

Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory

ID: 128

Name: Rockville Baptist CHURCH CEMETERY

Alternate name:

Address: S. VanBuren & W. Jefferson Sts. NEXT TO ROCKVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Town: Rockville

ADC Map Page 29 Grid B-6

Type

Religious BAPTIST
 Family _____
 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) NONE, WELL MAINTAINED, SOME MARKERS CRACKED OR BROKEN.

Approximate no. of burials 35 Date range of burials 1839-1896

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

For detailed description and map, see attached pamphlet from Peerless Rockville. Peerless has maintained + owned the cemetery since 1983.

All markers upright, some very old trees, one family plot surrounded by fence. Whole cemetery is fenced with new metal fence.
Surveyor(s) CARL PETERSON Survey date SEPT 2004
Photographer CARL PETERSON Date SEPT 2004 Photo no. 128-001 thru 128-007

Current owner PEERLESS Rockville, HISTORIC PRESERVATION, LTD
Address/Phone No. P.O. BOX 4262, ROCKVILLE 20850

Historic Status Locational Atlas ID National Register
 Master Plan ID Rockville HD Other _____

UTM 18S 0313449 UTM 4328242

Additional sources of information: PEERLESS ROCKVILLE BROCHURE (attached)

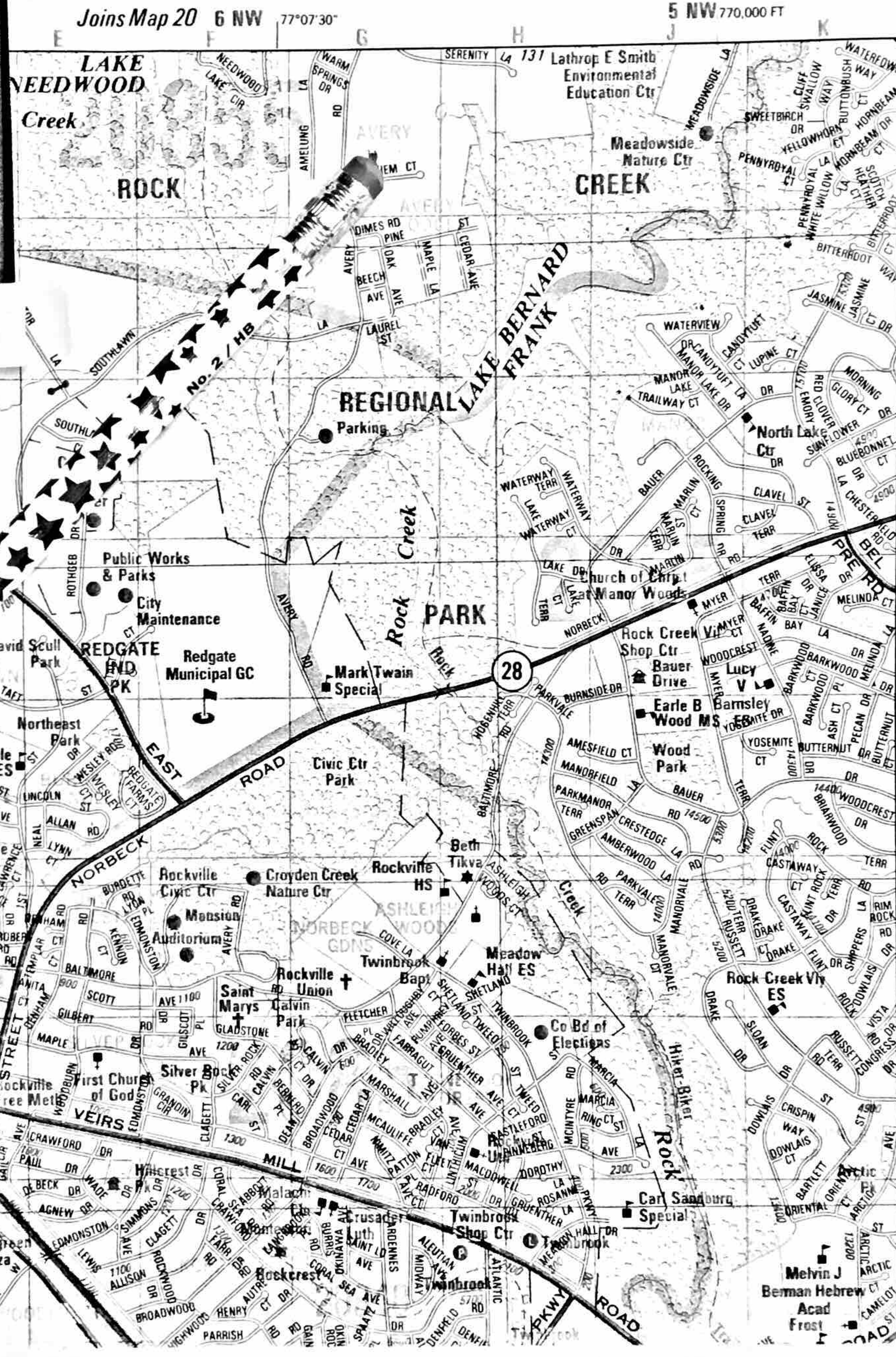
FILE @ PEERLESS ROCKVILLE INCLUDE CEMETERY AND PEOPLE BURIED THERE (VEIRS, BOVIC, KEY, BRADDOCK, PATTERSON, SELBY, SPATES, ETC.)

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ROCKVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY
INTERSECTION S. VAN BUREN/W. JEFFERSON
ROCKVILLE

ROCKVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY

Directions: Located at intersection of Washington and West Jefferson Streets, Rockville. [A.D.C. Map: Montgomery, page 23, grid coordinates J-13.] Condition of cemetery: Well kept, but has been vandalized, markers broken or removed. Inactive cemetery. Earliest known death: 1839. Most recent death: 1897. In 1936, C.H. Robertson had 2 record volume, Mrs. Russell Bogley had volume 1933-1937, other records lost. Date transcribed: 1979. Location of transcribed records: Montgomery County Historical Society Library, 42 West Middle Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Author: J. Thomas Scharf, A.M. Title: *History of Western Maryland*, page 752, Vol. I. Publisher: Regional Publishing Company

[reprinted 1968], Baltimore, MD [originally printed in Philadelphia, 1882].
Comments: Over 43 marked graves.



MAP 29
221 NW
220 NW
460,000 FT
219 NW
39°05'00" 218 NW
Joins Map 30
000 FT 217 NW

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PRESERVING ROCKVILLE'S PAST

Peerless Rockville, chartered in 1974, is well known for its activities to preserve Rockville's architectural resources -- the B & O Station, Montrose School, Dawson farmhouse, and the Red Brick Courthouse. Continuing this commitment, Peerless accepted stewardship of the Old Baptist Cemetery in 1983.

Stabilization and documentation were the first orders of business. Masonry specialist Leonard Mullar gently cleaned the stones, repairing several which were broken. Bartlett Tree Expert Company pruned and fertilized the ancient white oak trees. Volunteers in the "Adopt-a-Stone" project adopted family groups or single gravestones and combed historic records for information about those buried at the Cemetery. Their 350 hours of research produced this guide. Metal detecting and a subsurface radar survey provided more clues to the community now represented by faded names and distant dates.

Peerless Rockville's objective is to restore the Cemetery to its 19th century appearance. Landscape historian Roy Gauzza, Jr.'s master plan called for rural simplicity, with appropriate plantings and furnishings. A donation from the Town & Country Women's Club of Rockville reconstructed the fence shown in an 1890 photograph; the wood was painted by volunteers using materials donated by Duron Paint Company. Repair of the gravestones is a continual task.

Peerless Rockville believes that restoration and interpretation of the Old Baptist Cemetery will enhance our understanding of 19th century Rockville as well as the City's 20th century beauty. A host of caring volunteers makes this possible.

13. MARY STEPHEN (1807-1850) is not identified at this time.

14. LITTLE BELL KEYS (1876-1878) was the daughter of John W. Keys of Gaithersburg and Josephine Riley Keys, from a large plantation on Old Georgetown Road. They married in 1866, living and working on the farm belonging to John's parents, Chandler and Angelina Keys. After Bell's death, John and Josephine had another child, bought a home of their own, and celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary.

15. CHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND ISABEL BOGLEY These children Eugene (1876-1881), Ada B. (1872-1874) and Clarence N. (1881-1881) were three of thirteen born to William and Isabel Bogley. The other ten children lived into adulthood.

PERSONS BURIED IN CEMETERY AND LATER MOVED, OR THEIR TOMBSTONES NO LONGER PRESENT: Cornelia L. Bohrer, Wallace A. Bohrer, John Brewer, William R. Hance, Eliza Haney, Elizabeth Horner, Ellen Brewer Jones, Isaac Riley, and Col. Thomas F. W. Vinson.

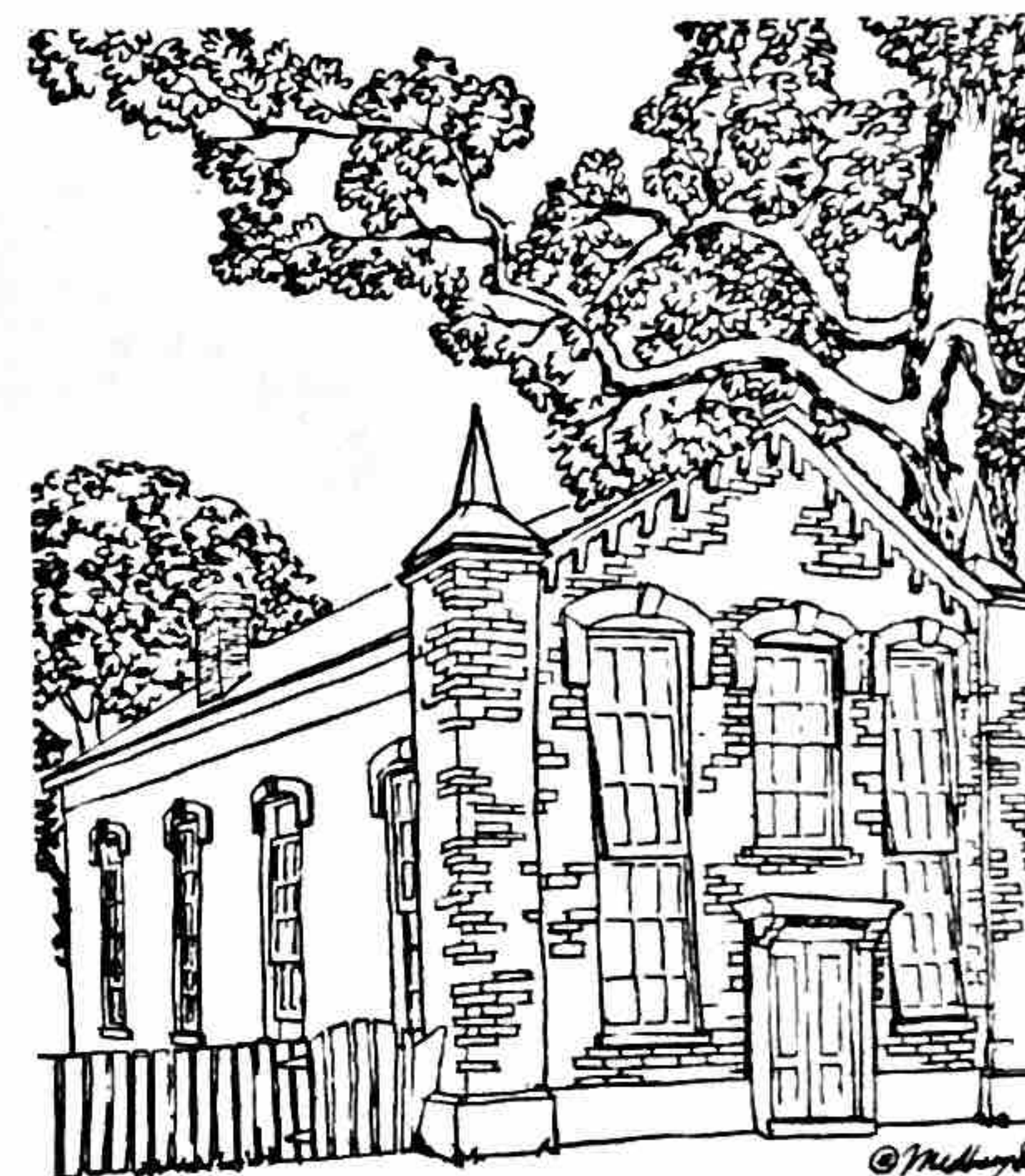
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Adopt-a-Stone: Barbara Nickerson, Project Director; Research, Ann Barnett, Ellie Bowman, Carolyn Butts, Barbara Chambers, Connie Christopher, Delores Crain, Kim Crews, Glenda Darrow, Barbara Duncan, Irene Goodroe, Sharon Kass, Linda Layman, Gale Luce, Dorothy Moorhouse, Dorothy Nowers, Chuck Osborne, Erin Owens, Helen Radford, Kare Varonfakis, Bernice Wilkinson; Training, Anne Cissel and Eileen McGuckian.

Illustrations: Cover drawing of 1890 Baptist Church and inside tombstones by Sherrell Medbery; tombstone locations by Roy Gauzza, Jr.

This walking guide was re-published in November 1990 by Peerless Rockville, with funds awarded by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission.

OLD BAPTIST CEMETERY ROCKVILLE



PEERLESS ROCKVILLE
Historic Preservation, Ltd.
P.O. Box 4262
Rockville, Maryland 20850
301/762-0096

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1. REBECCA GREEN (1825-1884) joined the Baptist Church on December 25, 1854, and was baptized the following year. In 1865 she donated \$15.50 for the new church building. The Crown and Cross on her tombstone signify her religious faith, perseverance, and reward. She married Melchisadek Green in 1845. They had 11 children during their 39 year marriage. A Commissioner of Rockville for 15 years between 1864 and 1882, Melchisadek operated a wheelwright and blacksmith shop on "Quality Hill" on Commerce Street (now West Montgomery Avenue) near S. Adams Street. According to the Sentinel, he was buried in 1890 in the Baptist Churchyard, but no record of a tombstone exists.

2. JOHN I. CAMPBELL (1837-1839) is represented by the earliest dated tombstone in the cemetery. John was probably the infant son of John I. and Martha (Mines) Campbell, who were married in 1836.

3. PATTERSON FAMILY

DR. THOMAS PATTERSON (1767-1848) (Tombstone no longer present, but noted in 1955) in 1833, arrived from Hagerstown with his family to take up residence in Rockville. He was a prominent physician who raised his children in an intellectual atmosphere, as his home contained a fine library of more than 2,000 volumes. Dr. Patterson served for many years as librarian to the House of Representatives in Washington, D. C.

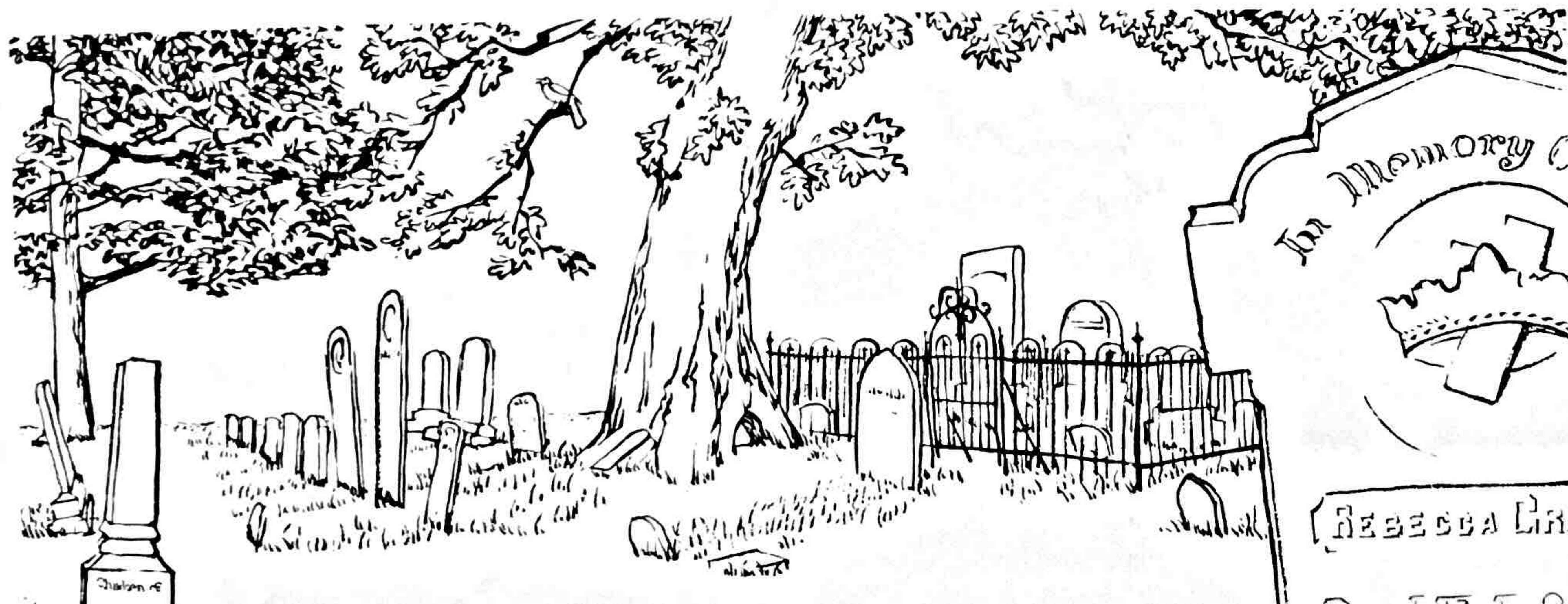
GEORGE C. PATTERSON (1815-1889) (Son of Dr. Thomas Patterson) studied law, but was more active in politics, being elected as Montgomery County representative to the Maryland Legislature in 1844-1845 as a member of the Whig Party. In 1848, he assumed his father's position as librarian to the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1880 he served a term in the Maryland Legislature as a Democrat. Nine years later he returned to Rockville by train to attend the funeral of a close friend, Dr. Samuel T. Stonestreet. As the train arrived at the Rockville depot, a boarding crowd pushed onto the train, preventing him from getting off. Fearing he would be unable to get off as the train began moving again, Patterson jumped from the coach, fell under the last car, and was killed.

4. BRICE SELBY (1774-1844) made his first, of many, real estate purchases in Montgomery County in 1808. He held several public offices including Member of the House of Delegates from Montgomery County (1802, 1804-06); Justice and Judge of the Orphans' Court (1812-15, 17-19); Sheriff (1819-25); and Clerk of the Court (1827-45). He married Catherine Marker in 1801 and Caroline Saunders in 1817. One of his 7 children, Brice, who died at 3 months in 1811, is believed to be buried in the cemetery, though the marker is no longer there.

5. SPATES FAMILY

CHARLES SPATES (1790-1837) and RUTH SPATES (1788-1866) were married in 1815 and had 2 children, George born about 1820, and John. Charles was a farmer, who at age 59, owned a farm valued at \$2,000 located near the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and Rockville Pike. The 1867 Census shows that the Spates owned slaves named Nelson and Mary Baker. The Spates were active in the Bethel Baptist Church, both being baptized in 1827. Charles served as Deacon for approximately 30 years.

6. MARY ELLA RICKETTS (1858-1882) in 1880 married Ulysses Magruder Ricketts at the Baptist Church, joining the Church in 1881. It is believed that one child, a girl, was born to Ella and Magruder, and that this child died in infancy. Their brief marriage ended tragically on December 10, 1882 in a fatal railroad accident at the junction of the City Road (Veirs Mill) and the B & O tracks. According to the Sentinel, the couple failed to hear the whistle or to see the approaching train. As the horsedrawn covered carriage crossed the tracks, the horse was killed, and the carriage shattered. Ella's "skull was crushed, right arm mashed, and left foot cut off". Her husband was not seriously injured. A Jury of Inquest found the Railroad "guilty of criminal negligence in not providing a flagman or other means of informing the public that a train is due".



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REBECCA L.R.

Died Feb. 26
1859

©Matthew

7. **CHARLES SMITH** (1817-1845) was probably married to Sarah Braddock, the daughter of WILLIAM BRADDOCK and Sarah, both members of the Baptist Church. An undated note in the Church records states that William Braddock paid \$4.00 for 2 graves for Smith.

8. **BRADDOCK FAMILY**
WILLIAM BRADDOCK (1818-59) and ROBERTA V. BRADDOCK (1826-66) and their 6 children are the largest family group in the Cemetery. William owned a thriving general store which he advertised in the Sentinel in 1859 in the following way: "Lots of new goods! Just opening at the store of Wm. Braddock, Quality Hill. Everything usually found in a first class country store, all of which will be sold at unusually low figures. Give me a call before purchasing, and avoid the regret of paying more for your goods than your neighbors." William died after a long illness followed by his wife and 6 of their 8 children in the next 11 years. Only 2 of the children lived beyond the age of twenty.

9. **VEIRS FAMILY**
SAMUEL CLARK VEIRS (1798-1872) was born near Dawsonville, Maryland. As a young man he moved to Baltimore and started a [mercantile] business with Charles Diffendorfer. He married his partner's sister, Julianna, in 1819. In 1833 his family returned to a farm on Rock Creek, where he successfully operated Veirs Mill for many years.

Samuel was Postmaster of Rockville from 1837-41 and Chief Judge of the Orphans' Court from 1864-72. With his wife, JULIANNA, he raised eight children on their estate, Meadow Hall, located just south of Rockville and off Veirs Mill Road.

10. **SOMMERS FAMILY**
VIRGINIA SOPHIA SOMMERS (1830-1872) was the second daughter of SAMUEL C. and JULIANNA VEIRS. She was born about 1830, although her stated age changed from Census to Census. On November 17, 1852, she married Abraham H. Sommers, from Alexandria County, Virginia, a physician and judge of the Orphans' Court for 16 years. They produced 7 children, 2 of whom are buried in the Baptist Cemetery: EDWIN (1869-1870) and WILLIE (1863-1878) who died in his 16th year. Willie's grandmother, JULIANNA VEIRS, died one week earlier.

11. **WILLIAM NELSON AUSTIN** (1792-1864) according to the 1850 Census was a farmer who owned land valued at \$1,000, was married to Eleanor Busey Austin (his second wife), and lived in Rockville. The 1857 tax records show that he owned 20 acres (part of his wife's dowry). Austin died the year that the Sentinel newspaper's owner Matthew Fields, was imprisoned for 4 months for having "southern sympathies"; because many issues of the Sentinel were never printed, Austin's obituary and other news of the day were never recorded.

12. **BOUIC FAMILY**
WILLIAM VEIRS BOUIC (1816-1896) was born near Poolesville, Maryland. At

age 5 his father died and he became a ward of his future father-in-law, Samuel C. Veirs, a prominent citizen of Rockville. William studied law in the office of John Brewer and was admitted to the bar about 1840. After moving to Jefferson County, Missouri, he returned to Rockville in 1843 and married MARY A. M. VEIRS, eldest daughter of Samuel C. and Julianna Veirs. Buried close by is their 4 year old child MARY, who died in 1849, and LOUIS AUBREY BOUIC (1871-72), probably their grandson.

In 1860 William secured the Charter for the commissioner form of government of Rockville and served as President of the Board of Commissioners (1865, 67-82). Under his leadership many improvements such as the planting of shade trees in streets and parks came about. He served as Judge of the Circuit Court from 1867-1882 and was the prime mover in the organization of the Montgomery County Agricultural Society, the oldest organization of its kind in Maryland. He was a faithful member of the Baptist Church, to which he was a liberal contributor. For a long time he was trustee of the Rockville Academy, and served as a Director of the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal Company. The 1850 Census shows the PETER A. BOUIC (1802-1859) was living with the Bouics. Peter married Sarah H. Trundle in Poolesville [MD] in 1824 and died in 1859 after a protracted and painful illness. His will was witnessed by A. H. Sommers, William N. Austin, and W. Veirs Bouic.

(Continued on back panel)

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TOMBSTONE LOCATIONS

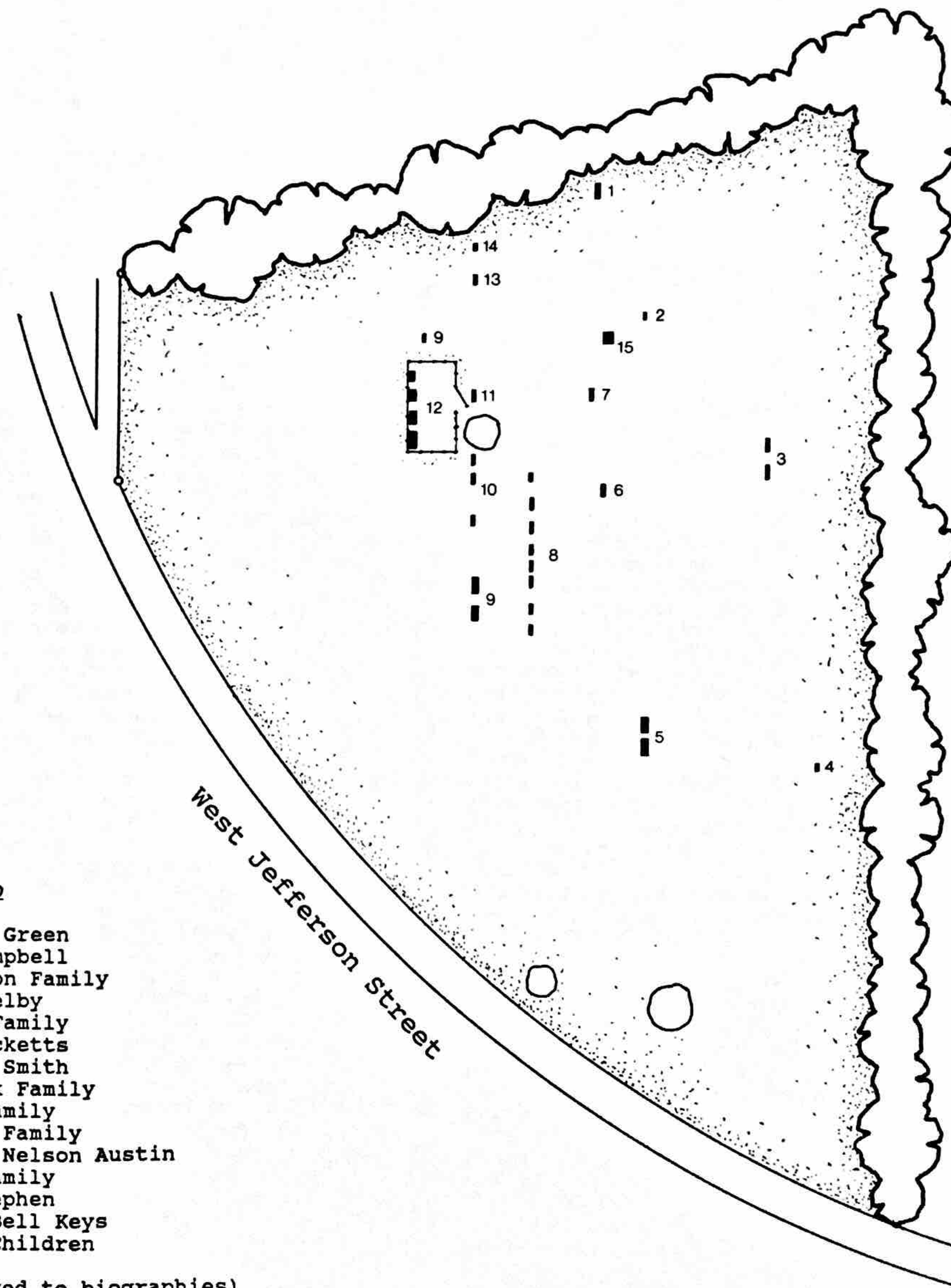
THE OLD BAPTIST CEMETERY

The headstones are worn and cracked, bearing mute testimony to the realized dreams and shattered hopes of Rockville citizens in an earlier time. The Old Baptist Cemetery is a history book etched in stone, waiting to be read.

The cemetery of Rockville's Bethel Baptist Church emerged from religious dissension at the Seneca Church in 1821. Angered at "arbitrary, tyrannical, and distressing government", eight members of the congregation established a new church. In 1823 the group acquired half an acre between the Road to the Mouth of the Monocacy (now West Montgomery Avenue) and Great Falls Road, where they erected a church and reserved the adjacent land for a burying ground. The original church was replaced with a brick building in 1864. A half-century later, the Baptists built a larger church and parsonage at the corner of Washington and Jefferson Streets, demolished the 1864 church, and enclosed the old cemetery with a new iron fence.

In 1897, the Trustees of the Baptist Church deeded a triangular piece of land to the Mayor and Council of Rockville to widen the small side street in exchange for "sufficient electric current to maintain 22 light of 16 candle power, and water to the church for the period of five years, and bringing the wires from the street to the church building." In this trade, 16 graves were moved to the Rockville Cemetery. The Baptist Cemetery received its last interment the previous year with the burial of William Veirs Bouic.

In 1971, the Church sold its Washington Street property and moved into a modern building on Adclare Road. The cemetery was conveyed two years later to the Montgomery County Historical Society, which in 1983 transferred title to Peerless Rockville for caretaking.



LEGEND

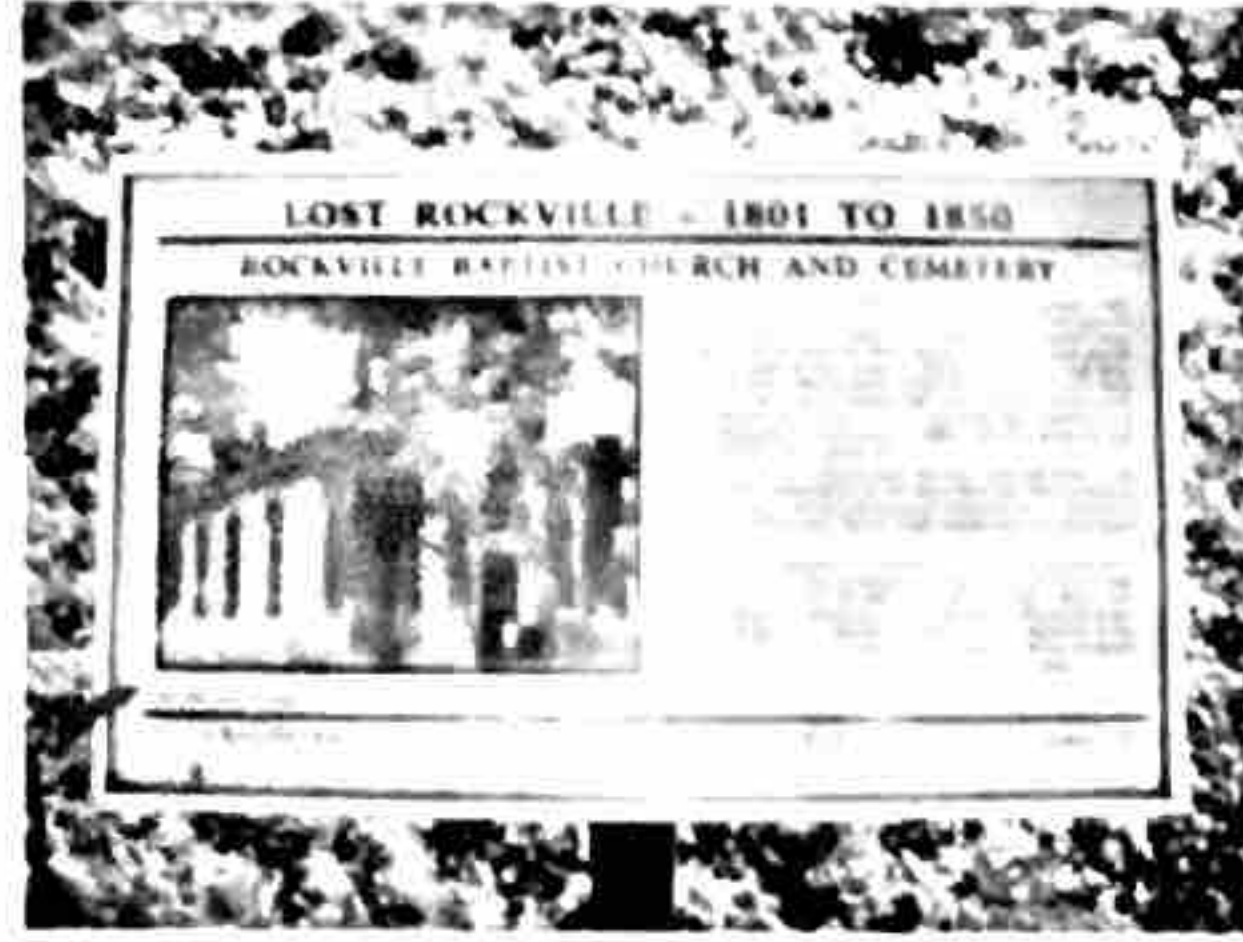
- 1 Rebecca Green
- 2 John Campbell
- 3 Patterson Family
- 4 Brice Selby
- 5 Spates Family
- 6 Mary Ricketts
- 7 Charles Smith
- 8 Braddock Family
- 9 Veirs Family
- 10 Sommers Family
- 11 William Nelson Austin
- 12 Bouic Family
- 13 Mary Stephen
- 14 Little Bell Keys
- 15 Bogley Children

(Numbers keyed to biographies)

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128-001.JPG



128-002.JPG



128-003.JPG



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OLD BAPTIST CEMETERY

Catalogued By
 JTS - Scharf (1882)
 DAR - (circa 1955)
 NT - Noma Thompson (1949)
 JDM - Janet Manuel for
 MCHS (1979)
 PR - Eileen McGuckian for
 Peerless Rockv.(198:

Name	Dates of Birth/ Death (age)	Catalogued By	Comments
Austin, William Nelson	-1864 (72)	JTS-NT-DAR-JDM-PR	
Bogley, children of William A. & I.	Eugene 1876-1881 Ada B. 1872-1874 Clarence N.1881-1881	DAR-JDM-PR	Monument engraver on 3 sides; pin loose, top of monument off
Bohrer, Cornelia L.	-1874 (49)	JTS	
Bohrer, Wallace A.	-1864 (17)	JTS	
Bouic, Peter A.	-1859 (57)	JTS	
Bouic, William Veirs	1816-1896	JTS-DAR-JDM-PR	4 head & foot stones in lot
Bouic, Mary A.M. Veirs	1821-1888	" " " "	with iron fence
Bouic, Louis Aubrey	1871-72	" " " "	
Bouic, Mary R.	-1849 (4)	" " " "	
Braddock, William	-1859 (41)	JTS-DAR-JDM-NT-PR	Broken--may not be repairable
Braddock, Elizabeth	1854-1870 (16)	JDM-DAR-PR-NT	
Braddock, William Jr.	1850-1868 (18)	" " " "	
Braddock, Mary R.	-1864 (12)	" " " "	
Braddock, Isaiah	1848-1866	" " " "	
Braddock, John P.	-1864 (19)	" " " "	
Braddock, Roberta V.	1826-1866	" " " "	
Braddock, Annie	-1856 (3 mo.)	JDM-PR-NT	
Brewer, John	1804-1866	JTS	
Campbell, John I.	-1839 (21 mo)	DAR-JDM-PR	Pretty shape and foot marker
Green, Rebecca	-1884 (59)	DAR-JDM-PR	Decorative but broken
Hance, William R.	-1878 (60)	JTS	
Haney, Eliza P.	1875-1875	DAR	JDM: Stone gone; EPH footstone lay ing next to tree

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OLD BAPTIST CEMETERY

NAME	DATES	CATALOGUED BY	COMMENTS
Horner, Elizabeth	-1875	NT	
Jones, Ellen Brewer	1845-1876	JTS	
"Little Bell Key"	1876-1878	NT-JDM-DAR-PR	Child's decorat (dove?)
Patterson, George C.	1815-1889 (73)	DAR-JDM-PR	Broken
Patterson, Dr. Thomas	-1848 (81)	DAR	(gone by '79)
Ricketts, Mary E.	-1882 (24)	JDM-DAR-PR	Decorative
Riley, Isaac	-1850 (76)	JTS	
Selby, Brice	-1811 (3 mo.)	DAR-JDM	
Selby, Brice	-1844 (70)	JTS-NT	
Smith, Charles	-1845 (28)	JTS-DAR-JDM-PR	Pretty stone at foot marker
Sommers, Edwin	-1870 (15 mo.)	JDM-DAR-PR	
Sommers, Virginia Sophia	-1872 (44)	JTS-DAR-JDM-PR	
Sommers, Willie W.	1863-1878	DAR-JDM-PR	
Sommers, Clarence	-1858	NT	DAR:dates uncl JDM:stone gone pieces w/"Clar under tree
Spates, Charles	-1873 (83)	JTS-NT-DAR-JDM-PR	Stones off base:
Spates, Ruth	1788-1866	JTS-NT-JDM-PR	" " "
Stephen, Mary	-1850 (43)	JDM-PR	
Veirs, Samuel Clark	-1872 (75)	JTS-NT-DAR-JDM-PR	"Bradley" carv stone; leaning
Veirs, Julianna	1797-1878	JTS-NT-DAR-JDM-PR	<u>precariously</u>
Veirs, 2	"dates unclear"	NT	
Veirs, Clarence	(25 months)	DAR-JDM-PR	pointed arch head and foot
Vinson, Col. Thomas F.W.	-1843 (58)	JTS	
"Several slaves"		NT mentioned	

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Other stones PR found (1983) : BS

small, no name

--S (broken)

large, heavy marble base and part of stone,
next to George C. Patterson

stones leaning on tree: MS

EPM

unreadable pieces of 2 others

"5913" slate square

Most stones are sandstone or marble

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Old Baptist Church and fence, 1890, from "Peerless Rockville" brochure.

Old cemetery evokes a slower age

by Eileen McGuckian

Who installed the wooden fence around the Old Baptist Cemetery, and why?

Passers-by traveling west on Jefferson Street to where it meets West Montgomery and Falls Road are calmed by the small grassy plot. The Baptist Cemetery recalls a slower Rockville, the Rockville of a century ago.

We are so taken with the city's handsome Victorians that we sometimes forget local history of the century before. Wooden dwellings on Adams Street, the grand Beall-Dawson house, Dr. Law's residence and the Methodist parsonage on Jefferson Street, Samuel Martin's farm and the Smith, Wood, and Ross homesteads in Haiti all existed in mid-19th century Rockville. By 1870, a population of 600 supported eight churches and three times as many businesses.

Peerless Rockville believes that documentation, restoration and interpretations of the Old Baptist Cemetery will enhance our understanding of 19th-century Rockville, and enhance the city's 20th-century beauty.

The Rockville Baptist Church was formed in 1821; the church on Jefferson Street was erected with its burying ground two years later. The oldest tombstone, that of 2-year-old John Campbell, is dated 1839. Burials continued during the next 60 years, even as the congregation replaced the original church with a brick building on the same site in 1864. The last burial in the

cemetery was that of William Veirs Bouic, president of the board of commissioners ("mayor") and a circuit court judge.

When Peerless Rockville accepted ownership of the small ceme-

terials, it appears that the cemetery was enclosed by a whitewashed board fence from the earliest times until after 1910. In 1913, the congregation voted to construct a new church and parsonage on Washing-



tery in 1983, it took the time to understand its new charge. To document the property, Peerless initiated the "Adopt-a-Stone" project, with volunteers "adopting" gravestones and searching historic records for information.

Peerless researchers read through church minutes dating from 1821 through 1915, seeking information on the congregation, the church and its grounds, and on practices and policies in that period. They learned which 16 bodies were moved in 1897 to open Van Buren Street, and they found expenditures for painting, frescoes, colored glass and a new organ. A call went out for any photographs of the old property, especially the church building and cemetery fencing.

Based upon the photograph found in Henry Copp's 1890 "Peerless Rockville" brochure, notes in the church minutes and recollections from many individ-

ton Street and also to sell the old building and use the money to put a fence around the old cemetery. The wrought iron fence subsequently erected remained until it was dismantled for scrap iron during World War II.

Based upon the findings, Peerless then engaged landscape architectural historian Roy Gauzza to develop a plan for the old cemetery. Roy stressed simplicity in interpreting the cemetery, for 19th-century Rockville was rural, informal and pedestrian-scaled. He specified plants that were used in 1850 and called for a re-creation of the appropriate fencing. After much discussion, Peerless drew plans for the wood fence shown in the 1890 photograph.

Oak Grove Designs constructed the fence. These craftsmen, who received a county preservation award this year, used clear yellow pine boards a full inch thick. They ordered handmade cinch nails from by Tremont Nail Co. in New Hampshire, the oldest U.S. nail manufacturer and finished them off in the traditional way. Oak Grove then took advantage of modern technology to apply two coats of clear wood preservative, soon to be covered by a primer and then an oil-based paint. They will use a flat white paint, duplicating the appearance of 19th-century whitewash. Donations from the Town and Country Women's Club of Rockville made the fence project possible.

Other plans for the cemetery include further headstone repair, additional period plantings, a bench, and a small interpretive sign. Donations, volunteers, and information are most welcome. Call 762-0096.

Schaefer addresses funding imbalance

William Donald Schaefer, City institutions overwhelmed Arts Council was may- in

Council grants.

Schaefer urged County Executive Sidney Kramer to follow his old book and go fight for the money if he wants more for Montgomery County.

Schaefer said he would like to see funding for a requested museum in Hagerstown and would try to get the recently renamed National Symphony Orchestra receive more money. The orchestra used to be part of the Montgomery Chamber

his remarks interview

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Cemetery offers link to history

by Eileen McGuckian

A call from the Montgomery County Historical Society two and a half years ago asking if Peerless Rockville might be interested in assuming the maintenance of a tiny cemetery at one of the busiest intersections in Rockville initiated an unusual and exciting chain of events.

Within two months, in November 1983, Peerless Rockville became the new owner of the Old Baptist Cemetery on West Jefferson Street.

Immediate reaction to the transfer on the part of Peerless board members was not all positive. What, one inquired, does an organization do with one-third of an acre of burying grounds? The church building had been torn down 70 years before and the stones had been neglected for half a century.

Although the property only cost \$1, there was so much to do. Several stones were broken, their surfaces had been invaded by vegetation and eroded by exhaust fumes and obviously many were missing. Bad jokes about acquiring a grave situation aside, the board began to examine the cost of the cemetery's restoration.

Along with the property, the historical society donated the unspent balance in its budget for mowing the cemetery and also an anonymous \$100 received specifically for stone repair.

Peerless took title to the cemetery in November 1983. Immediately we contacted our insurance agent, who takes our unusual acquisitions in stride but couldn't understand why anyone would want to own a cemetery with wobbly tombstones and an uncertain future. However, Glenn Goldburn good-naturedly attached a donation when he revised our policy.

Peerless Executive Director Eileen McGuckian catalogued the remaining tombstones, observing that many of them noted by Scharf in 1882, Thompson in 1949, the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1955 and Manuel in 1979 had vanished. Dave Kelsey and Richard Andrews photographed the stones.

Peerless issued a press release on the activities and plans for restoration, resulting in an article that attracted Frido Von Kesteren of Bartlett Tree Experts. His men pruned the large white oaks and removed a dumpster full of volunteer hickories. Bartlett returned in the spring to fertilize the oaks.

Peerless Rockville recognized the immediate need to repair several of the stones and contacted individuals throughout Maryland, gathering information and compiling a short list of companies that repaired old tombstones. Emergency action saved Samuel Clarke Veirs' stone, but the group is still seeking an experienced specialist to complete the full repair job.

Former board member Jackie Wilhams, who lives close to the cemetery, agreed to chair a committee to plan for and oversee its preservation. The group commissioned Roy Gauzza Jr., a young landscape historian, to develop a plan for restoring the cemetery to its 19th century appearance.

At the same time, Eileen McGuckian began to assemble historical information about the Baptist Church in Rockville. She spent long hours in the land records, spoke with older members of the church and read church records dating back to 1822.

She found names of many of those buried in the graveyard, resolutions moving the congregation to a new site two blocks east and lists of fence and building repairs. But sadly, only one 19th-



century photograph surfaced and no plan of the cemetery has yet emerged.

Work on the trees preserved the peaceful shade amidst the bustling traffic on Route 28, but the grounds still needed care. Fortunately, Barbara Wolper of the Town and Country Women's Club called, seeking a project. The club agreed to be responsible for clearing one property line of unwanted saplings, poison ivy and other undesirable growth.

The first summer, young Peerless members Patrick and Shawn Kelly mowed and clipped the grass and weeds. Last year, Barrett Vitol continued to keep the grounds well groomed.

In the spring of 1985, Erin Owens applied for a small challenge grant from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission. That body earmarked \$2,000 for the "Adopt-a-Stone" project, which would involve volunteers and experts in an orchestrated effort to document the cemetery and those buried there, perform work on the stones and produce a walking guide to the cemetery.

Barbara Nickerson became pro-

ject director in December 1985. Since then, more than 20 volunteers attended three training sessions to learn research sources and techniques.

Volunteer Helen Radford, curious as to why the husband of her chosen individual wasn't buried with her, searched Rockville cemetery and city council records to discover the names of 16 people relocated from the Baptist Cemetery in 1897 when South Van Burden Street was put through. Another researcher is documenting the life and tragic death of her grandfather's first wife in 1882.

Leonard Mullar, a masonry cleaner from Gaithersburg, read one reporter's coverage of the training sessions and request for volunteers and offered to clean the gravestones with a mild detergent. Many of the volunteers came to watch, some spraying and scrubbing their own stones and marveling over newly emerged writing.

The Baptist Cemetery project has evolved from acceptance of an unwanted property to a major community preservation project demanding time, attention and resources.

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