



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research

November 21, 2010

St. Mary's Catholic Church
Fr. Rory Conley
13715 Notre Dame Place
Bryantown, Maryland 20617

Grave Concerns visited St. Mary's Catholic Church on January 23, 2010, at the request of Ms. Joyce Clerico, to examine the wooded area behind the cemetery proper and to look for unmarked graves and grave markers.

During the investigation, it quickly became apparent the many graves do exist in the wooded area and indications are that these graves, largely unmarked, are those of African descent. Evidence to support this is the fact that they are found on the outer perimeter of the cemetery, the graves are mostly unmarked, there are several homemade stones of concrete, and one grave was marked with Yucca plants, an almost sure indicator of African burials. In addition to these burials, several fragments of marble stones were found and these are believed to be the markers of white families that were broken and tossed aside. Also found were the remnants of wrought or cast iron plot fences with granite piers to support them. These too, appear to be tossed aside.

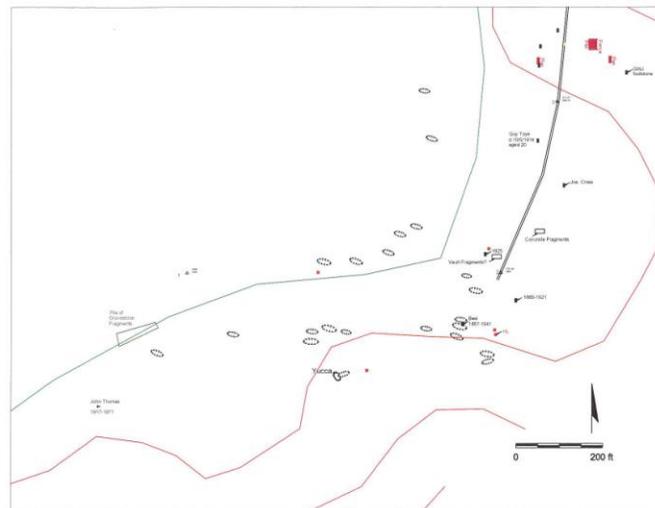


Figure 1 Cemetery Site Plan



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research

As mentioned previously, there are graves in the woods that have several different types of markers and four have names and dates associated with them. The following figures show these graves:



Figure 2 Guy Toye Grave # 30



Figure 3 Jos. Cross Grave # 29



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research



Figure 4 John Thomas Grave # 17



Figure 5 Mary Butler Grave # 31



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research

There are numerous burial markers in the woods as well that we believe may be associated with burials, but have been misplaced and no longer mark the exact spot that they belong to. These figures are shown below:

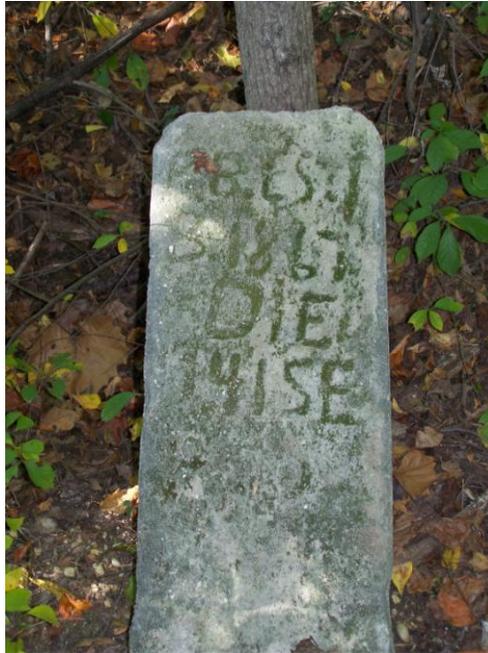


Figure 6 Bessie? Grave # 20



Figure 7 Undecipherable Grave # 28



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research



Figure 8 Unknown burial with Yucca Grave # 11



Figure 9 Unknown Burial with Funeral Home Marker Grave # 34

There are many miscellaneous remnants of markers and plinths that do not seem to be associated with any particular grave and we cannot determine if they were disposed of from the cemetery proper or if they do indeed mark graves near where they currently rest. Some appear to be plot markers, some monolith fragments, and possibly, broken remains from a concrete vault.



GRAVE CONCERNS

Historic cemetery restoration, documentation, and research

While we are confident that we have at least 34 burials mapped, we cannot be sure if any more exist. Indeed, it would make sense that there are more than we were able to locate. Without intensive archaeological investigations, any other burials may well remain undiscovered.

Grave Concerns located many marble stone fragments that have been moved to the wood line and lay in a pile. We recommend these stone fragments be catalogued and an attempt at restoration for those that have most of their pieces accounted for. This restoration should be completed by a qualified cemetery restoration professional and when the stones are mended, they should be erected in a special place in the cemetery and the records should indicate that the stones no longer mark their original burial places.

We at Grave Concerns appreciate the steps St. Mary's Church has taken to have those forgotten burials recorded. At one time, these people were the castaways of society and it is time for their proper recognition.