



MONTGOMERY COUNTY CEMETERY INVENTORY REVISITED

BURIAL SITE INFORMATION

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Name: Harris-Williams Cemetery [RELOCATED] | Inventory ID: 269 |
| Alternate name: | |
| Address: 305 Frederick Avenue, Rockville | |
| Website: | |
| GPS coordinates: Latitude: 39.094484 | Longitude: -77.146242 |
| FindaGrave: | |

BURIAL SITE TYPE

Category: Religious **Community** Family **African American** Other:

BURIAL SITE EVALUATION

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Setting/location description: <input type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Urban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suburban <input type="checkbox"/> Wooded <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | | |
| General condition (See conditions sheet): <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None | | |
| Is there a formal entrance? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Accessibility: <input type="checkbox"/> Inaccessible <input type="checkbox"/> By foot <input type="checkbox"/> By car | |
| Is cemetery active (recent burials)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Is there a cemetery sign: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | |
| Is cemetery being maintained? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (If yes, note caretaker's name below) | | |
| Are there visible markers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Approximate number of burials/visible markers: 0 | Date ranges: 1878-1920s |
| Description: (markers, materials, arrangement, landscaping/vegetation, fence, paths and roads, etc.) | | |
| • For close to a century, burial markers were visible, but c 1967 they were removed | | |
| • Today a single-family residence dominates the N section of this lot | | |

BURIAL SITE CONTACT

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| Name: Heirs of Wilma Shelton Bell (N section of lot, with residence) City of Rockville (S section of lot, with tennis court) | | |
| Relationship to burial site: Owners | Advocacy contact: Sharyn Duffin | |
| Address: | | Phone: |
| City: | State: | ZIP Code: |

BURIAL SITE SURVEYOR

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Name: Sharyn Duffin and Eileen McGuckian | Survey Date: 11/30/2018 | Time spent: |
| Email: | Photographer: | |

COMMENTS

Suggestions for follow-up:

- **Check records 1965-69 of Snowden Funeral Home (for removal of remains), City of Rockville records (for building permit and correspondence), death certificates, and 20th century US Census Records (for individuals) and maps.**
- **Non-invasive GPR could be used to determine if any burials were not relocated**

Safety issues, invasive vegetation removal, fence removal/restoration, signage, trash, erosion, vandalism:

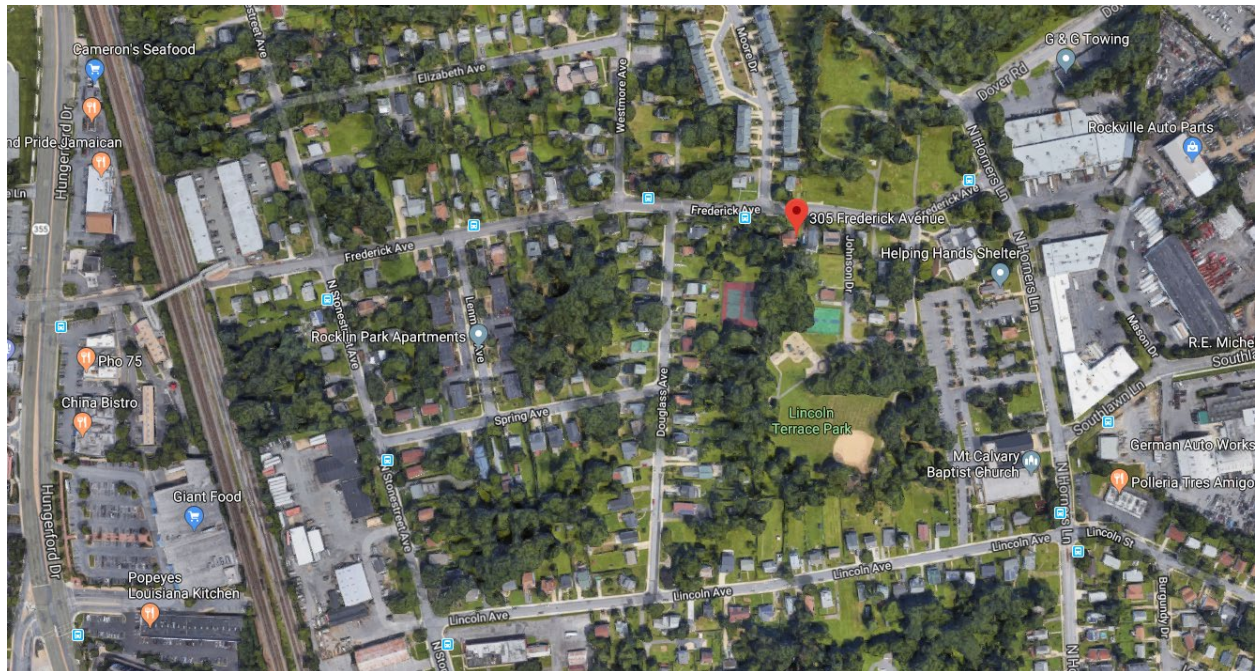
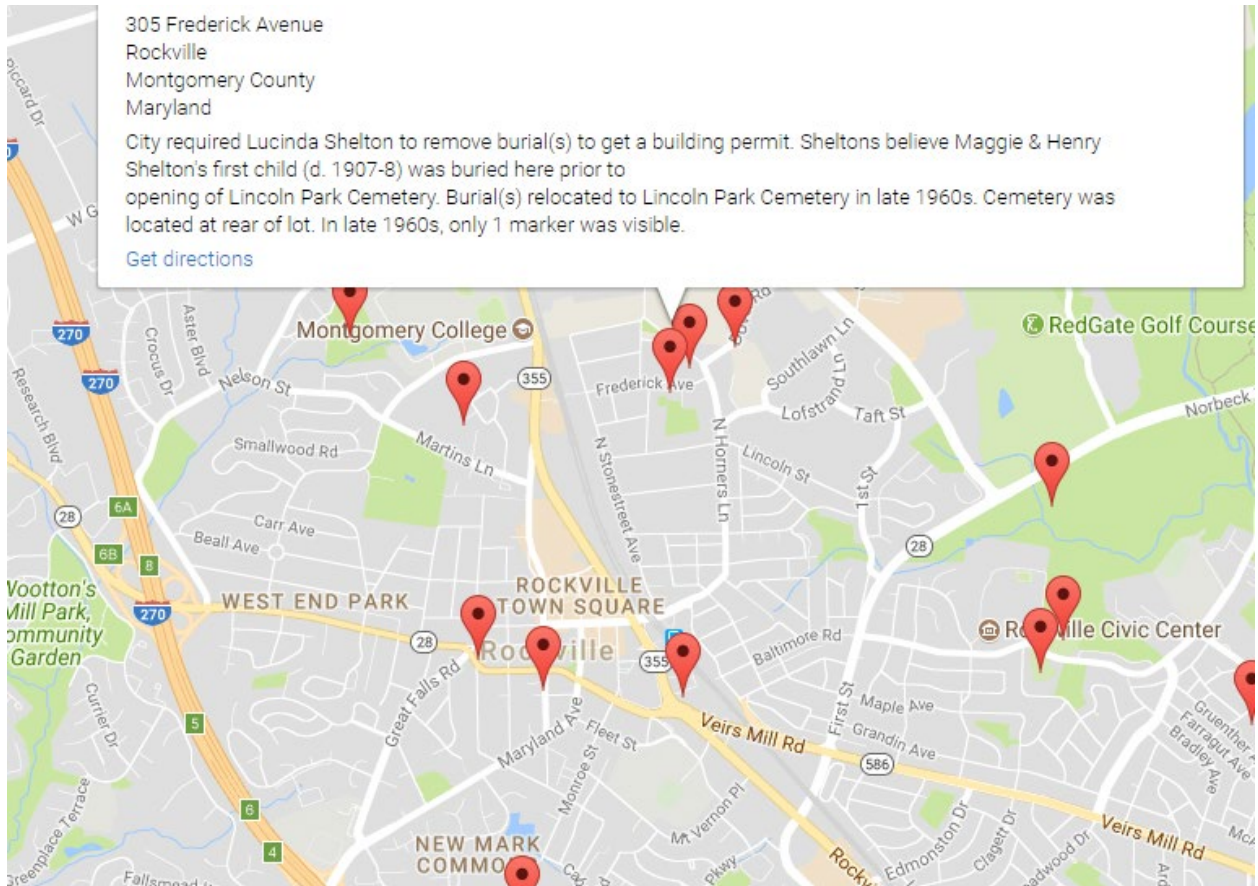
Anything of significance about this cemetery?

- **This likely was an early communal burial site prior to subdivision of Lincoln Park (1890) or establishment of Galilean Fishermen's Cemetery (1917). Known burials of these post-Emancipation black families in this area include Williams, Harris, Hall, Hill, and Shelton.**

SOURCES

Cite sources used and resources available:

- **Recollections of Sharyn Duffin, Wilma Bell, Fran Hawkins; US Census records**
- **Montg. Co. Land Records, including 1879 deed Solomon + Sidney Williams to Adeline + Mary Harris, 144 sq ft "to be used as a burying ground." EBP20/265 (attached)**





Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory **Recollections**

On May 30, 1879, Sidney and Solomon Williams deeded to Adeline and Mary Harris 144 square feet of land “for use as a burying ground.” African American families had located in this area near Rockville following Emancipation. Because there were no other local cemeteries until 1917, the original burial area probably expanded into a community cemetery. Oral informants suggest multiple burials in the Harris, Williams, Hall, Hill, and Shelton families.

It is likely that Adeline Harris was first to be buried here. She was counted in the 1870 census with her husband Wesley and their 10-year old daughter Mary. In the 1880 census, Wesley Harris lived in the household of Isaac and Charlotte Johnson and was recorded as a widow. Mary Harris (age 20 by 1880) could not be traced.

S. Williams appeared on the 1879 *Hopkins Atlas*, as did daughter P(riscilla) Powers. Sidney Williams’ will was probated in 1883. Son Hezekiah Williams lived in Washington DC for nearly 40 years. His 1917 death notice in *The Washington Herald* indicated that his funeral was in Rockville. Although Galilean Fishermen's Cemetery was established in that year, it is possible that Hezekiah was also buried on his parents’ land.

Sharyn Duffin’s grandmother, Mabel Hill, recalled that a school friend died around 1912 and was buried here. Her last name was Hall; Solomon Williams’ daughter Priscilla was married to Joseph Hall. Their son George purchased the two lots adjacent to Solomon Williams land circa 1893. Mabel Hill’s school friend was probably George Williams’ daughter.

Also from Sharyn Duffin: I was told that my great grandparents—Reuben Hill who died in 1915 and his wife Rachel who died between 1920 and 1923—were both buried here. The original 1879 deed from Williams to Harris was found in 1987 in the home of their grandson Carlisle Blair Hill at 305 Lincoln Avenue.

In the mid 1950s, my cousins and I discovered the cemetery. We were attracted to the lilies of the valley growing in a shady area. We approached the site and found headstones. We carried one to our grandmother, Mabel Hill, who told us in no uncertain terms to return it immediately. I do not recall venturing there again.

In 1946 the large property was purchased at a tax sale. Eventually, Raymond Smith bought it and built the house at 310 Lincoln Avenue on the south end. In about 1967 he sold the Frederick Avenue (north) section containing the cemetery to Lucinda K. Shelton, who told Wilma Shelton Bell that Lucinda’s parents, Henry and Maggie Shelton, buried their first child here about 1907-8. In the late 1960s, prior to issuing a building permit for a house to Lucinda Shelton, the City of Rockville required removal of the graves, which was conducted by Snowden Funeral Home to a common grave at nearby Fishermen's Cemetery.

Additional Sources: See file at MCHS for Bell oral history transcript

Sharyn R. Duffin
December 8, 2018