

Female Union Band Society of Georgetown, D.C., Constitution (Washington, D.C., 1859)

... the Female Union Band Society, being a cooperative benevolent association of free black women pledged to assist one another in sickness and in death...

... provides each member \$2 per week when she is ill, and a grave and \$20 for burial expenses upon death.

The price of a grave three feet long, shall be two dollars and fifty cents, and all over that size four dollars. The price of a lot of first quality, shall be twelve dollars, and of second quality, ten dollars...

...the agent of the Burial Ground shall not allow a longer credit than thirty days, and no sales shall be made without cash or good and sufficient security. The agent shall also report all sales and monies to the society every month, and he shall be allowed six per cent commission on all monies collected.

...The Society possesses all power to make such rules and regulations concerning the Burial Ground as may, from time to time, be thought best to promote the interests of the same.

... Membership is restricted to women of "good moral character," and "recommended by two members of the society."

Provisions were made to expel any member "convicted of immoral or disgraceful practices," as well as those who did not pay their dues or who were "disagreeable to a majority of the society, either by words or actions."

The Society's Constitution also stated "this society shall not be dissolved as long as there are five members willing to continue the same. And all business translated by them, of whatever nature, shall be of binding force."

Though society membership was restricted to women, and preference given to female descendants of the original founders, it has been shown that men were allowed to serve as trustees or agents. A good example of a male trustee is Joseph Mason, who initially purchased the cemetery on behalf of the society.