

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

DRAFT

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Pine Street African Burial Ground

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

name of related multiple property listing N/A

## Location

street & number 157 Pine Street, portions of adjacent parcels

☒

not for publication

city or town Kingston

☐

vicinity

state New York

code \_\_\_\_\_

county Ulster

code \_\_\_\_\_

zip code 12401

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide X local

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

Name of Property

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- |                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | public - Federal |

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- |                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	buildings
1		sites
		structures
		objects
1	1	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary/Cemetery

Industry/Processing/Extraction

Domestic

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary/Cemetery

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: \_\_\_\_\_

walls: \_\_\_\_\_

roof: \_\_\_\_\_

other: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

**Summary Paragraph**

The Pine Street African Burial Ground is located at 157 Pine Street in the City of Kingston, Ulster County, New York (Figure 1). Established in 1750 by the Trustees of Kingston as Kingston's "burying ground for colored people," it was the city's first burial ground for enslaved people and their descendants before the burial ground was sold to a lumber company ca. 1870.<sup>1</sup> It then became a residential property ca. 1910. Today, the Pine Street African Burial Ground is in a residential neighborhood with adjacent single- and multi-family, mid-to-late twentieth century residences. The Kingston Stockade Historic District (NR listed 1975) is located four blocks from the site.

The main section of the burial ground is located at 157 Pine Street on an approximately half-acre, rectangular parcel. Based on historical maps and archaeological evidence, the burial ground extends to adjacent lots including 163 Pine Street, 104-114 Saint James Street, and 156 and 160 Fair Street. Based on historical maps, it is estimated that the cemetery at its full extent was rectangular in shape and approximately half-acre in extent. Due to subsequent development, there are no remaining burial stones or markers.

Originally established on the outskirts of Kingston in an undeveloped area known as the Armbowery, the city began encroaching on the burial ground by 1777 (Figure 2). Although not labeled as such, the burial ground is a long rectangular lot on the 1858 French Map of the City of Kingston (Figure 3). The burial ground was first officially designated on insurance maps in 1870 and appears to have extended nearly to Fair Street on the west and onto adjacent lots to the north of the modern property boundary of 157 Pine Street (Figure 4).

The cemetery boundary is by systematic archaeological excavations undertaken between 2022 and 2024. Based on historical maps and archaeological excavations to date, it is estimated that the nominated site at 157 Pine Street (Tax Lot 56.91-6-11, Figure 9) contains 60 percent of the burial ground. The remaining 40 percent of the burial ground is located in sections within the following parcels: 163 Pine Street (56.91-6-10), 104 Saint James Street (56.91-6-5), 106 Saint James Street (56.91-6-4), 110 Saint James Street (56.91-6-3), 114 Saint James Street (56.91-6-2), 160 Fair Street (56.91-6-26), and 156 Fair Street (56.91-6-25).

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**Narrative Description**

The majority of the Pine Street African Burial Ground is located within 157 Pine Street. The landscape is largely comprised of grassy areas, bordered by non-historic metal fencing around the perimeter. Several large chestnut and hickory trees dot the landscape, though it is mostly bare of any significant landscape features or funerary objects. Small marble markers placed within the past several years outline rectangular sections of the lawn, indicating where archaeological excavations have occurred. A vernacular one-and-one-half-story side gable house built ca. 1910 with minimal Craftsman style detailing is used by Harambee Kingston NY, Inc.—the Kingston-based, African American community group that owns the property—as a cultural center and small museum. The former residential property is not directly associated with the establishment and usage of the Pine Street African Burial Ground and is thus non-contributing within the nomination.

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<sup>1</sup> Diamond, "Owned in Life, Owned in Death: The Pine Street African and African-American Burial Ground in Kingston, New York, 58."; Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York: From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year 1820*, 1.

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Based on its depiction in the 1870 (Figure 4) and 1875 (Figure 5) Beers maps of Kingston, the original cemetery extended from Pine Street in the east to nearly Fair Street in the west.<sup>2</sup> Since the burial ground predates the establishment of Kingston's parcel lot divisions, the burial ground extends beyond the modern property lines of 157 Pine Street. Archaeological evidence of the burial ground has been documented within 163 Pine Street, properties at 104-114 Saint James Street, and 156 and 160 Fair Street. The construction of the house and previous lumber yard occurred within the historical boundaries of the burial ground. Excavations in 2022 clearly indicate that the construction of the house and basement destroyed that portion of the burial ground. The lumber yard appears to have had little impact on the burials.

The eastern boundary of the site extends to Pine Street, while the southern boundary appears to coincide with the property lines depicted in the 1858 French Map (Figure 3), the 1870 and 1875 Beers maps (Figures 4 & 5), and the 1887 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Figure 6). This correspondence was corroborated by archaeological documentation of a series of post molds, noting the location of a former fence, running in an east-west alignment along the modern property line.<sup>3</sup> Based on archaeological evidence, the burial ground further encroaches to the north within the 163 Pine Street and 104-114 Saint James Street parcels.

Although historical documentation and archaeological evidence clearly demonstrate the boundaries of the Pine Street African Burial Ground extending beyond the modern property lines of 157 Pine Street, the majority of the burial ground is contained within the property lines of 157 Pine Street. There are no other above-ground resources within the boundaries apart from the non-contributing museum owned and operated by Harambee.

**Integrity**

The Pine Street African Burial Ground has provided critical information relating to the lives and legacies of enslaved people and their descendants and represents a previously under-researched part of Kingston's history of enslavement. Archaeological excavations have demonstrated that below-ground disturbances are primarily limited to the construction of the house and basement; the majority of the burial ground—apart from that beneath the museum—is undisturbed.

Although there are no above ground historic markers or headstones at the Pine Street African Burial Ground, archaeological excavations have recovered one intact and inscribed marble headstone (moved off site), footstones with inscribed initials, and multiple headstone fragments. Additionally, archaeological excavations have documented twenty-seven burials, twenty-two within the modern property limits of 157 Pine Street and five within the adjacent property to the west at 160 Fair Street, in addition to the disturbed burial identified at 163 Pine Street. The total number of people buried at the site remains unknown as archaeological excavations have intentionally been limited in scope given the nature of the site, and due to the fact that there are no historical documents that record the names of those buried there. That being said, based on the estimated 1800 m<sup>2</sup> total area of the burial ground and the average spacing of individuals encountered during excavation, the burial ground may contain as many as 575 individuals.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Sanford, "Combined Map of Rondout, Kingston, & Wilbur," 1870; Beers, "County Atlas of Ulster New York," 1875.

<sup>3</sup> Post molds are the stains or remains of decayed wooden posts in the ground.

<sup>4</sup> This figure is an approximation based off the spaces of known burials found within the burial ground limits.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☒ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Archaeology: Historic/Non-Aboriginal

Ethnic Heritage/Black

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

African American

**Period of Significance**

1750 – ca. 1870

**Architect/Builder**

**Significant Dates**

1750; ca. 1870

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance begins in 1750 when the Trustees of Kingston set aside a portion of land for use as a burial ground for enslaved Africans and concludes ca. 1870 when the land was sold to W. H. Palen who established a lumber yard on the property.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

The nominated property is a historic burial ground wherein enslaved Africans, their descendants, and African Americans are interred. At the time of its founding, the Pine Street African Burial Ground was the first and only public burial ground established for enslaved Africans in the Town of Kingston.

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Pine Street African Burial Ground is locally significant under Criterion D for its ability to inform our understanding of the living conditions, health, and burial practices of Kingston's African and African American community during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The interred individuals were instrumental in shaping the character and history of Kingston, for the city and entire state were dependent on enslaved labor. Despite the centrality of Kingston in New York's history, the visibility and understanding of the role that Africans and African Americans played in that history remains limited. This lack of information is particularly striking given that the 1790 Census indicates that Kingston had the largest enslaved population by percentage outside of New York City.

The burial ground is nominated under the following Areas of Significance: Archaeology: Historic/Non-Aboriginal and Ethnic Heritage/Black. Based on archaeological investigations, it is believed that the Pine Street

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African Burial Ground was the primary burial ground for enslaved Africans and free persons in Kingston between 1750 and ca. 1870, with probable cause to believe that interments were occurring on the site before then.<sup>5</sup> Existing research and documentation have already confirmed the burials of people of African descent within the boundaries of the burial ground. The site is also significant under Ethnic Heritage/Black for its connection to the lives of enslaved Africans and free persons living in Kingston throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The burial ground has provided critical information regarding the history of enslavement in Kingston, with future plans for additional research and documentation that will provide a comprehensive history of the site and the individuals interred there.

The burial ground was formally established in 1750 by the Trustees of Kingston in the Armbowery area of the city but is not marked as such on historical maps until 1870 (Figure 4). Beginning in 1853, the land was sold to a series of private landowners but is still marked as a cemetery on the 1870 and 1875 Beers insurance maps (Figures 4 & 5). The burial ground was thus used at least until ca. 1870 when the property was sold and became a lumberyard. Subsequent Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps in 1887 (Figure 6) and 1892 (Figure 7) show the lumberyard with the cemetery's location as depicted on earlier historic maps.

Although the existence of the burial ground was well-established by the time it was rediscovered in 1990, it was not until the purchase of 157 Pine Street in 2019 by Harambee Kingston NY, Inc., in conjunction with the Kingston Land Trust, that protection and historical interpretation of the site began. It was also at this point that archaeologists from the State University of New York at New Paltz became involved in the project in order to aid in the reconstruction of African American history in Kingston and the mid-Hudson Valley region more broadly. As such, archaeological and historical documentation of the site are ongoing in conjunction with Harambee.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance**

**History of Enslavement in Kingston**

Race-based slavery was introduced to the New Netherlands under Dutch occupation in 1626 and saw a significant expansion after British control began in 1664, accelerating under the Royal African Company.<sup>6</sup> By the eighteenth century, a considerable portion of New York's enslaved population resided in the Hudson Valley, which had the highest concentration of enslavers outside the American South.<sup>7</sup> In 1746, close to one-fifth of New York's population was enslaved. According to the 1790 Census, there were 21,324 enslaved people in the state, which represents six percent of a total population of 340,000. At the county level, ten percent (2,906 out of 29,397) of the population of Ulster County were enslaved.<sup>8</sup>

The first records of enslaved people in Kingston appeared in 1667. By 1790, Kingston had the largest population of enslaved Africans by percentage outside of New York City, with eighteen percent —711 enslaved individuals—out of the total population of 3,929 residents. In the same census, enslaved people were recorded in 209 out of the town's 536 households (thirty-nine percent). Although most households who enslaved people

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<sup>5</sup> Diamond, "Owned in Life, Owned in Death: The Pine Street African and African-American Burial Ground in Kingston, New York, 49.

<sup>6</sup> Lyndon, "New York and the Slave Trade, 1700 to 1774."

<sup>7</sup> Maisha, "AME Zion Church of Kingston and Mt. Zion Cemetery," 10, 11.

<sup>8</sup> Diamond, "Owned in Life, Owned in Death," 56.

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had between one and three enslaved laborers, eleven families owned at least ten enslaved people. There were only nine free Africans living in Kingston during this time.

Cemeteries and burial grounds for enslaved Africans and their descendants were created due to “social distance, color, and perceived moral differences” between enslaved persons and their enslavers.<sup>9</sup> They were also established due to the prohibition of religious institutions to perform church burials for people of African descent by the state of New York in 1697.<sup>10</sup> As such, burial grounds for enslaved Africans, free persons, and other persons of color were located on the periphery of city limits.<sup>11</sup> In Kingston, this area was known as the *Armbowery*, a Dutch word “derived from *arm* meaning ‘poor, needy or indigent’ and *bouwen*, meaning in one sense, ‘to cultivate.’”<sup>12</sup> This area—owned by the Commonality of Kingston until ca. 1750—was effectively a ‘poor farm,’ a large swathe of land that was divided by use for pastures, farming, social events, and other uses.<sup>13</sup>

As Kingston’s African and subsequent African American population grew throughout the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, so did the city’s present-day Midtown neighborhood. The neighborhood—wherein the Pine Street African Burial Ground is located—was the most densely populated area in Kingston. It was also the location of both Kingston’s and Ulster County’s first African American church, the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church.<sup>14</sup> The accompanying Mt. Zion Cemetery (NR Listed 2021) was the second-oldest African American cemetery in Kingston, the first being the Pine Street African Burial Ground.

By the mid-nineteenth century, Kingston maintained a small but fairly stable African and African American population. Much of the cultural life centered around the African Methodist Episcopal churches that were formed. Churches belonging to the denomination served as “anchors of community life and centers of freedom struggles, radiating strength and commitment to justice.”<sup>15</sup> The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church (NR Listed 2021) was founded in Kingston in 1848, and erected their first church building in 1863. A second, historically African American church, the African Union Church—now known as St. Mark’s AME Church—was incorporated in 1853 (Contributing within the NR listed Rondout-West Strand Historic District, 1990).

It is most likely that Kingston’s African American community began to use the Mt. Zion African American Cemetery after the sale and closure of the Pine Street African Burial Ground ca. 1870. Kingston’s two largest rural cemeteries - Montrepose (ca. 1840) and Wiltwyck (ca. 1856) - did not have separate sections for African Americans nor records of the race and ethnicities of nineteenth-century burials. Of the 104 markers located within the Mt. Zion Cemetery—the earliest burial dating to ca. 1856 and the latest dating to 1967 —, many of those interred have surnames of the families who enslaved them and their ancestors, including Tappan, Schermerhorn, VanDyke, and TenBroeck.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Diamond, “Owned in Life, Owned in Death,” 50.

<sup>10</sup> Diamond, “Owned in Life, Owned in Death,” 50.

<sup>11</sup> Diamond, “Owned in Life, Owned in Death,” 50.

<sup>12</sup> Diamond, “Owned in Life, Owned in Death,” 50.

<sup>13</sup> Diamond, “Owned in Life, Owned in Death,” 50.

<sup>14</sup> Maisha, “AME Zion Church of Kingston and Mt. Zion Cemetery,” 11.

<sup>15</sup> Maisha, “AME Zion Church of Kingston and Mt. Zion Cemetery,” 11, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Maisha, “AME Zion Church of Kingston and Mt. Zion Cemetery,” 6, 18.



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The lives of enslaved peoples in the Hudson Valley during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries are poorly documented except for the few instances where they appear in court records. Most authors have noted that enslaved Africans likely provided manual labor, performed household chores, and engaged in skilled and semi-skilled crafts alongside their white enslavers, often living in the same house. Yet despite living and working in close proximity, they remained segregated in death.

**History of the Pine Street African Burial Ground**

Racial discrimination and segregation in burial practices were especially prevalent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Enslaved Africans were often buried on the rural farms and estates where they lived, their graves almost always separate from the enslavers' cemeteries and churchyards. In cities and villages, separate cemeteries were created for Africans, most notably the African Burial Ground (National Historic Landmark 1993) in New York City. Originally located on the margins of Kingston, the Pine Street African Burial Ground reflects these practices of racial discrimination and cultural disenfranchisement.

As previously noted, the Trustees of Kingston formally established the Pine Street burial ground in the area known as the Armbowery in 1750 (Figure 2).<sup>17</sup> While Schoonmaker interpreted this as a "poor farm," it was used by the commonality of Kingston for grazing animals, cultivation, and in this case, burial purposes.<sup>18</sup> As slavery was practiced in Kingston since at least 1667, and as the colonial New York Assembly enacted a law in 1697 denying interment of enslaved people in any church cemetery, it is possible that the burial ground was being used prior to 1750. Slavery became a substantive part of Kingston's economy and culture from the late-seventeenth century until its legal statewide end on July 4, 1827. It should be noted that although the burial ground was officially designated as such in 1750, it does not mean that the area was not used for the burial of enslaved individuals before that date.

The burial ground is indicated as an open parcel on the 1858 French Map of Kingston (Figure 3), and then as a "cemetery" on the 1870 Beers Map of Kingston (Figure 4). The 1875 Beers Map has it labelled as "CEM" (Figure 5). The Burial Ground was in use at least until the early or mid-1870s before the property was sold ca. 1870 to Henry Palen, who constructed a lumberyard on the property. A description of the cemetery only two to three years later states: "It is devoted to the purposes of a lumberyard, and only three of four gravestones remain in sight."<sup>19</sup> Both the 1887 (Figure 6) and 1892 (Figure 7) Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show the lumberyard with the cemetery's location based on earlier maps. From 1893 to 1914, there are no maps of the site. Based on census data, however, the current house on the property was likely constructed ca. 1910. As shown in the 1915 Codwise Maps of Kingston (Figure 8), several lumber sheds remained at the rear of the 157 Pine Street property after the home's construction; they have since been demolished.

**Recent History and Archaeological Record**

In 1990, bones identified as being of African descent were unearthed on the lot (163 Pine Street) immediately to the north of 157 Pine Street (Figure 9), prompting a resurgence of interest in the burial ground. The remains were found under the concrete floor when the owner was installing new pipes in the bathroom. Dr. Rodriguez of the Onondaga County Medical Examiner's Office identified the remains as probably African American in

<sup>17</sup> *Trustees Records, County of Ulster, New York, 1751.*

<sup>18</sup> Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York: From Its Earliest Settlement to the Year 1820*, v.

<sup>19</sup> Sylvester, *History of Ulster County New York: With Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers*, 257.

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origin. The bones were said to have been brought back to Kingston and reburied in the Mt. Zion Cemetery on South Wall Street, although this remains uncorroborated.

In 2018, the SUNY New Paltz Anthropology and Geology departments conducted the first round of ground-penetrating radar investigations of the burial ground (Figure 11). The area that was scanned included a large portion of the central 'core' of the known extent of the burial ground, as well as what historical maps indicated was the southern boundary.

In 2019, 157 Pine Street was to be auctioned at a foreclosure sale. In an effort to save the burial ground, the Kingston Land Trust and Harambee Kingston NY, Inc. successfully raised funds to purchase the property. In February 2021, the property was conveyed to Harambee, who are the stewards of the land in perpetuity. Harambee rehabilitated the house located at 157 Pine Street (which is non-contributing to the nominated site) for its use to promote African American culture and to display a small exhibit about the Pine Street African Burial Ground.

In July 2022, and in conjunction with Harambee, the SUNY New Paltz Archaeological Field School began excavations at 157 Pine Street. The overarching goals of the project focused on documenting the historical boundaries of the burial ground, determining the impact that any post-1870 activity may have had on the integrity of the burials, and ensuring that any future activity/construction would not impact burials. Based on estimates from historical maps, the burial ground covers approximately 1800 m<sup>2</sup> to date and approximately 120 m<sup>2</sup> has been excavated (around 6.8 percent of the total area). While a total of twenty-seven burials have been documented, nine individuals have been fully exhumed (Figure 10). Only one of these burials exhibits any evidence of being impacted by post-1870 activity (e.g., building construction, infrastructure work, etc.).

Excavations during this time uncovered the burial of an adult male immediately adjacent to the west side of the house at 157 Pine Street. Most notably, the individual's body was bisected by the stone foundation of the house, resulting in the complete loss of skeletal elements below the knee. Further, a mandible was recovered from a context that most likely represents fill from the early-twentieth century excavation of the basement. Additionally, marble fragments, as well as an intact marble headstone, were recovered while archaeologists monitored septic line work previously performed on the house at 157 Pine Street.

A total of 6 units (20.5 m<sup>2</sup>; Units 1-3, 7, 9 and 10) were placed along what was believed to be the southern boundary of the burial ground. In 2022, two post molds with cut bluestone bases were found that correspond to a previous fence along the historical lot line. The bluestone base likely represents an attempt to protect the wood from termite and carpenter ant activity, as well as provide a solid footing in a sandy matrix. Two additional post molds were identified in 2023, confirming previous evidence of a fence that was uncovered in the 2022 field season. Interestingly, the post molds are on a line heading to a current property corner stake. However, that current property corner is not the westernmost extent of the cemetery, which is shown on nineteenth-century maps as including portions of the property to the west of the stake.

Excavation of these units uncovered the remains of four individuals (two adults and two juveniles). In Unit 9, just north of the line of post molds and the southern boundary, a juvenile individual (approx. 4 yrs +/- 1 yr) with a coin between their legs was documented. The coin was a copper penny Draped Liberty Bust. Although the

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date was unreadable, based on the design of the Liberty Bust (e.g., facing right, no Liberty Cap and pole), the coin dates to between 1790 and 1807. After it was photographed and examined, it was placed in its original position and reburied with the individual.

Although it may never be possible to establish the northern boundary of the burial ground because it is located within the backyards of several private residences, recent archaeological evidence has provided some clues. In 2024, archaeological excavations were conducted in the southern portion of the lot at 110 St. James (Tax Lot 56.91-6-3), which based on the estimated extent of the burial ground, could potentially contain the northwestern portion of the burial ground (Units 16-20). These excavations, however, did not uncover any evidence of burials. However, in 1990, human remains were uncovered during house renovations at 163 Pine Street, the most north-easterly abutting modern lot. The locations of these remains are indicated in Figure 10. While the approximate location of the remains found in 163 Pine Street falls outside the boundaries of the nomination, this is considered an anomaly at this time. As such, no other remains have been found through archaeological work outside of the historical boundaries of the burial ground.

Additionally, three units – Units 13-15 (129 feet) - were excavated on the property at 160 Fair Street, immediately to the west of 157 Pine Street. At this location, four intact burials were identified and documented. Of note, five copper-based alloy rings were recovered with one of the burials. In 2024, six, 6.5 x 6.5 feet excavation units were established in the backyard of 160 Fair Street, the property immediately west of 157 Pine Street. In total, five intact, undisturbed burials were documented. The most westerly unit in which a burial was documented, is approximately fifty feet west of the property line between 157 Pine Street and 160 Fair Street.

To date, these finds represent the only grave goods/offerings directly associated with a burial. In Unit 11, a substantial piece of bluestone was found flat on an east/west axis above Burial #16. It is possible that this was laid flat when filling began in the backyard. Directly underneath the stone, a possible cache or offering of four items was found. What was uncovered included a fragmentary smoking pipe in the shape of a fish (with scales), two glass ground perfume stoppers, and the lip and neck of a bottle with a cork stopper still intact. At present, it is unclear what association, if any, these items may have with the individual interred there.

Although excavations indicate that the burials themselves were not significantly impacted by post-1870 activity, it is clear that any above-ground evidence of the burial ground has been destroyed. To date, only one complete headstone has been recovered, which was found while monitoring the excavation of a new water line for the house at 157 Pine Street (Figure 12). The marble headstone was intact and is engraved with the following:

*Ceazer Smith died Jan. 26 1839, aged 41 years 2 mo. & 5 days*

*Life's duty done, as sinks the clay*

*Light from it's load the spirit flies*

*While heaven and earth combine to say*

*How bless'd the righteous when he dies*

Since he was born before 1799, Ceazer Smith may have been born into slavery in 1797 and died a free man in 1839. The other headstone fragments provided minimal information but were encouraging. Found among the

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units and during the water line replacement were two marble footstones, one engraved with “B.T.,” the other with “D.T.”.

During the 2023 field season, an area approximately 36 m<sup>2</sup> was excavated immediately west of the house. The goal of this excavation was to identify and exhume any remains in this high-traffic area. In total, five burials were encountered and exhumed, while evidence for a sixth, unexcavated, burial was observed in the western wall of the unit. During clearing of the area behind the house, a dry well that was made from a wooden barrel filled with bluestone fragments and a fragmentary marble gravestone were found. No inscriptions on the gravestones were observed.

Material artifacts classified as grave furniture include recovered coffin nails, hinges, and screws. Although some small samples of coffin wood were recovered, for the most part coffin wood was very deteriorated and was largely evidenced by soil color and texture changes. Shroud pins were recovered from a limited number of burials, though it was more common to encounter copper staining on skeletal elements.

By far the most common category of artifacts are those attributable to post-1870 activity associated with the lumber yard and the site’s conversion to a residential property. Many of the units had significant quantities of brick and brick fragments, various categories of nails, window glass, concrete, bluestone, and large pieces of iron in their upper strata. Along with the construction debris was a large amount of household items, including plain whiteware, blue transfer-printed whiteware, red transfer-printed whiteware, Ironstone, flow-blue pearlware, red earthenware flowerpot fragments, porcelain, and various categories of stoneware. Personal items recovered include combs, marbles, syringe fragments, hair clips, buckles, white clay smoking pipes, buttons, slate pencils, and a lice comb. One Native American artifact, a Levanna projectile point was found. However, this artifact was in an ash deposit, apparently having been discarded with coal ash when someone emptied their stove. The 2023 field season also gave us a wider perspective on the length of time that the backyard had been used for refuse disposal. During the 2023 season a brass faucet patented by the “J.A. Vogel Co.” on “Dec. 30<sup>th</sup> 1913” (Unit #10, Figure 10), and a New York State dog collar # 390480 with a date of 1931 (Unit #9, Figure 10), were found. This would suggest that the southwest corner of the yard was being used as a location for refuse as late as the 1930s.

**Research Questions**

The Pine Street African Burial Ground is the first cemetery specifically founded for the interment of enslaved Africans to be archaeologically excavated in Kingston and the surrounding area. Given the limited historical information available, specifically regarding the histories of African enslavement and African Americans in Kingston and the mid-Hudson Valley more broadly, analysis of the human remains recovered from the Pine Street African Burial Ground has the potential to contribute significantly to our knowledge regarding these histories. Bioarchaeological analyses of the human remains recovered will significantly expand our knowledge, answering questions related to nutrition, disease, physical stress, injury, and the daily activities of this population. The research questions highlighted here build upon one another, leading from questions that relate to site-level topics (e.g., sample/population demography) to those that touch on national/global issues (e.g., molecular origin, movement of peoples within the United States).

The human skeleton responds and adapts to environmental conditions and provides insight into a wide range of topics related to behavior in the past. Nutrition, disease, physical stress, injury, and daily activities can leave

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traces on human bone and teeth. Analysis of the biogeochemical makeup of bones and teeth facilitates understanding of both diet and mobility. These methods can provide results that speak to broader historical and anthropological questions such as geolocating the region of Africa where individuals were enslaved, the impact of manumission on individual mobility within New York state, and the connection between diet, health, and socioeconomics.<sup>20</sup> Further, analyses of mitochondrial DNA can provide information on geographic regions in Africa where they, or their ancestors, were enslaved.<sup>21</sup>

Although it may not be possible to assign names to the remains, constructing osteobiographies—personal stories based on skeletal analysis—offers a profound opportunity to understand and honor the lives of those interred there. For instance, Nystrom published an article that looked at a young woman (approximately 25 years old) recovered from the Newburgh Colored Burial Ground (NR Listed 2010). This young woman experienced, and survived, severe systemic physiological stress during childhood as her teeth had a number of developmental defects and various lesions. Perhaps the most significant insult, however, was that upon her death she became the subject of a postmortem examination in the form of a craniotomy.<sup>22</sup>

Though these research questions will reveal aspects of the lives of these specific people that lived and died in Kingston, the results will also contribute to the burgeoning literature on the lives of enslaved Africans and their descendants throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Data generated from the Pine Street African Burial Ground will be considered in relation to other African American cemetery sites, including the New York African Burial Ground, the Eighth Street First African Baptist Church cemetery in Philadelphia, Schuyler Flatts Slave Burial Ground in Albany, and the Newburgh Colored Burial Ground.<sup>23</sup>

Ultimately, excavation, documentation, and interpretation of the burial ground is grounded in the idea that its preservation is contributing to the reclamation of the cultural, historical, and humanistic significance of the Pine Street African Burial Ground. Here, reclamation manifests as community-centered control over the place, the people, and the narrative that surrounds the burial ground, the exploration and communication of forgotten or overlooked historical truths, as well as a vision for a path towards healing. Ideally, the research agenda can also

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<sup>20</sup> Bastos et al., “Isotopic Study of Geographic Origins and Diet of Enslaved Africans Buried in Two Brazilian Cemeteries.”; France et al., “Stable Isotopes from the African Site of Elmina, Ghana and Their Usefulness in Tracking the Provenance of Enslaved Individuals in 18th- and 19th-century North American Populations.”; Kootker et al., “Dynamics of Indian Ocean Slavery Revealed through Isotopic Data from the Colonial Era Cobern Street Burial Site, Cape Town, South Africa (1750-1827).”; Laffoon, Espersen, and Mickleburgh, “The Life History of an Enslaved African: Multiple Isotope Evidence for Forced Childhood Migration from Africa to the Caribbean and Associated Dietary Change.”; Price, Tiesler, and Burton, “Early African Diaspora in Colonial Campeche, Mexico: Strontium Isotopic Evidence.”; Nystrom, Amato, and Jankovitz, “Strontium Isotopic Reconstruction of the Composition of an Urban Free Black Population from the 19th Century United States.”; Franklin and Wilson, “A Bioarchaeological Study of African American Health and Mortality in the Post-Emancipation US South.”; Vanderpool and Turner, “Stable Isotopic Reconstruction of Diet and Residential Mobility in a Postbellum African American Community in Rural Georgia.”

<sup>21</sup> Fleskes et al., “Ancestry, Health, and Lived Experiences of Enslaved Africans in 18th Century Charleston: An Osteobiographical Analysis.”

<sup>22</sup> Nystrom, “Postmortem Examinations and the Embodiment of Inequality during the 19th Century.”

<sup>23</sup> Blakey, “Introduction.”; Mack et al., “Odontological Indicators of Disease, Diet, and Nutritional Inadequacy.”; Rankin-Hill, L.M. et al., “Demographic Overview of the African Burial Ground and Colonial Africans in New York.”; Angel et al., “Life Stresses of the Free Black Community as Represented by the First African Baptist Church, Philadelphia, 1823–1841.”; Kelley and Angel, “Life Stresses of Slavery.”; Rankin-Hill, *A Biohistory of 19th-Century Afro-Americans: The Burial Remains of a Philadelphia Cemetery*.; Lee et al., “MtDNA Origins of an Enslaved Labor Force from the 18th Century Schuyler Flatts Burial Ground in Colonial Albany, NY: Africans, Native Americans, and Malagasy?”; Nystrom, “Postmortem Examinations and the Embodiment of Inequality during the 19th Century.”; Nystrom, “Dental Evidence of Congenital Syphilis in a 19th Century Cemetery from the Mid-Hudson Valley.”

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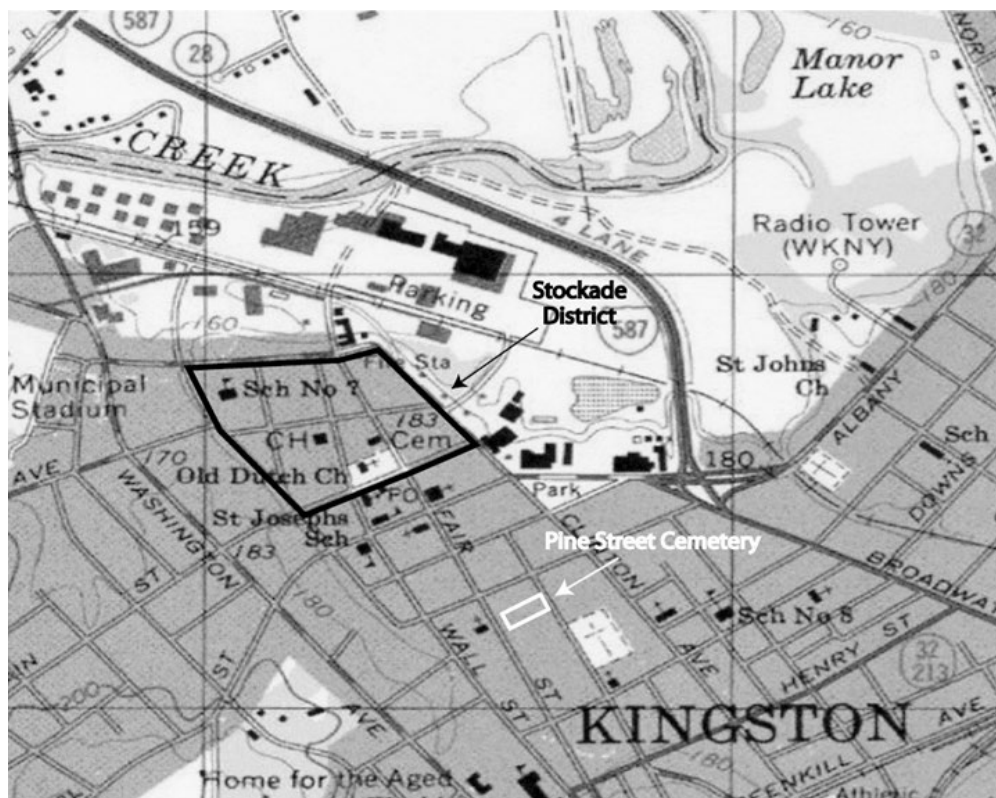
contribute to restitution (the restoration of relationships) and reconciliation (truthful and forward-looking discussions about uncomfortable and painful topics).

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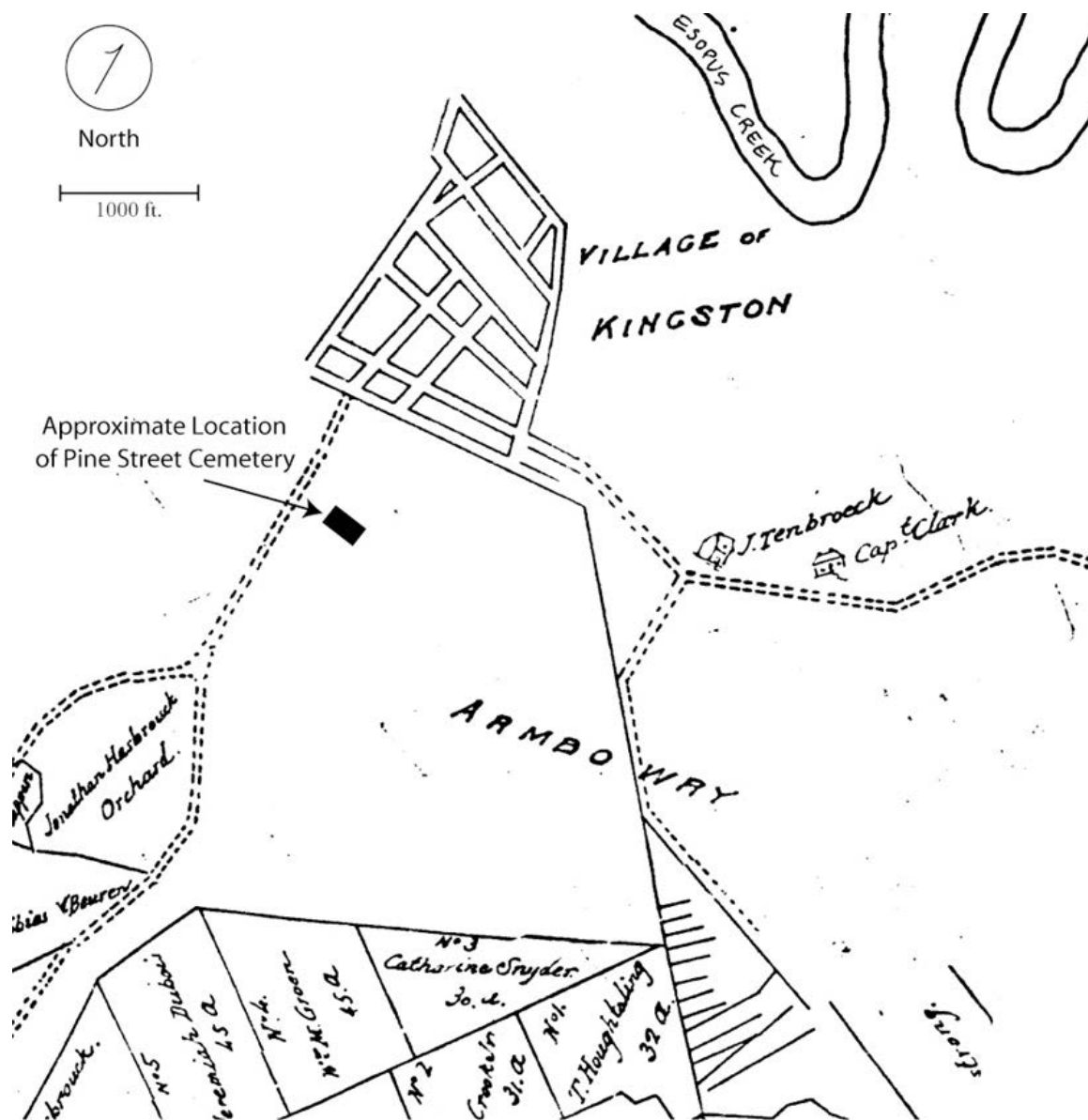
**Figure 1.** Location of the Pine Street African Burial Ground as shown on a USGS Kingston West Quadrangle with a map of New York State for comparison. Dr Joseph E. Diamond, "Owned in Life, Owned in Death: The Pine Street African and African-American Burial Ground in Kingston, New York," 2006.

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**Figure 2.** Map highlighting the approximate location of the Pine Street African Burial Ground within the historic Armbowery section of Kingston, 1750. Trustees Records, County of Ulster, New York, 1750.

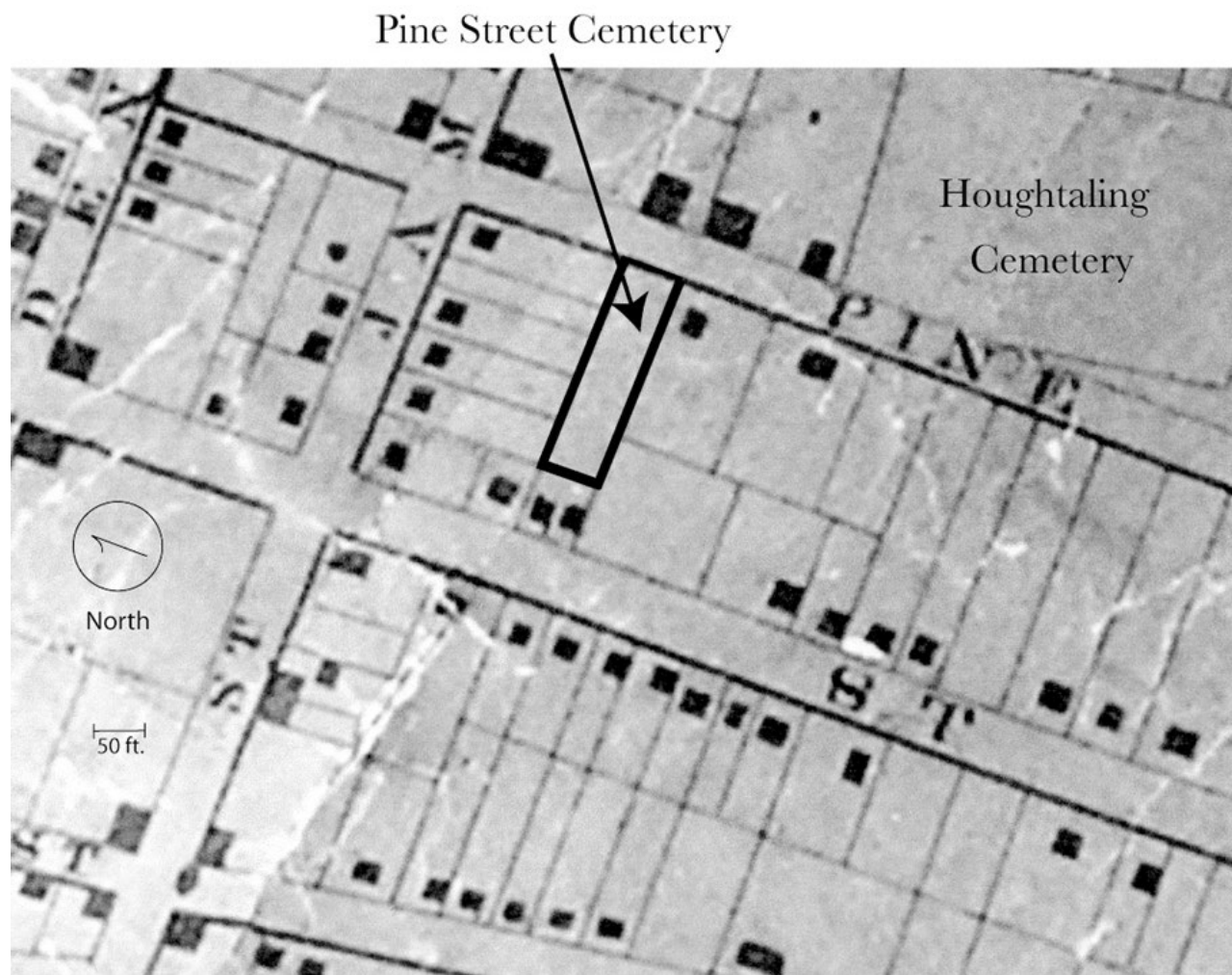


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**Figure 3.** The location of the Pine Street African Burial Ground is outlined on a map showing subdivided lots along Pine Street, 1858. French Map, Library of Congress.

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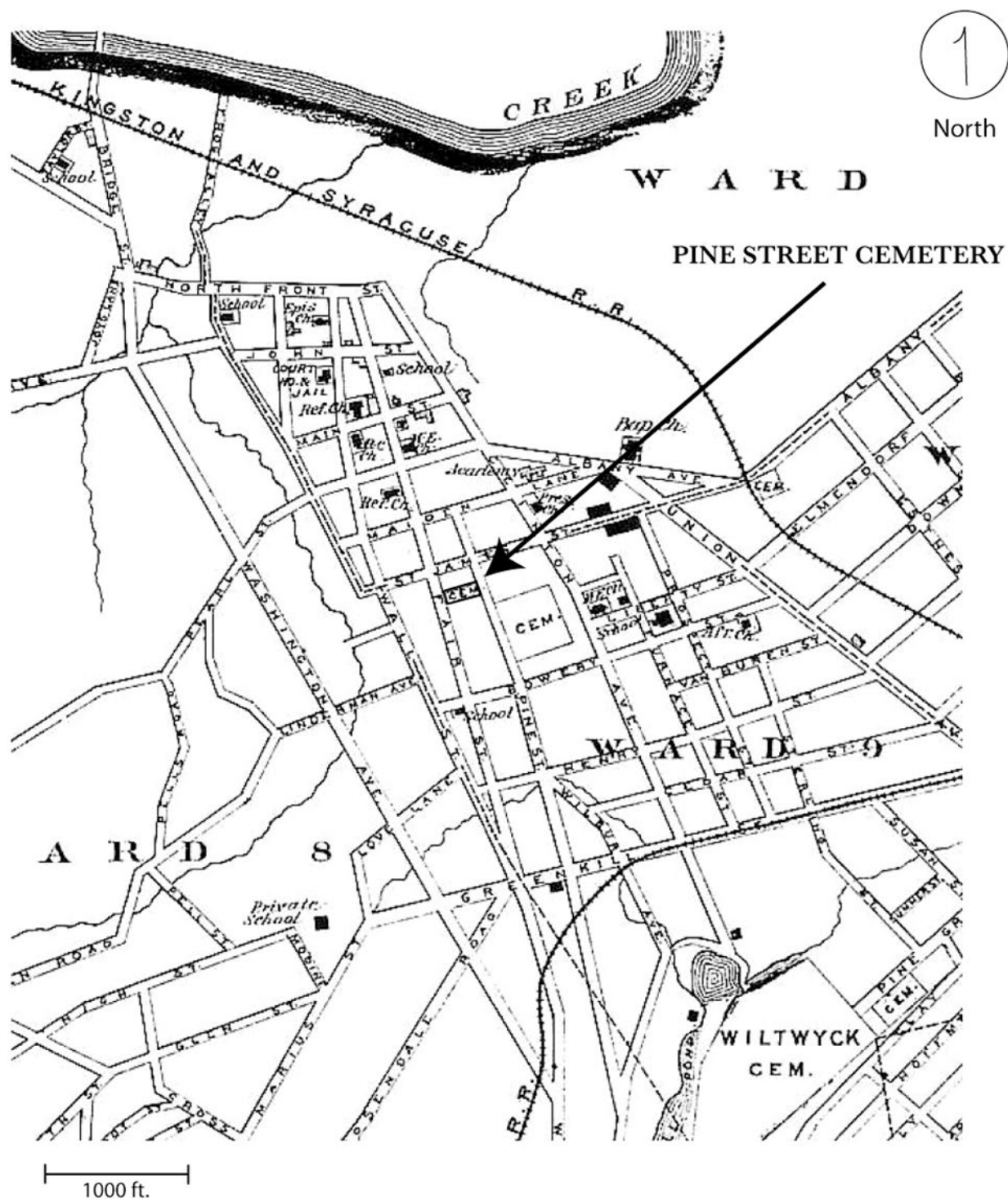
**Figure 4.** The first insurance map to officially label the lot as a “Cemetery” with surrounding residential development, 1870. Friends of Historic Kingston, Combined Map of Rondout, Kingston, & Wilbur.

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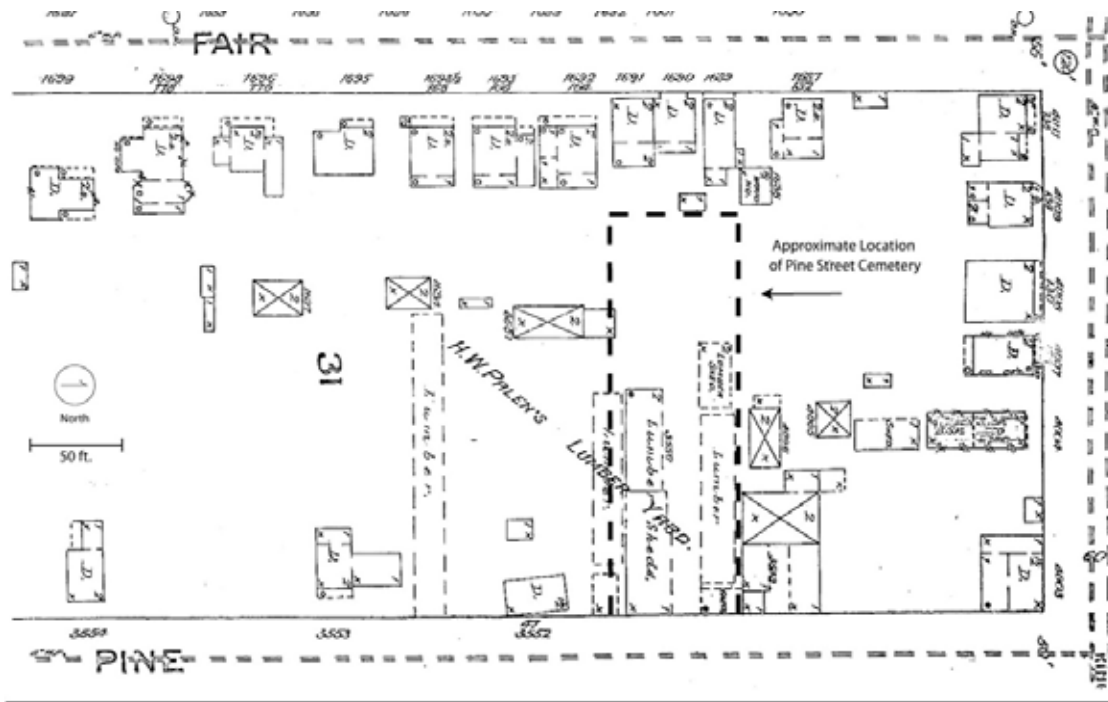
**Figure 5.** Location of the burial ground labeled on an atlas map of Ulster County, 1875. Ulster County Clerk, Beers Map.

**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

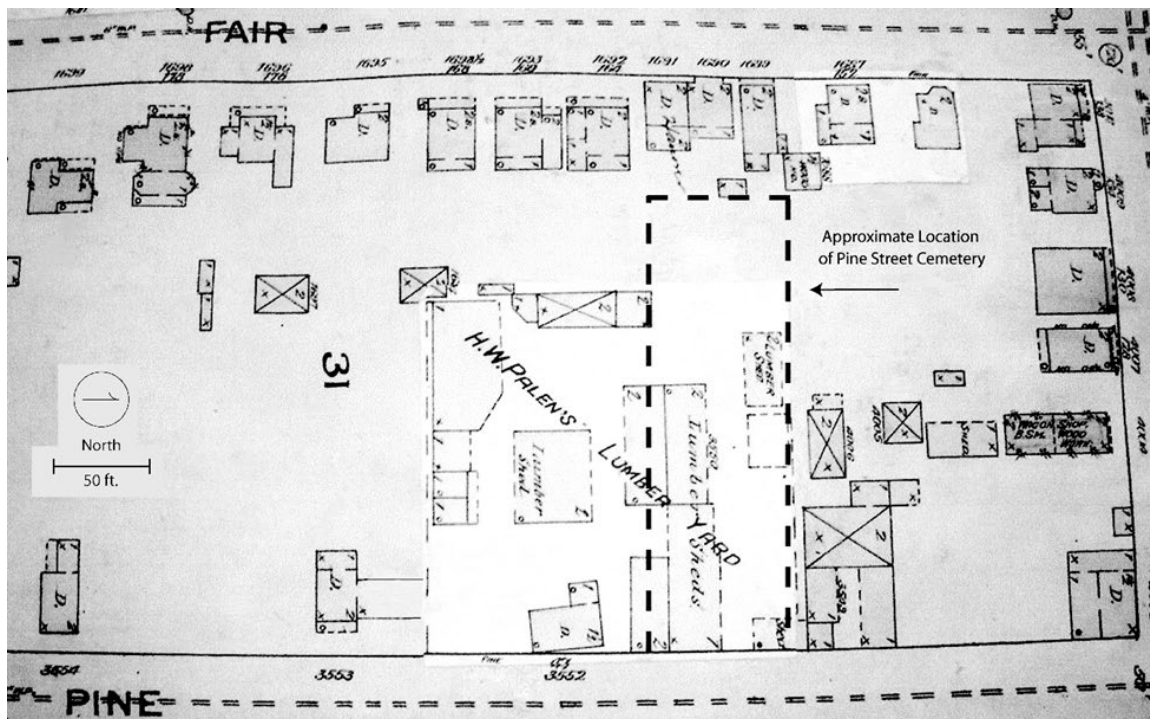
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**Figure 6.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map demonstrating the development of H.W. Palen's Lumber Yard located directly on the site of the Pine Street African Burial Ground, 1887.



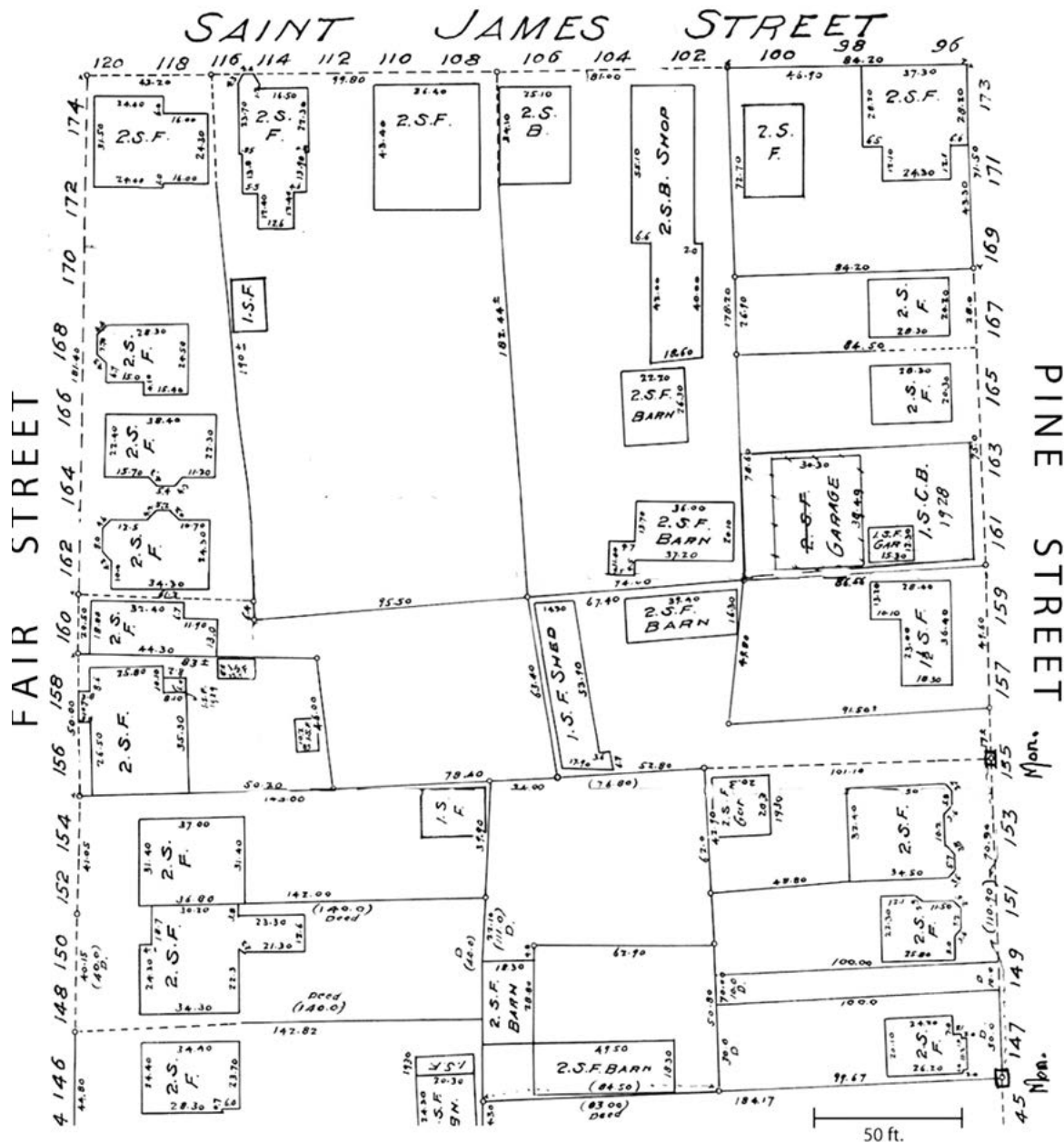
**Figure 7.** Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1892 demonstrating the location of the lumber yard within the boundaries of the historic burial ground.

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**Figure 8 .** Construction of the site's residential property occurred sometime between 1892 and 1915, as demonstrated by the 1915 Codwise Map of Kingston. Office of Planning and Engineering, Kingston.

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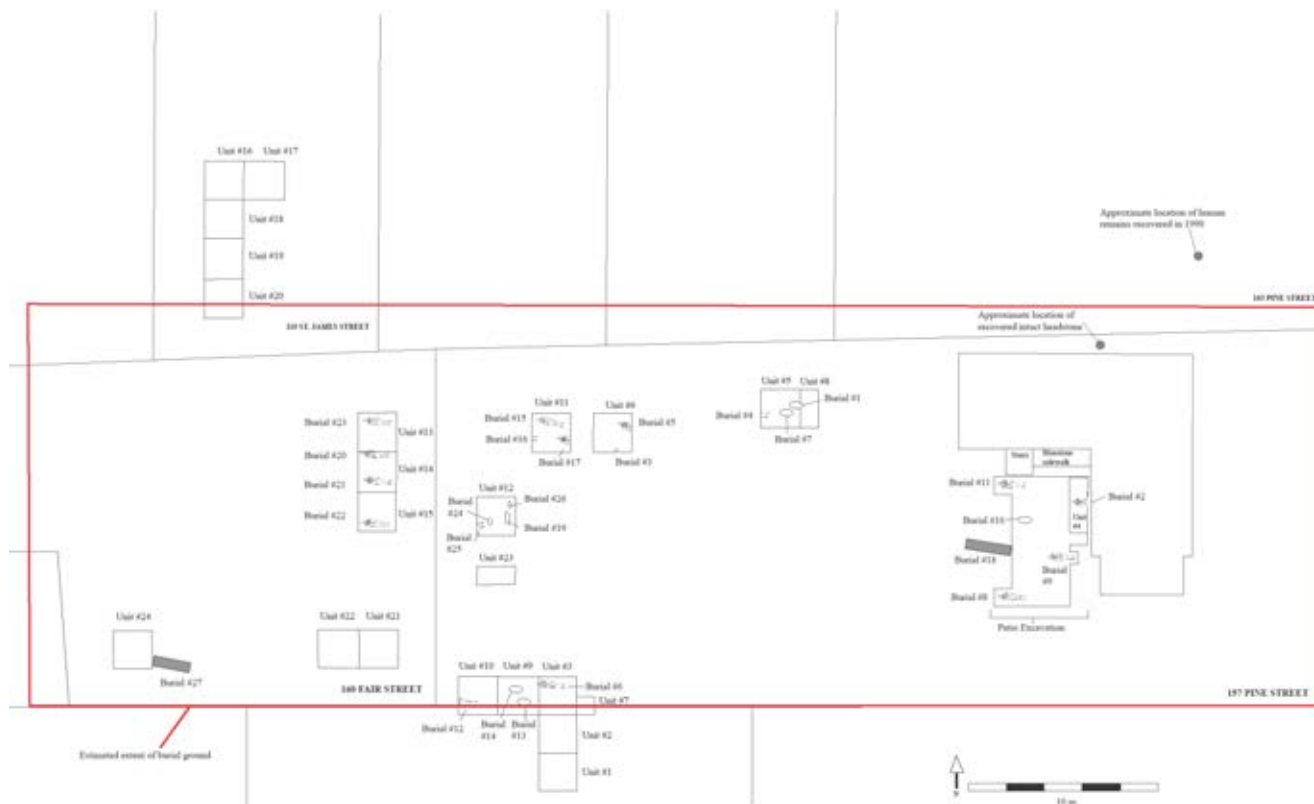
**Figure 9.** The present-day boundaries of the Pine Street African Burial Ground are outlined in red.

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**Figure 10.** Site map indicating location of units and burials.

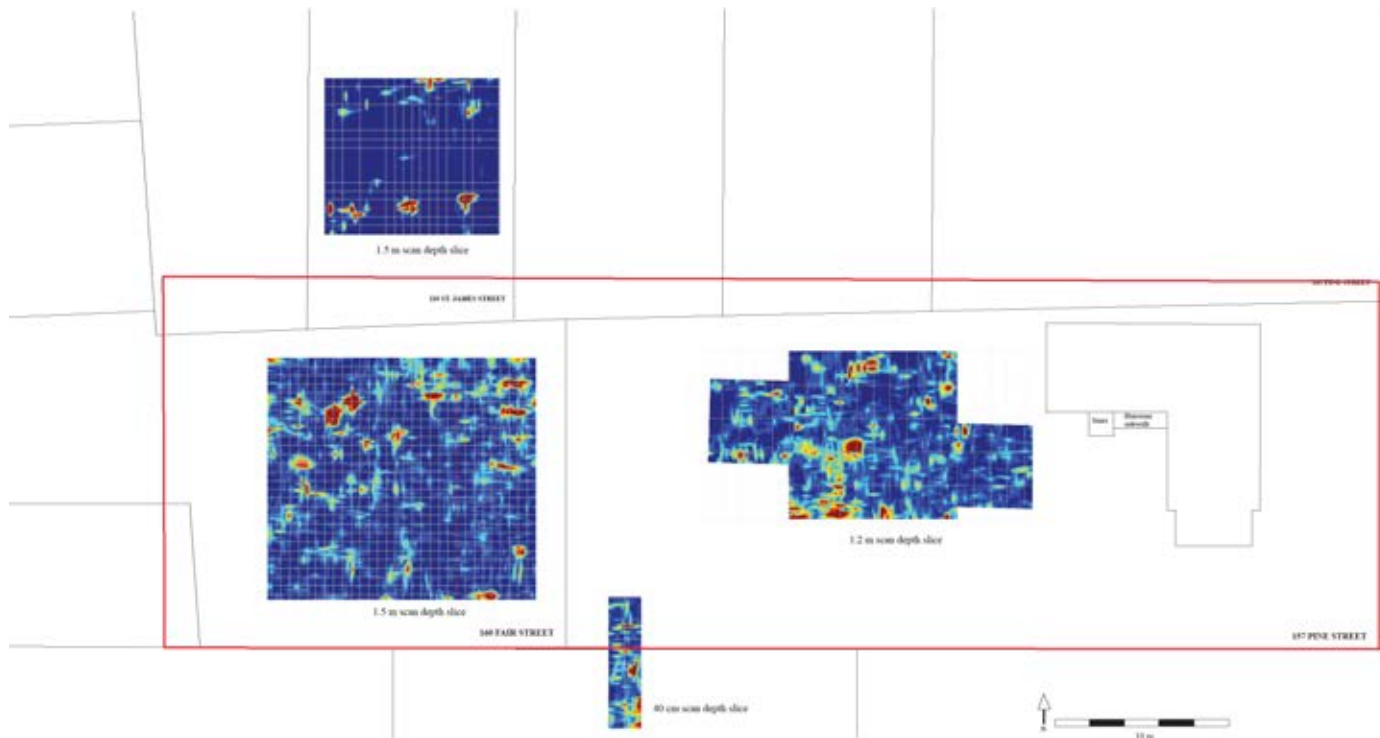


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**Figure 11.** A composite image with ground-penetrating radar results from different depths (40 cm, 1.2m, and 1.5 m).



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**Figure 12.** Photo of the headstone for Ceazer Smith, the only complete headstone recovered on the site.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other  
Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 0.43

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_  
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 41.929837 | Longitude: -74.015257 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

From the northwest corner of 157 Pine Street, the northern boundary of the Pine Street African Burial Ground extends into the southern sections of the lots at 163 Pine Street, 104 Saint James Street, 106 Saint James Street, 110 Saint James Street, and 114 Saint James Street. The eastern boundary encompasses the rear, eastern portions of the lots at 160 and 156 Fair Street, and the southern boundary follows along the southern lot divisions at 156 Fair Street, 160 Fair Street, and 157 Pine Street. The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary was drawn to reflect the extent of the burial ground as indicated by historical maps and archival documents, archaeological excavations, and ground-penetrating radar. Based on the collected data, approximately 60 percent of the burial ground is located within 157 Pine Street, with further evidence of burials at 163 Pine Street, 104 Saint James Street, 106 Saint James Street, 110 Saint James Street, 114 Saint James Street, 156 Fair Street, and 160 Fair Street.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Tyrone Wilson, Executive Director; edited by Olivia Holland, NYSHPO

organization Harambee Kingston NY, Inc. date April 3, 2025

street & number 157 Pine Street telephone 845-853-8443

city or town Kingston State NY zip code 12401

**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

Name of Property

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e-mail info@harambeekingstonny.org

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location. SEE FIGURE 1 ABOVE

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

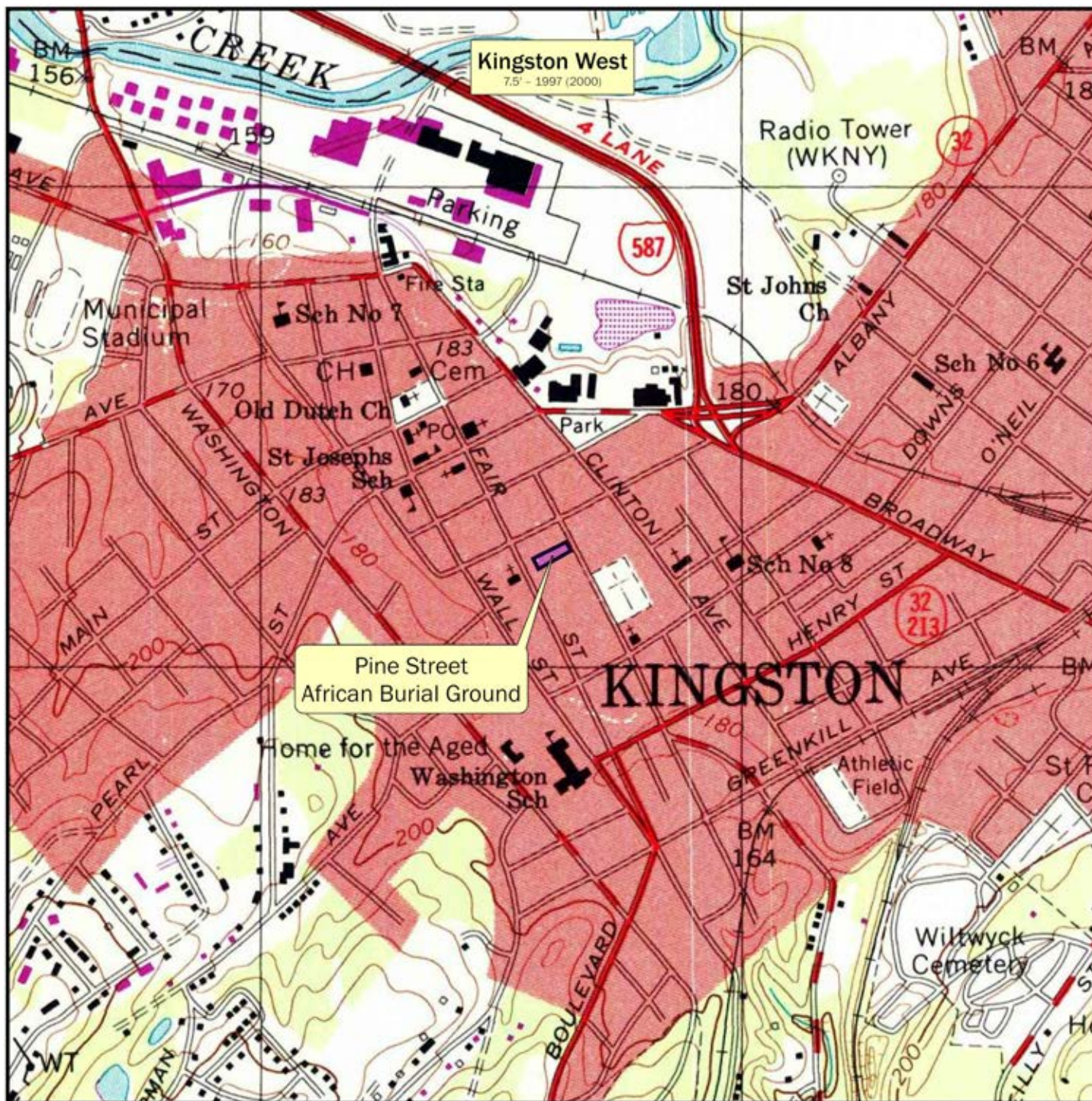


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1:12,000

0 500 1000 ft



Pine Street African Burial Ground



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Mapped 06/23/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO



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1:1,200

0 50 100 ft



Nomination Boundary (0.43 ac)



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

New York State Orthoimagery Year: 2020

Mapped 06/23/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO



**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

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**Note: The Ulster County tax parcel boundaries appear to be inaccurate at this location.  
The parcels shown below have been offset 2.41 m S 44° 59' 54" E to approximate the correct parcel boundaries.**



1:1,200



Nomination Boundary (0.43 ac)



Tax Parcels



New York State  
Parks, Recreation and  
Historic Preservation

Projection: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 18N

Ulster County Parcel Year: 2024

Mapped 06/23/2025 by Matthew W. Shepherd, NYSHPO

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND

City or Vicinity: KINGSTON

County: ULSTER

State: NEW YORK

Photographer: Rich Gromek

Date Photographed: December 1, 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number (Property lines in white, approximate area of burial grounds in red):

0001 of 0005: View of Harambee Kingston NY, Inc.'s cultural center and museum, looking west on Pine Street.

0002 of 0005: Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking west from the back of the museum.

0003 of 0005: Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking southwest from the back of the museum.

0004 of 0005: Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking southeast from the rear of the lot.

0005 of 0005: Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking northeast from the rear of the lot.



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**Photo 1.** View of Harambee Kingston NY, Inc.'s cultural center and museum, looking west on Pine Street.



**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

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**Photo 2.** Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking west from the back of the museum.



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**Photo 3.** Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking southwest from the back of the museum.



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**Photo 4.** Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking southeast from the rear of the lot.



**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

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**Photo 5.** Pine Street African Burial Ground, looking northeast from the rear of the lot.

**PINE STREET AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND**

Name of Property

**ULSTER COUNTY, NY**

County and State

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Harambee Kingston NY, Inc.

street & number 157 Pine Street

telephone 845-853-8443

city or town Kingston

state NY 12401

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



# CITY OF KINGSTON

## Office of the Mayor

mayor@kingston-ny.gov



Steven T. Noble  
Mayor

---

July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025

R. Daniel Mackay  
Deputy Commissioner for Historic Preservation  
Division for Historic Preservation  
PO Box 189  
Waterford, NY 12188

Dear Deputy Mackay,

I am in full support of the recommendation for Pine Street African Burial Ground in Kingston, NY to be placed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This property will be considered for nomination at your September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven T. Noble", is written over a horizontal line.

Steven T. Noble  
Mayor