

Protect and Respect the Bodies (PRB) is a coalition of individuals, descendants, community organizations, and concerned citizens united by a shared commitment to honor and protect the historic burial ground at 106 Coming Street.

In the spring of 2025, community members learned of the College of Charleston's plans to construct a first-year student dormitory on land that served for centuries as a burial ground where thousands of people were laid to rest. This discovery raised profound concerns about the preservation of sacred ground, the treatment of human remains, and the responsibility we share to honor those whose lives and histories are connected to this place.

Known as a Potter's Field, the burial ground is associated with enslaved Africans and people brought from the Caribbean, free and enslaved African Americans, Native Americans, white orphans, strangers, and others who lacked the means for private burial. Many experienced hardship, displacement, injustice, and indignity during their lives. Their final resting place must not become another chapter in which their humanity and history are overlooked.

Since learning of the proposed development, PRB and its supporters have worked to bring public attention to the historical, cultural, spiritual, and educational significance of the 106 Coming Street Burial Ground. We have raised questions about the treatment of human remains, the protection of burial sites, the recognition of cultural and religious traditions, and the potential loss of irreplaceable historical knowledge. We continue to seek transparency, meaningful community engagement, and accountability from the College of Charleston, the City of Charleston, and the state and federal agencies responsible for protecting burial grounds and historic resources. Our commitment is rooted in a simple belief: Every life has value. Every person deserves dignity. Every resting place deserves respect.

The people buried at 106 Coming Street were more than names lost to history or remains beneath the ground. They were mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, children and elders. They were people who loved, struggled, worked, dreamed, and hoped for a better life. Some were denied dignity and freedom during their lifetimes. All deserve dignity and peace in death. We may never know all their names or the stories of their lives, but we can choose how their stories are honored today.

We believe the future of 106 Coming Street must be shaped with care, compassion, and the meaningful participation of descendants and the broader community. Together, we have an opportunity to ensure that those buried here are not forgotten and that their final resting place is treated with the humanity

and respect they deserve. We remain hopeful that the College of Charleston, public officials, descendants, preservation professionals, faith communities, and concerned residents can work together toward an outcome grounded in respect, understanding, and shared responsibility.

The future of the 106 Coming Street Burial Ground is not a matter for others to decide while the community remains silent. Each of us has a place in this conversation. Whether our connection to this burial ground is through ancestry, faith, history, community, or simply a belief in the dignity of every human being, we all have something to contribute.

We invite everyone who believes in the dignity of human life, the importance of preserving history, and the responsibility to honor those who came before us to stand with Protect and Respect the Bodies.

We ask you to:

- Join PRB: Sign up to receive updates and participate in efforts to protect and commemorate the burial ground.
- Make your voice heard: Encourage the College of Charleston and public officials to engage in transparent, meaningful dialogue with descendants and the broader community before decisions affecting the burial ground are finalized.
- Share this history: Bring this conversation to your congregations, neighborhood associations, community organizations, families, and friends.
- Help define what respect looks like: Participate in community conversations about how the burial ground should be protected, preserved, interpreted, and commemorated for future generations.
- Stand for the protection of all burial grounds: Support the principle that every person, regardless of race, wealth, status, or circumstance, deserves dignity in death.