

## **ORGANIZATIONAL FACTS**

Organized: 2014

SC Charity ID: C86831104

HTLC Funding Request: \$12,500

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## Narrative

The COVID-19 Virus changed the world and especially how non-profits operated in the year 2020. As an organization social distancing was implemented. As a committee our activities such as resetting and cleaning headstones due to conditions were curtailed.

Concealed and long forgotten due to negligence and social norms was an abandoned, over-grown cemetery in the midst of downtown Abbeville, South Carolina. The Historical Thomson/Lakeview Cemetery (HTLC) had been left abandoned, unmaintained, deserted and the only husbandry was that performed by Mother Nature. Further research revealed the cemetery was over 150 years old.

We viewed this final resting place of approximately 125 burial sites (Pre -Post Civil War Era) as atrocious and an affront to the civilized world. Those seemingly forgotten burial sites should have been treated with more dignity, decorum and honor.

In 1995 several attempts by different groups, embarked on an undertaking to reclaim, restore and preserve this cemetery. They were able to maintain HTLC, from 1995 - 1998. The maintenance placed a huge financial burden on their operational funds causing a decrease in other services they provided within the county. They were forced to retreat from the project. Since that time, there have been attempts to clear the cemetery with short term effectiveness.

The HTLC Committee was formed in 2019 for the specific purpose to draw attention to the desecration of this Historical Cemetery, to seek out relatives of the interred and secure local state and national support. As a local volunteer committee our only agenda is for the reclamation and perpetual

maintenance of HTLC.

We sought and obtained from the City of Abbeville to have the cemetery included in the City's Historic Properties Preservation Protection Commission (HPPPC). The designation and inclusion was granted in 2015. The cemetery holds the remains of Alfred Ellison, grandfather of Ralph Ellison, author of "The Invisible Man". There are over 27 individuals born into slavery interred in HTLC. In addition, Abbeville County's first and only elected Afro-American member of the SC House of Representatives and who also holds the distinction of a former Abbeville County Sheriff, Hutson J. Lomax is buried in HTLC. The SC House member was posthumously inducted into the Abbeville Chamber of Commerce's Hall of Fame in 2016. HTLC is indeed an Historical Abbeville County Landmark.

We have partnered with our local newspaper, the Press & Banner to publish the names of those interred in the HTLC in an effort to secure a revenue stream from their descendants. We have received extensive exposure through the medium of television, following a television interview at the cemetery and by means of local media coverage we have received many inquiries regarding visiting the cemetery once the cemetery is free from vegetation and overgrowth.

Please find article of a recent Family Reunion trip to HTLC by 60 family members in 2016 who convened on Abbeville County from throughout the United States to visit the burial site that holds the remains of their ancestors. As a result the media coverage of their visit was picked up by the internet, social media and other publications and periodicals focusing on Abbeville County, SC.

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With funding from the Historical portion of the South Carolina State Budget t we will be able to maintain HTLC, erect and earn a Historical Marker and attract more visitors/tourist to Abbeville County which will bolster our local economy, promote Economic Development and honor the interred.

Respectfully submitted,

The HTLC Team

Claude Thomas, Chair

Wallace McClinton, Jr., Member

John M. Reid, Member

Christine T. Inabinet, CFO

Samuel Lyons, Member