the other black cemeteries on Blue Ridge Boulevard, it is the final resting place of notables in Kansas City's African American community and the thousands of the City's African American's who owned small businesses, waited tables, cleaned homes and businesses, worked as common laborers, taught school and kept house, as well as the graves of veterans of all United States twentieth century wars. These burial places provide visual insight into the rich, diversified life of the area's African-American community during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The cemetery is part of a handful of remaining African American landmarks in Jackson County. Blue Ridge Lawn Cemetery is individually significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Social History. As a contributing element to a Multiple Property Submission it is significant under Criterion B as the burial place of numerous important individuals and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. Individual burial places may be eligible for listing after conducting research and evaluating other sites associated with specific individuals.
2X. Further Description

The 23.2-acre Blue Ridge Lawn Memorial Gardens incorporates a vast expanse of open ground and slopes to the west and southwest from Blue Ridge Boulevard. A system of curving gravel roads divide the open space, creating a central area divided into four general burial areas that are connected by a central triangular grassy "island" [Photographs #10, #11, #18, #19, #20, #22]. Throughout the cemetery "street," signs of iron pipe and cast metal denote the various cemetery sections by name. In the outer portions of the cemetery near its boundaries, the gravel roads consist of double ruts created by tires. Except along the boundaries, which are defined by mature vegetation and trees indigenous to the region, plantings are scattered, suggesting a random placement of ornamental vegetation. The age and species of the trees reflect a planted landscape in these open areas. A formal entrance gate consists of four, square fieldstone columns capped with triangular hipped shake single "roofs" [Photographs # 1, #2, #3]. The tallest and innermost flank the entrance drive. From there, a low chain link fence curves outward and ends with another set of square columns. Although flush markers predominant, there are a few scattered vertical granite headstones. On one knoll, in the northwest quadrant of the cemetery, a concrete monument in the form of an open book has an image of the Christ on one page and a scriptural passage on the other. The "book" rests on a fieldstone wall [Photograph # 14]. A chain link fence surrounds the cemetery and can be found in the underbrush that encroaches upon the open space. Like the other cemeteries located on the west side of Blue Ridge Boulevard, the burial plots have their short side running north and south and their long side running east and west.
Historic Name: Blue Ridge Lawn Memorial Gardens
County: Jackson
Address: 2640 South Blue Ridge Boulevard

2Y. Description of Environment and Outbuildings

The Cemetery is on a high ridge on the west side of Blue Ridge Boulevard, between Truman Road (15th Street) and 23rd Street. The viewshed to the west and southwest is unbroken. A mix of commercial and residential buildings line Blue Ridge Boulevard. To the west is the Little Blue River industrial area.
SEC. 1  GARDEN OF THE LAST SUPPER
SEC. 2  GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE
HUSBAND

J. D. Johnson

1836 - 1931

AGE 95
I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

St. John 11:25-26
Missouri Historic Resources Survey
Form

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<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<td>E. City</td>
<td>Kansas City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. County</td>
<td>095 Jackson</td>
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<td>R. Significant Person(s)</td>
<td>See Continuation Sheet</td>
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<td>S. Significant Date(s)</td>
<td>1909, 1964</td>
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<td>N. Ownership</td>
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<td>Q. Areas of Significance/Contexts</td>
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<td>T. History / Significance - Continuation Sheet</td>
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Survey Report
Blue Ridge Boulevard African American Cemeteries

Preparer
Sally F. Schwenk

Organization
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

Date
June 2001

Photo Roll and Frame Number
Highland Cemetery is the oldest of three cemeteries that served as the only privately owned, local burial grounds available to the city's African Americans between 1909 and the passage of public accommodations laws in the 1960s. Over 11,200 graves date from 1909 to 1950, a period in which the largest number of burials occurred. Advertised as "devoted to the exclusive use of the Negro Race," its development and location outside the city limits reflect common segregation patterns of the time period. As the burial place for some of the city's African American elite as well as the final resting place for the thousands of ordinary African American citizens of Kansas City it has special significance. The thousands of graves provide visual insight into the rich, diversified lives of the area's African American community during the 19th and 20th centuries and the cemetery is part of a handful of remaining African American landmarks in Jackson County. John A. Eames and his wife Frances G. Eames sold a tract of land, legally described as the west one-half of the Northwest one-quarter of Section 8 Township 49, Range 32 located in an unincorporated area of Jackson County called Blue Summit, to the Highland Cemetery Company for $15,000 on February 17, 1909. John Eames served as president and P. J. Loers served as secretary to the board of directors who administered the company. Envisioning 25,000 burial plots, on June 4, 1909 the directors platted the land into twelve blocks and further subdivided it into lots to be made available for sale and burial. On June 15th of that year, Sallie Powell was the first person buried in the cemetery. Among the notables buried here are: Richard Thomas Coles, the "father of vocational education" in Kansas City; entrepreneurs Alexander Johnson, J. Edward Perry, Walter Williams and Stephen Hightower; Mini L. Crosthwaite, social worker; publishers Nelson C. Crews, of the Kansas City Sun and Chester Arthur Franklin, of the Kansas City Call; early civil rights activists such as the Reverend Daniel Arthur "Fighting Parson" Holmes, John Wesley Hurse and Ann Louise Bryant, the first black woman admitted to the Kansas City University School of Education; jazz singer Julia Lee; and physicians Dr. J. Edward Perry and Dr. L.P. Richardson. Highland Cemetery is individually significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Social History. As a contributing element to a Multiple Property Submission it is significant under Criterion B as the burial place of numerous important individuals and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. Individual burial places may be eligible for listing after conducting research and evaluating other sites associated with specific individuals.
Historic Name | County | Address
--- | --- | ---
Highland Cemetery | Jackson | 2100 Blue Ridge Boulevard

2X. Further Description

Highland Cemetery is a rectangular area that is 951.24 feet on the east, 955.21 feet on the west, 1315.5 feet on the south and 1315.38 feet on the north, comprising 28.8 acres. It is located on sloping ground with frontage on the west side of Blue Ridge Boulevard which follows a ridge of limestone bluffs which run parallel to the Little Blue River. A series of looping and curvilinear narrow gravel roads intersect at various points throughout the cemetery. The circular and irregular areas bordered by roads constitute 11 "Blocks" that are divided into rectangular or square lots, which include 12 grave sites. The plat contains 25,000 lots [See Figures #2 and #3 in Survey Report]. Cemetery records indicate that between 1909 and 1950 over 11,200 burials occurred. A significant number of the graves are unmarked. In the southern quadrant, Blocks 11 and 9 remain undeveloped due to the change in terrain and the presence of rock outcropping. Thick underbrush and trees cover these areas. Block 8, located in the southwest quadrant, contains only a few burials. Block 2, in the southeast portion of the cemetery, is a ditch. The entrance from Blue Ridge Boulevard is denoted by a double-leaf wrought iron gate and square fieldstone piers [Photograph # 1-3]. At the first juncture of the entrance road stands a flag pole and bronze plaque affixed to a short stone pillar. The plaque is dedicated to the veterans of United States wars [Photographs #4 and #5]. Directly to the west is life-sized stone statue of the Christ [Photographs #6 and #7]. To the north is a large cast concrete open book with a carved scriptural message. The book rests on a low, stepped brick wall. A wide variety of headstones are scattered throughout the cemetery. The majority are in open ground, covered with grass [Photographs #11,#12, #13, #14, #18]. In several areas paired, above-ground tombs of granite appear [Photographs #6, #15, #16]. One, located in the southern part of Block 7, features a perpendicular cross atop the paired tombs. A wrought iron fence surrounds the plot. There are a number of standard military headstones of the design furnished by the government [Photographs #22, #27, #33, #34]. Like the other cemeteries located on the west side of Blue Ridge Boulevard, the burial plots have their short side running north and south and their long side running east and west. The earliest graves are marked by head stones that are set perpendicular to the ground. Most are small, simple markers. Only one or two have conscious ornamentation [Photograph #29]. Many of the burial places have markers set flush into the ground. Forest vegetation denotes the boundaries of the property, [Photographs #13, #14 #30] at times encroaching on the cemetery proper [Photograph #25]. Trees, both deciduous and nondeciduous varieties, date from the time of the cemetery platting in 1909 to the current time. Formal cemetery plantings include day lilies and small cedars and yews in scattered locations. With the exception of these elements and mature trees, the remainder of the cemetery is grass [Photographs #8 and #9]. The chain link fence that encircles the cemetery is visible in the forest undergrowth. The roads are gravel, sometimes consisting of only two tire paths [Photographs #19, #21, #16]. Principle vistas from the cemetery are from east to west and northeast to southwest.
2Y. Description of Environment and Outbuildings

Located on ground that slopes to the southwest from Blue Ridge Boulevard, which runs roughly north-south along a ridge overlooking the Little Blue River Valley. The area is marked by open space and scattered residential development. To the west is the Little Blue River industrial area.
THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF
THE PERMANENT MEMORIAL DAY COMMITTEE INC.
KANSAS CITY, MO.

THIS FLAG IS DEDICATED
AS A MEMORIAL TO THE VETERANS OF ALL WARS OF
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
WHO ARE BURIED IN THIS CEMETERY.
THEIR SACRIFICES WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED.
All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth, to be
forbearance and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the
Father and of the Son and of the
Ghost.
Ann W. Mosley
Died Aug. 18, 1908
Age 39 yrs.
At Rest.
ULYSSES
MOHN
ILLINOIS
PFC
3678 QM TRUCK CO
WORLD WAR II
AUGUST 15 1921
MARCH 7 1962
AUSTIN LEWIS 
1840-1920
C.C.C. 886 U.S. COLD. INF.
1861-1865

THOS. J. LEWIS 
1869-1912

BRUCE K. LEWIS 
1884-1913
DANIEL ELLINGTON
1874 — 1910
Missouri Historic Resources Survey
Form

D. Address / Location
8604 East Truman Road
E. City Kansas City  B. County 095 Jackson

Gl. Owner's Name  Address (If Different)
Lincoln Cemetery, Inc.

H. Acreage: 160

Use, Historic 07 Funerary
Use, Present 07 Funerary

Legal Description
A. Historic Name Lincoln Cemetery
C. Other Name

2M. Resource Type Site
2L. No. of Ancillary Structures

2A. Architect / Builder
Unknown

2B. Architectural Style N/A
2C. Vernacular Type N/A

2J. Historic Function 07 Funerary
2K. Historic Sub-Function 07A Cemetery

2Q. Other Materials
2P. Wall Materials N/A

2X. Description of Property and Outbuildings

Q. Areas of Significance/Contexts
130 Ethnic History
280 Social History

National Register Name

NR Eligibility Individually eligible
Integrity Good

Survey Report
Blue Ridge Boulevard African American Cemeteries

Preparer
Sally F. Schwenk

Organization
Historic Preservation Services, LLC

Date June 2001

21. Sources

Property Photograph

Reference Number

1934
1964
Lincoln Cemetery

**T. History / Significance**

The 160 acre Lincoln Cemetery established in 1934 is the largest of the African American cemeteries located on Blue Ridge Boulevard. Its size and simplicity as well as the almost total adherence to the 20th century memorial park cemetery design idiom lends it special significance for its ability to represent the modern landscape design treatment. As the last of the African American cemeteries to be located on Blue Ridge Boulevard, it is the culmination of the evolution of styles presented by the three cemeteries. Over 1,800 graves in the cemetery date from 1934 to 1950. Like the other black cemeteries on Blue Ridge Boulevard, it is the final resting place of notables in Kansas City's African American community, which at Lincoln Cemetery include jazz musician Charlie "Bird" Parker, Buffalo Soldiers, Negro Leagues baseball players and such other notables as pioneer photographer, Charles W. Williams; architect, W. T. Thomas; and female business leader and hotel owner, Mrs. P.S. Street. It also holds the graves of the thousands of the City's African American porters, barbers, waiters, railway service workers, teamsters, laundresses, cooks and housekeepers, as well as the graves of veterans of all United States wars beginning with the Spanish American War and concluding with the Viet Nam War. These burial places provide visual insight into the rich, diversified life of the area's African-American community during the nineteenth and twentieth century. The cemetery is part of a handful of remaining African-American landmarks in Jackson County. Lincoln Cemetery is individually significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of Ethnic Heritage and Social History. As a contributing element to a Multiple Property Submission it is significant under Criterion B as the burial place of numerous important individuals and under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. Individual burial places may be eligible for listing after conducting research and evaluating other sites associated with specific individuals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln Cemetery</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>8604 East Truman Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2X. Further Description**

The cemetery is bisected by a central east-west gravel road and features one of the simplest plans of the three African American cemeteries on Blue Ridge Boulevard. There are 1,761 burials dating from 1934 to 1950. A chain link fence surrounds the property. Upon entering the property, a rectangular sign with "LINCOLN CEMETERY 1934" [Photographs #1, #2] is visible on the north side of the entrance. The main drive is gravel and follows the crest of a hill; the ground slopes to the west and southwest from it. In the western portion of the cemetery, the road completes a full loop to the north [See Figure 4 in Survey Report]. Within this loop is a flagpole [Photograph # 15]. Mature trees flank the roadway on both sides creating a bower effect and reflecting conscious landscape planning [Photograph # 5]. The almost universal use of flush markers – low, flat grave markers – allow an unbroken view of the rolling grass lawns [Photographs # 3, #7, #8, #9, #11, #13.] The graves are arranged almost parallel with Blue Ridge Boulevard; the width runs north-south and the long sides run east and west. The only graves that stand out are the pair of vaults that contain the remains of jazz musician Charlie "Bird" Parker and his mother, Addie Parker [Photograph #14]. The vaults have granite "ledgers" -- large rectangular grave markers set parallel with the ground to cover the grave surface -- and have carved epitaphs.

The most striking landscape features of the cemetery are the large rolling greenswards surrounded by curving lines of mature trees that denote the portion of the cemetery land that serves as a burial ground. The grading demonstrates a conscious plan to provide a series of vistas. Vegetation on the periphery of the cemetery consists of mature trees and vegetation native to the area. There are a few scattered ornamental plantings such as coniferous trees and day lilies. To the south, near the entrance, a large telecommunications tower has been erected. It is part of a series of towers running through the hilly open space between Truman Road (15th Street) and 23rd Street on the north and south and Van Brunt Boulevard and Winner Road on the west and the east. Directly to the east is Mount Washington Cemetery, designed by landscape architect George Kessler that opened around 1900.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lincoln Cemetery</td>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>8804 East Truman Road</td>
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</table>

**2Y. Description of Environment and Outbuildings**

Located on the west side of Blue Ridge Boulevard, the cemetery has unbroken views to the south and west. To the east, across Blue Ridge Boulevard, is the western boundary of c.1900 Mt. Washington Cemetery. To the west is the Little Blue River industrial area.