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Forgotten Bones: Uncovering a Slave Cemetery

Cynthia Frazier

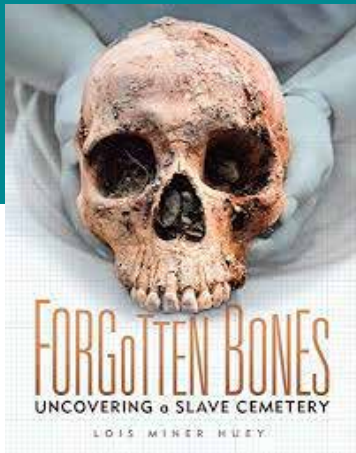
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Book Review

Forgotten Bones: Uncovering a Slave Cemetery

Author

Lois Miner Huey

Illustrator

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Reviewer

Cynthia Frazier

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate, Young
Adult

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Pages

56

Year

2016

Publisher

Millbrook Press

ISBN

9781467733939

A worker was watching a backhoe dig a trench for a new sewer line when a human skull rolled out of the bucket and hit his shoe. As soon as the coroner determined that the skull was very old and that it wasn't a part of a crime scene, bioarchaeologists were called in. This was the beginning of the third slave cemetery excavation in the Northern United States. Scientists carefully surveyed the area, found the remains of fourteen people. Through meticulous means, they determined the race, sex, health and age of the people when they died. DNA determined where the people came from, and often the state of the bones and teeth helped decide if they were born in the United States or other countries. Historical records showed the graves originally resided on the Schyler Farm away from the farmhouse and the family cemetery on the grounds. It was found that the skeletons were of African American descent, and were remains of slaves belonging to the Schyler family and buried in the slave cemetery on the farm.

An Historical Archaeologist for the State of New York, as well as a teacher and writer, Lois Miner Huey has written fourteen books about historical and archaeological topics for youth. Her enthusiasm for her work is evident in the forthright way that information is organized and in the stories that are uncovered through scientific means. The many photographs, diagrams, interesting historical events relating to the time period, and even facial reconstruction of the skulls make the lives and struggles of these early Americans real and poignant. This book would be of interest to youth from middle school age and up to adults. It could create interest in early American history, the origins and history of the slave trade, slavery in the Northern United States, the science of archaeology and some of the different types of jobs available in that field of study. Although this book contains no sensitive content in regards to language or violence, the excavation of human bones and the study of them could be difficult for some readers.