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Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses Cemetery and Hall Site Named One of the Most Endangered Historic Places in U.S.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has named the *Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses Cemetery and Hall* site in Cabin John, Maryland one of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places of 2021**.

“Saving the Morningstar Moses Cemetery and Hall site is how we make good on promises to expand our infrastructure in an equitable way without further destruction of communities of color. Past disregard for the heritage of the community of Gibson Grove in transportation projects has already resulted in the loss of an important part of our full American story. This endangered listing challenges us to do the right thing today as we expand our infrastructure, so there will be no additional wrong to correct in the future, and it also calls attention to the threats facing African American cemeteries across the country.”

– **Katherine Malone-France, Chief Preservation Officer, National Trust for Historic Preservation**

Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses Cemetery and Hall was established around 1885 alongside a post-Emancipation Black settlement known as Gibson Grove in Cabin John, Maryland. Residents, some of whom had been formerly enslaved, established a local benevolent society to care for the sick and destitute, bury the deceased, and provide overall support to the local Black community during Jim Crow and Segregation – when social and institutional services were very limited or largely unavailable to the Black community.

In an act of racial injustice, interstate highway construction in the 1960s ran through the Gibson Grove community and took a portion of the cemetery site. Today, foundations are all that remain of its Moses Hall, and the planned expansion of the Washington, D.C.-area Capital Beltway further threatens the cemetery, where known burials span from 1894 to 1977.

A coalition of neighbors, descendants, and others experienced in archaeology, genealogy, historic preservation, research, and advocacy organized ***Friends of Moses Hall*** in 2020 to lead the effort to save this place by advocating that new Beltway construction avoid the cemetery. Friends of Moses Hall aims to preserve the site as a hallowed resting place and as an important African American historical site.

“Friends of Moses Hall is honored that this special place has been designated one of America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places,” said **archaeologist Alexandra Jones, PhD, RPA**. “It is our hope that this recognition will help call national attention to past racial injustice and further support our efforts to protect and preserve this important African American resource.”

“My family is deeply blessed knowing that this sacred place has been recognized. We pray that those who have been laid to rest may remain at rest and undisturbed forever,” stated Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses **descendant Montgomery Crawford**.

Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses **descendant Diane E. Baxter** shared, “My family is honored to know there are those who care enough to select the final resting place of my family members and so many others as an 'Endangered Place.' They can now most assuredly rest in sweet peace forever.”

The Morningstar Tabernacle No. 88 Order of Moses Cemetery and Hall site, deemed eligible for the **National Register of Historic Places** by state and county officials, still exists, with the foundation of Moses Hall located in the cemetery. Thus far over 70 individual burials have been identified here, including community founder Sarah Gibson and Emma Jones, longtime housekeeper for Clara Barton in Glen Echo, MD and local midwife. Descendants of those buried at the Cemetery live locally and in nearby counties and are dedicated to preserving the property as a treasured historical resource for future generations.

<https://www.friendsofmoseshall.org/>

<https://savingplaces.org/americas-most-endangered-historic-places>