



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
New Orleans District

News Release

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Corps will relocate cemetery covered by levee in 1933

NEW ORLEANS – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will relocate an African-American church cemetery covered by a Mississippi River levee built in 1933 near White Castle.

Cost is estimated at \$4.2 million for the design, cemetery relocation and associated levee work. Corps archaeologists estimate that the cemetery contains 800 to 850 graves.

The Corps discovered human remains in September 1999 in an archaeological test trench being dug in preparation for a levee-improvement project known as slope paving.

Archaeological investigations are routinely performed before construction to protect cultural resources.

The New Orleans District recommended that the cemetery be relocated, and after studying various alternatives for design of the relocation, its regional headquarters, Mississippi Valley Division in Vicksburg, Miss., approved the plan and design work can now begin.

The site is that of the former Braziel Baptist Church cemetery. The Corps has been working with the Reverend John Baptiste, the church's pastor.

As a follow-up to the 1999 discovery, the Corps conducted remote-sensing investigations and historical background research to bring to light the

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circumstances surrounding the 1933 levee construction. In addition, a small number of graves were uncovered temporarily, confirming that remains were still present. All remains were left in place, and each grave was covered by hand.

This was not the first levee in this area. The new levee was set back farther from the river to improve flood protection.

The 1933 levee work was part of large-scale improvement of flood control on the Lower Mississippi, such as the Bonnet Carré Spillway downriver. These works were undertaken under the Flood Control Act of 1928, the federal response to the Great Flood of 1927.