

Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory

ID: 37

Name: HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEMETERY

Alternate name:

Address: ARUNDEL AVENUE
in subdivision known as Spring Lake Park

Town: Rockville
(south of City boundaries)

ADC Map Page 29 Grid H 11

Type

Religious
 Family Higgins Knowles
 Private
 Other

Association

Free black
 Enslaved
 Ethnic
 Prehistoric

Setting Rural Urban Suburban Forested Other

Condition Excellent Good Fair Poor

Negative Impacts (vandalism, dumping, neglect, encroachment, etc) OVERGROWN, Neglected (NO MAINTENANCE RECENTLY)

Approximate no. of burials 20 Date range of burials 1816-1891

Description (markers, materials, arrangement, landscaping, fence, paths and roads, etc.)

The cemetery occupies a small city lot on Arundel Avenue. There is a sign that restoration is in progress, but the only noticeable restoration are flowers around the James Higgins monument, and a DAR plaque at the base of the monument (placed by the Chevy Chase Chapter of the DAR.) There are parts of 3 or 4 stones and bases, and a few field stones. Some ground depressions indicate unmarked graves. There is a worn path used to go between the commercial buildings on the north and south sides of the cemetery. James Higgins marker in disrepair.

Surveyor(s) EARL M. DUNN

Survey date 11/11/2004

Photographer EARL M. DUNN

Date 11/11/2004 Photo no. _____

Current owner HIGGINS CEMETERY HISTORIC PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION, INC.
Address/Phone No. ARUNDEL AVE, ROCKVILLE, MD (formed 1999)

Historic Status Locational Atlas ID Master Plan ID (2008) National Register Other

UTM _____

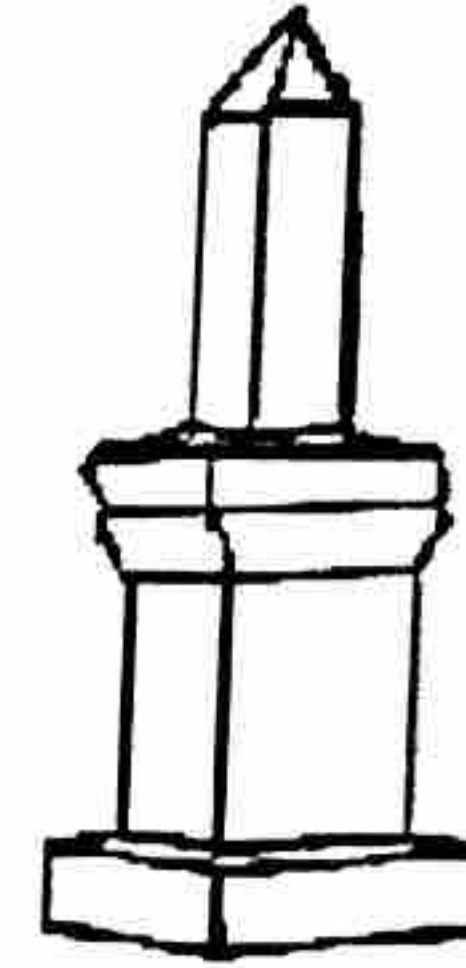
Additional sources of information:

Files @ Peerless Rockville
Higgins Cemetery Association

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
ARUNDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

Oct. 2006

**Ten Years of Progress in the
Restoration of The Higgins Family Cemetery
with Higgins Cemetery Historic Preservation Association, Inc.**



History of Higgins Cemetery

The burying ground known as Higgins Cemetery holds at least 11 known graves of Higgins family members (in four generations) and probably includes several of their slaves.

James Higgins (1732-1816), a planter who served in the Maryland militia during the Revolutionary War, and his wife Luraner Becraft Higgins (1744-1819) were the first generation to be buried on the farm. With their son James Becraft Higgins (1772-1848) and his wife Mary Eleanor (1784-1845), they are memorialized by a red sandstone monument that was placed in the center of the cemetery in 1866.

Luraner Higgins (1811-1883) and her husband George Knowles (1805-1881), who founded Knowles Station (now the town of Kensington), are also here. Other grandchildren and great-grandchildren of James and Luraner Higgins were interred between 1869 and 1891.

The Higgins cemetery and home survived subdivision of the farm in 1891 as "Spring Lake Park," but there followed nearly a century of neglect. A grass roots community effort led to incorporation of the Higgins Cemetery Historic Preservation Association, which resolved ownership by taking title to the property in 1999. Since then, the volunteer organization and its private and public partners have documented the property through research and field archeology, removed invasive trees and a foot of debris, prepared a master plan to guide rehabilitation, and found sufficient pieces scattered on site to reconstruct the large Higgins monument.

Higgins Cemetery is a unique historic resource with strong local and state associations, a Revolutionary War-era oasis that survives within an urban landscape, and a community project with potential for education and interpretation.

Higgins Cemetery Historic Preservation Association, Inc. formed in 1999 to document the historic cemetery, develop and implement preservation plans, maintain and enhance the beauty of the cemetery, and provide education programs for the public. As a nonprofit organization recognized by the IRS, donations to the Association are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law.

Visit us at <http://mysite.verizon.net/kglhiggins>

Officers

*John E. Higgins, Jr., president Mary Ann Barnes, vice president Knowles G. Little, Jr., treasurer
Joan Geer, secretary*

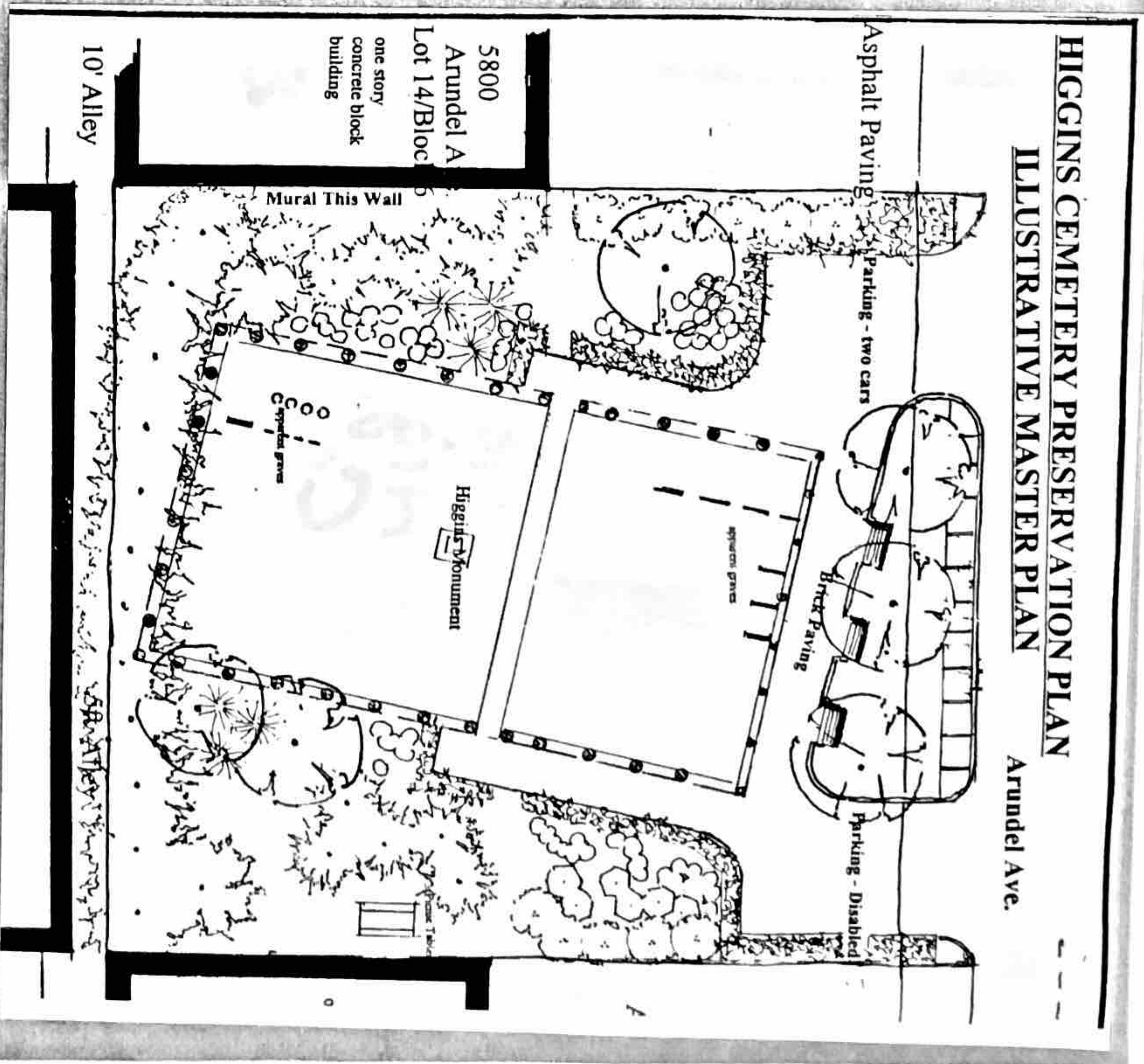
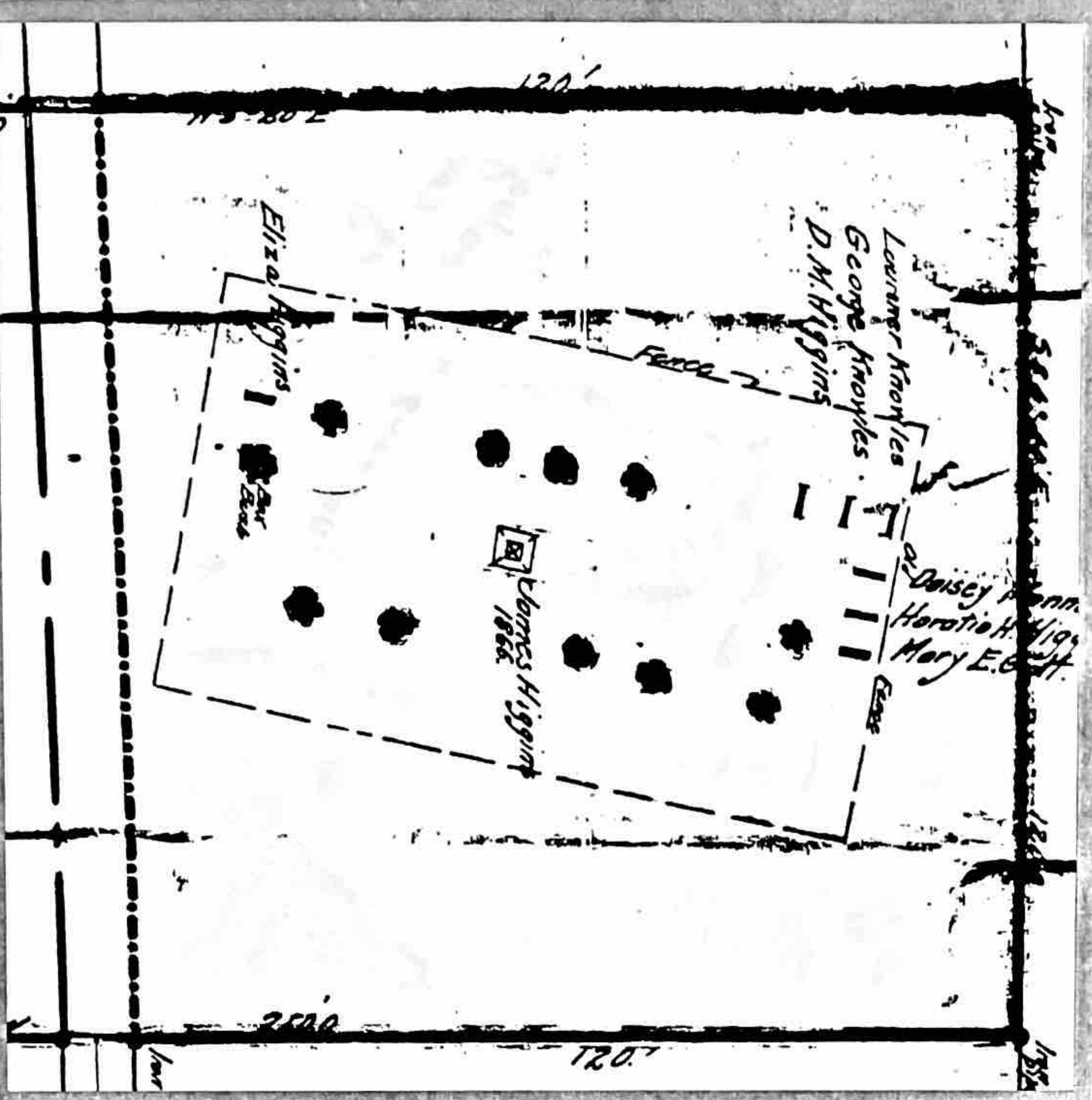
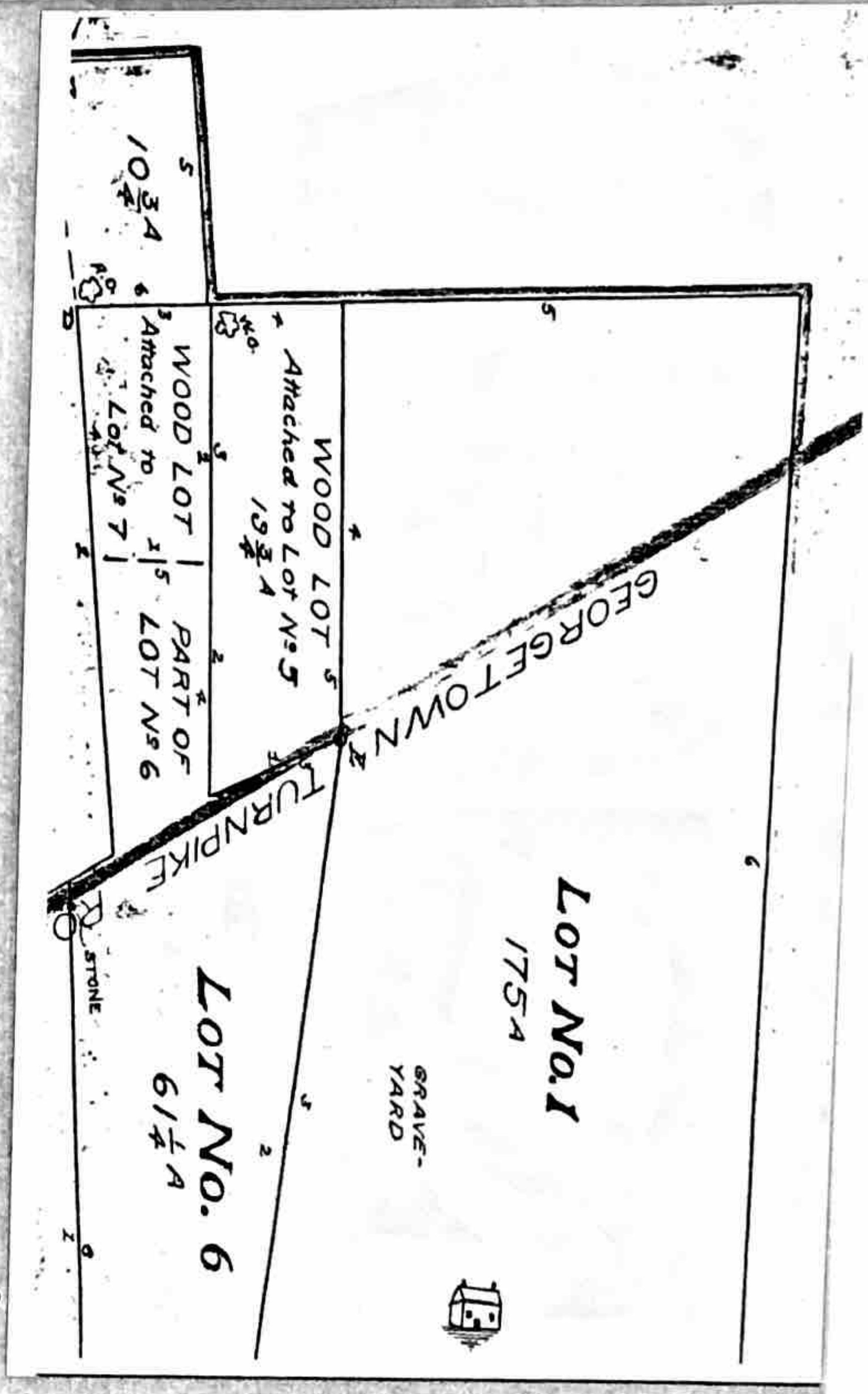
Directors

*Ernest Aschenbach Margaret Welsh May
Dorothy Brault Eileen McGuckian
Laura Edson Robin R. Talbott*

Donations to help restore Higgins Cemetery are gratefully accepted by Higgins Cemetery Historic Preservation Association, Inc. c/o Knowles Little, Treasurer, 9109 Scott Drive, Rockville, MD 20850

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
APPONDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

37
 HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
 ARUNDEL AVENUE
 ROCKVILLE

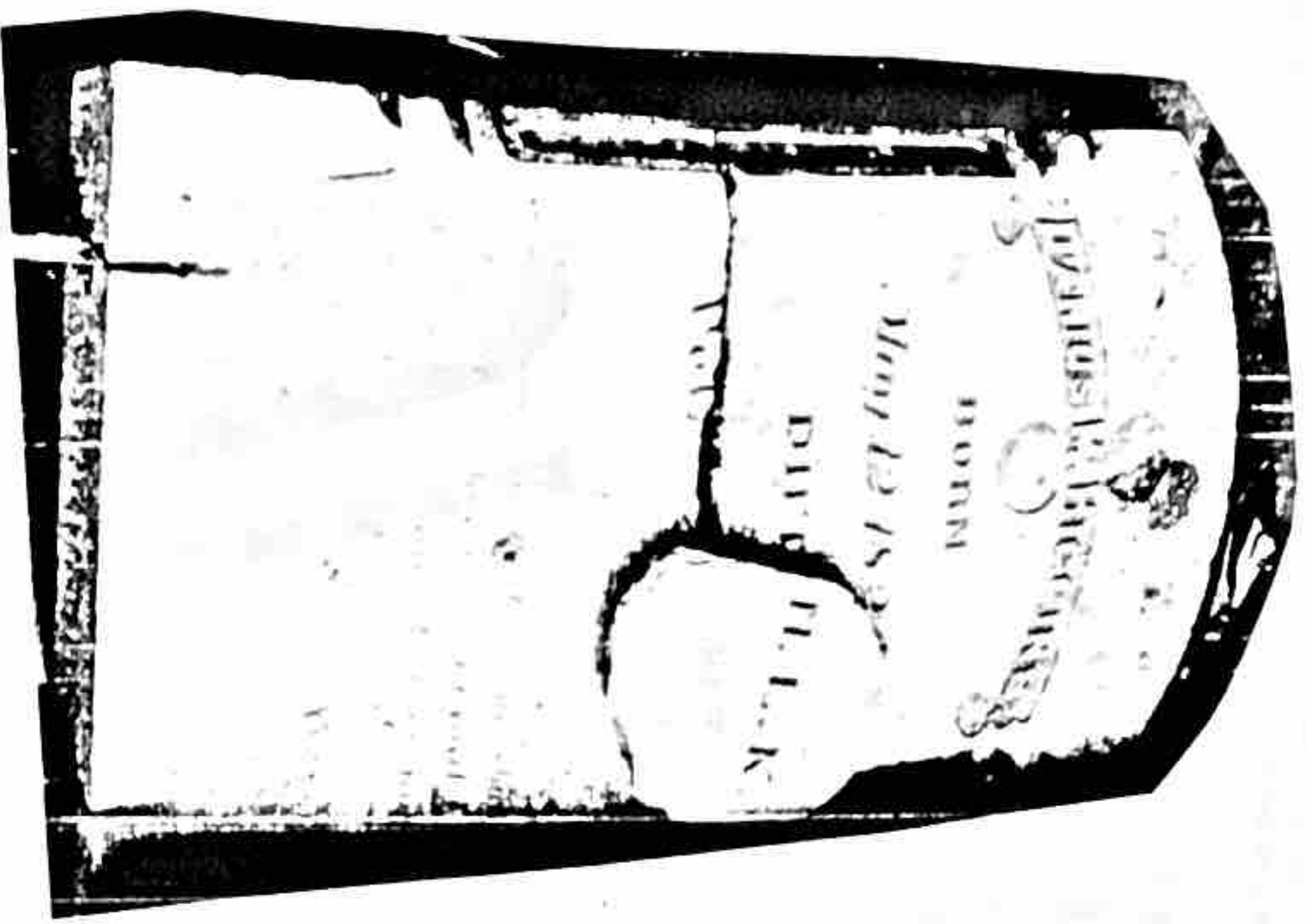


- Maps of Higgins Cemetery
1. Subdivision of James B. Higgins land, 1851
 2. Survey by C. J. Maddox survey, 1927
 3. Illustrative Master Plan, 2001

2.

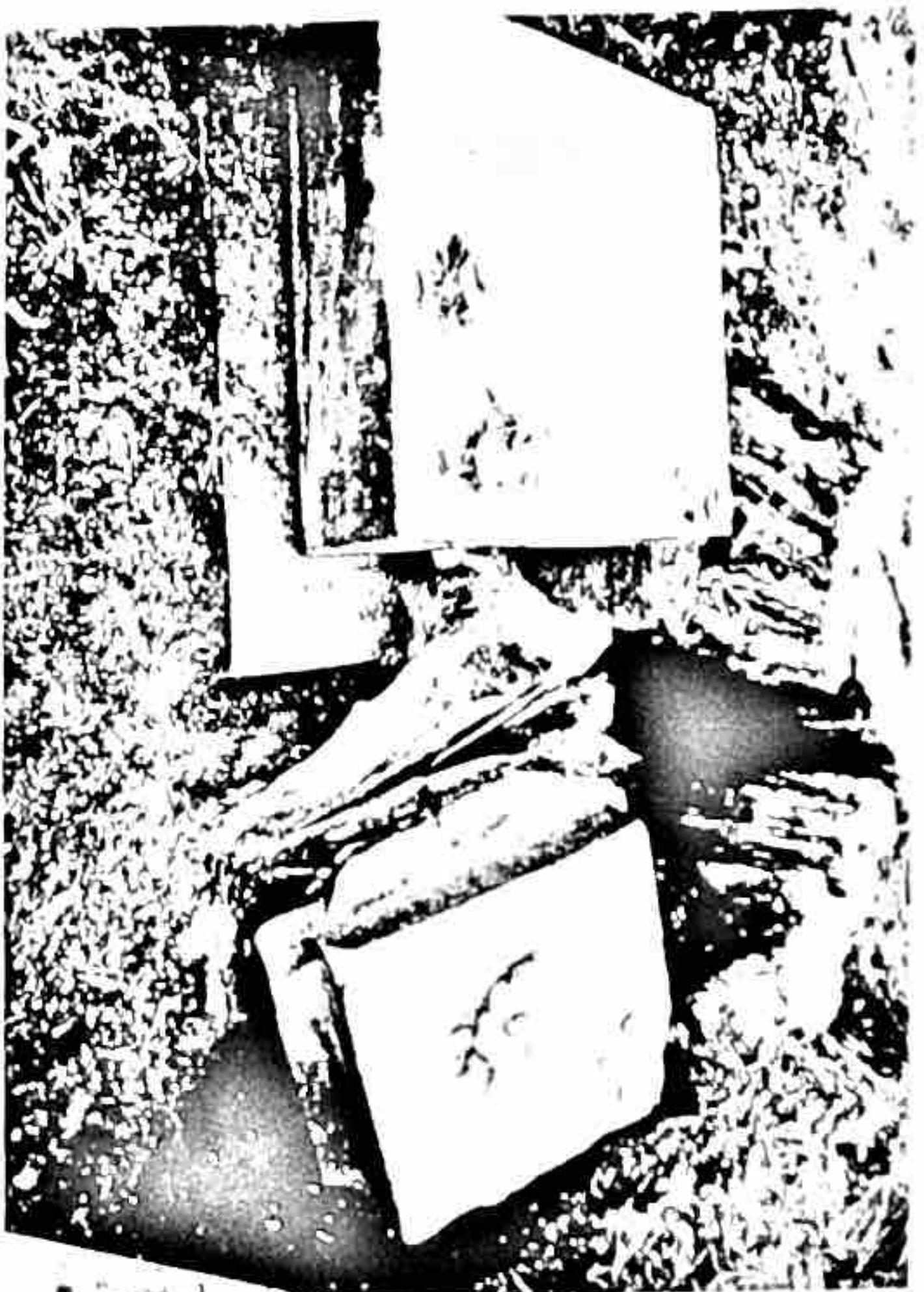
1.

3.



Gravestone in
need of Repair

Rescuing Higgins Cemetery — 1997 — 2005



Workers retrieved pieces
of stone from layers
of debris and trees so
Stone conservator could

Reconstruct 1866 Higgins Memorial



WORK SESSION
AT HIGGINS CEMETERY

Bring your work gloves, shovels, clippers, rakes, families, and energy to Higgins Cemetery on Saturday, October 23, at 9:30 a.m. The work-up sessions over the past 20 months is notable, valuable, and priceless. This tiny historic plot is now recognizable as sacred ground, and each clean-up brings new discoveries.



Volunteers include
professional archeologists
and landscaping companies

HIGGINS CEMETERY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

Higgins Cemetery in the Twinbrook Sector Plan

Higgins Cemetery is one of many "plan elements" in the Staff Draft of the Twinbrook Sector Plan update to the 1992 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan. The final document will guide the future of the area, including our little plot of land.

The plan identifies Higgins Cemetery as Historic Resource #32-50 in this planning area and includes a brief history and statement of significance. Generations of Higgins family members, including the Revolutionary soldier and those who founded Knowles Station (now the town of Kensington), with the possibility of slave burials, are noted. This information – along with the work of many volunteers over nearly a decade to rescue the cemetery from oblivion and plot its future -- led the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in May 2005 to vote unanimously to recommend Higgins Cemetery for placement on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

In May 2006 the staff of the Montgomery County Planning Board concurred with the HPC's recommendation in its draft plan. The staff draft will go to the Planning Board for public hearing in September 2006. Following discussion and work sessions during winter 2006-07, the Planning Board is expected to complete action on the Master Plan and send it to the Montgomery County Council. The Council in turn will conduct a public hearing (estimated to be during the fall of 2007), a work session, then make a committee recommendation and vote to adopt the Twinbrook Sector Plan update to the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan.

Thus, there are two more opportunities for public comment within the next 18 months, at hearings before the Planning Board and the County Council.

Planning Board staff also recommends incorporating "the cemetery into the area's urban design plans to create a useful and accessible community resource." The concept is not for Higgins to become a park or active public space, but that it would be connected to (adjacent to, complemented by) nearby green spaces on private and public property. Staff indicates desire to treat the cemetery with respect and highlight it as a bit of green respite in an area planned to be even busier than it is now. We think James and Luraner Higgins would approve.

If you have questions for Planning Board staff, the contacts are Claudia Kousoulas 301-495-4558 and Kristin O'Connor 301-

495-2172. Higgins Cemetery's point person in this matter is Eileen McGuckian 301-762-0096.

Submitted by Eileen McGuckian



Higgins Tavern, 16800 Georgia Avenue, Olney, MD – Site of the former Silo Inn – 1½ story section is original 1820s log house – 2 story addition 1870s.

Higgins Tavern

Our Cemetery Association is keeping a close eye on the preservation efforts being made for the Higgins Tavern.

This property was part of the estate bequeathed by James Higgins (1732-1816) in his Last Will and Testament. At the time of his death, Higgins owned three significant tracts of land: the home place tract where the cemetery is located at 5700 Arundel Avenue, in Rockville; a tract that now comprises the business portion of the Town of Kensington that includes the train station and Knowles Avenue; and his third tract known as "The Forks" and "The Addition to The Forks," a sizeable area of about 230 acres on the 7th Street Pike (Georgia Avenue) and containing the Higgins Tavern.

James Higgins bequeathed this third tract to his son, Benjamin Higgins. This land was on an early, well-traveled road now known as Georgia Avenue (State Route 97) in the Olney area of Montgomery County.

Higgins Tavern has been a private residence, a commercial site, and reverted back to a private home as the residence of the former owners of the Martin's Dairy farm. It was long known as a commercial building on the site of the former Silo Inn. During that era, the old house/tavern served a variety

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
ARUNDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

HIGGINS CEMETERY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

of commercial uses, including a bakery business and later an antique shop.

Long neglected, it became a sad reminder of its more prosperous past. Through the years, as needs changed, some additions were constructed on the old tavern. The south side of the building served as a billboard for the bakery. The southwest corner of the structure had an exterior wall covered with green Astro-Turf type exterior carpeting from the ground to the roof line.

Leonard Becraft, local citizen with kinship to Lurander Becraft Higgins, wife of James Higgins, joined in presenting testimony at hearings before the Historic Preservation Commission. Mary Ann Barnes from our association also testified.

The area around the old tavern is currently being developed, and the property owner is planning to restore the tavern. The County Council has approved its inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. A recent Gazette article noted that it is one of the few remaining tavern buildings in Montgomery County dating back to the 1820s.

Submitted by Mary Ann Barnes

Report on Work accomplished and Finances for 2005

Significant progress is being made in restoring the Higgins Family Cemetery. Much of this work is being performed by volunteers from the board, community organizations, and civic-minded businesses. Restoration of the cemetery began in 1998 with the removal of tons of debris, the location of graves and markers, and development of a master plan. During 2005, archaeologists supervised removal of the final 6 inches of soil, and landscapers removed another group of trees and stumps, then installed new sod. Thanks to these dedicated volunteers, Higgins Cemetery is now maintainable and looks better than it has in nearly a century!

Significant support came from three businesses last year. The JBG Companies, a local developer, in partnership with Capitol City Contractors, donated and installed 2,700 square feet of sod over the front section of the cemetery lot, and has been cutting the grass in the cemetery. Capitol City also extended credit for the removal of tree stumps. The Ottery Group worked with Capitol City on soil removal and also performed critical archaeological survey and mapping services. Higgins Cemetery Association very much appreciates these contributions that greatly improve the appearance of our small piece of Rockville. We hope to be able to continue making Higgins Cemetery a responsible part of our neighborhood.

Individuals have assisted the project. During 2005 the Association received 20 separate donations that totaled \$4,325.21. The numerical average of these donations was \$183.59. Cash funding continues to be essential for maintaining and improving the Cemetery.

In order to continue this work, we need both your voluntary labor on work days and your generous cash donations. Please take a moment to complete the form on page 4 of this newsletter and make your check payable to "Higgins Cemetery Historic Preservation Association." We are a 501c (13) non-profit organization, so your donation is tax deductible. Mail your donation to Higgins Cemetery, c/o Knowles Little, Treasurer, 9109 Scott Drive, Rockville, MD 20850.

Submitted by Knowles Little

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
APPONDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

HIGGIN (JAMES) FAMILY BURYING GROUND AT PARKLAWN
Directions: From Parklawn, right on Washington St, right on Arundel Avenue at end of street on left. [A.D.C. Map: Montgomery, page 32, grid coordinates E-5.] Condition of cemetery: Well kept, in park near Parklawn Building. Inactive cemetery. Earliest known death: 1816. Most recent death: 1891. Date transcribed: 1981. Location of transcribed records: Montgomery County Historical Society Library, 42 West Middle Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Comments: Cemetery located in Old Springlake Park, at least 10 marked graves sites, plus at least two other

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
ARUNDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

HIGGINS CEMETERY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2006

Higgins Cemetery
Historic Preservation Association, Inc.
2006-2007

OFFICERS

President: John E. Higgins, Jr.
Work: 202-273-3700
Home: 301-656-7202
Fax: 202-273-4483

Vice President: Mary Ann Barnes
Home: 301-762-7582

Treasurer: Knowles Graham Little, Jr.
Home: 301-762-6253

Secretary: Joan Geer
Home: 301-330-1266

DIRECTORS

Ernest Aschenbach	301-770-0496
Dottie Brault	301-309-0289
Laura Edson	301-299-8720
Margaret Welsh May	301-762-2332
Eileen McGuckian	301-762-0096
Robin R. Talbott	301-461-0457

Lyle Torp Guest Speaker At The Chevy Chase Chapter DAR December Meeting

Describing the technical aspects of the archaeological work at the historic Higgins Cemetery in 2005, Lyle Torp gave both an educational and historical talk to the members at their annual Christmas luncheon.

Lyle is the son-in-law of Chevy Chase Chapter member Frances Higgins and John Higgins, president of the Higgins Cemetery Association. He is the CEO of the Ottery Group, an archaeological consulting firm that donated time and expertise for the excavation at the cemetery.

The Chevy Chase Chapter has been involved in the cemetery restoration project from its beginning. The identity of the Revolutionary War soldier buried at the Higgins Cemetery, and confirmation that he was indeed a member of the Militia, was proven by the chapter. A DAR historic marker was placed by the chapter, and the area around the monument is maintained by members who also serve on the Higgins Cemetery board.

A DAR certificate of appreciation was presented to Lyle Torp and, in his honor, a check from the Chevy Chase Chapter for one hundred dollars was presented to President John Higgins, who also received a certificate of appreciation.

Submitted by Dottie Brault



Keep this date!

And Plan on joining us on.....

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28th
10 - 12 Noon

For the

Higgins Cemetery Open House

- Learn about this historic site hiding in Twinbrook
- Help to preserve our local heritage and improve our green spaces
- Celebrate the generous contributions of these donors:

The JBG Companies
Capitol City Landscaping
The Ottery Group
Daughters of the American Revolution
Montgomery County Dept. of
Public Works & Transportation

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
APPONDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE

KENSINGTON Gazett

Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1997 · 250

WORK SESSION AT HIGGINS CEMETERY



Bring your work gloves, shovels, clippers, rakes, families, and energy to Higgins Cemetery on Saturday, October 23, at 9:30 a.m. The work accomplished by volunteers at Higgins in clean-up sessions over the past 20 months is notable, valuable, and priceless. This tiny historic plot is now recognizable as sacred ground, and each clean-up brings new discoveries.

Peerless Rockville

Volume XVII No. 2

HIGGINS CEMETERY PROGRESS

On Saturday, October 24, 57 people aged 5 to 75 descended upon tiny Higgins Cemetery on Arundel Avenue just south of Twinbrook Parkway. With rakes, clippers, and determination they tackled the summer's growth of weeds and vines. They combed out trash and tree limbs from among the gravesites and found treasure troves of old milk bottles, dishes, a key, and other early 20th century household items.

Volunteers came from GE Information Services, Girl Scout troops 846 and 2723, St. Elizabeth's Church, William Smallwood Chapter of the SAR, Chevy Chase Chapter of the DAR, Volunteer Partnership Montgomery, and Peerless Rockville. Five hours later, they left a caring imprint on this family cemetery. See their photos on the Peerless website!

The "Complaint to Quiet Title" filed in August elicited no further interest, so our attorney has petitioned Circuit Court for transfer of title to 5 Higgins heirs. Next step is to form the nonprofit group which will restore, raise funds, and plan for maintenance of the cemetery. We need energetic, thoughtful people to assist.

The Higgins Cemetery Working Group formed by Peerless has accomplished a great deal in one year. More will happen courtesy of small grants from the Montgomery Co. Historic Preservation Commission and...

November-December 1998



Brian Lewis/GA

Locals try to preserve historic grave site

by Adam Stein

On a recent... the sort of... mayors and... dled up a... ture, sto... stone of... The... Know... call...



Jones and... director of a... group, want to... Board...

PRESERVATION NEWS

HIGGINS CEMETERY SHAPES UP.

Peerless Rockville's initiative to document and preserve Rockville's historic graveyards is ambitious, particularly considering the variety of properties and conservation issues involved. The situation at Higgins Cemetery serves to illustrate the challenges and opportunities present in this project.

Last November, Peerless Rockville invited individuals and groups to join in a working group to rescue Higgins Cemetery from sure oblivion. Much has been accomplished in a short time. Jack Jones, has taken the lead on this project for the KHS and the Town brush and layers of trash. Volunteers have stepped forward to assist with title search, surveying, archeological tree identification. Higgins will be subject of more intense scrutiny up, and an Eagle Scout project.

Of the approximately one-dozen burials at Higgins Cemetery, the first appears to be that of Revolutionary War soldier James W. Higgins. When his son's heirs divided up the large farm in 1851, they reserved the family graveyard for development. Four of the children were buried there.

Much more work needs to be done. Please volunteer your services or make a contribution towards preservation of Higgins Cemetery contact Eileen McGuckian at 301/762-0100.

Thanks to Eileen McGuckian for her permission to use this photo from...

SATURDAY OCTOBER 23, 1999

AUTUMN CLEAN-UP at
HISTORIC HIGGINS CEMETERY
in ROCKVILLE

ALL AGES WELCOME!

Noting the downtrodden state of George Knowles' (1805-1881) final resting place in Rockville are: Jack Jones, a former Kensington mayor and no member of the town's historical society; Eileen S. McGuckian, the executive director of Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation Ltd.; and Kensington Mayor George Basle. Knowles and his descendants sold to the railroads land that created Kensington.

37
HIGGINS (JAMES) FAMILY CEM.
ARUNDEL AVENUE
ROCKVILLE