



May 14, 2020

Dear Relatives and Friends of Andrew Robinson,

Please accept our heartfelt condolences on the recent loss of our friend, Andrew Robinson. For the past decade, Andrew had quietly worked with the Dataw Historic Foundation in a successful effort to identify and dignify those enslaved and freedmen reposing in the cemetery at the end of Cotton Dike Road on Dataw Island.

In 2007, Andrew Robinson along with his brother, Willie, approached Dataw Island management to request that they be allowed to erect a memorial to their ancestors at the cemetery on Cotton Dike Road. They were referred to the Dataw Historic Foundation (DHF) to work out the details. We agreed to meet two days later. Andrew showed us a list of deceased members of the Robinson family dating back to the 18th century. All were believed to be buried in the former slave cemetery. The list had been researched and recorded by Andrew's nephew, Nathaniel, who drew upon several old family bibles and from having conversations with his family elders.

This list was the first concrete information the Foundation had ever received about the people buried in the Cotton Dike Cemetery! DHF agreed to create signage containing the names of and, where possible, the birth and death dates of those buried there.

In Spring, 2008, Dataw Historic Foundation and the Robinson Family gathered on Dataw to rededicate this holy ground as the Cotton Dike Cemetery. Over 50 people attended. Robinson family members from three States, aged from 3 to 93 years, joined with members of the Dataw Historic Foundation and senior management from Dataw Island to witness the service. Though it rained on and off during the ceremony, it was a truly a bright day for us all!

Since then, DHF has preserved the Cotton Dike Cemetery and included it in our tour program. The Cotton Dike Cemetery has been declared: "the finest and most carefully maintained slave cemetery of its kind."

It is with a great sense of admiration intertwined with heartfelt grief that we mourn the loss of our good friend Andrew Robinson. His courage and vision made this cemetery possible and ensured that it would stand as an instructive example to future generations.

Respectfully,

John W. Colgan
Past President