

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CEMETERY INVENTORY

Survey ID 307

307
 GRIFFITH FAMILY CEMETERY
 21205 DENIT ESTATES DRIVE
 SUNSHINE



Cemetery name Far View

Alternate name(s) GRIFFITH FAMILY

Address (or direction from nearest intersection) 21205 DENIT ESTATES DRIVE, FORMERLY
~~4401~~ New Hampshire Ave, Sunshine, MD 21440 N.H. AVE
South of the intersection of RT 97 and RT 650

ADC Map Page _____ Grid _____ Town _____

Type	Association
<input type="checkbox"/> Religious _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Free black _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Family _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Enslaved _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Private _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ethnic <u>Euro-American</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric _____

Setting Rural Urban Suburban Forested Other _____

Condition Excellent Good Fair Poor

Negative Impacts (vandalism, dumping, neglect, encroachment, etc) ground hog hole over
one grave

Approximate no. of burials 4-8 Date range of burials 19th century

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

Field stone markers. One carved with RC, died Febry 28, 1821

↙
 P.G.?
 ↘

NEW FRANCING. CEMETERY IS AT END OF DENIT ESTATES DRIVE, SOUTH OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE, AND IS APPROXIMATELY 100 FEET FROM ROAD AND 100 YARDS IN FRONT (WEST) OF FAR VIEW HOUSE

Surveyor(s) Vivian Ficke Survey date 11/19/04

Photographer EARL M. DUNN Date 7-18, 2006 Photo no. _____

Current owner JOHN A. (TONY) THOMETZ

Address/Phone No. 21205 DENIT ESTATES DRIVE BROOKVILLE, MD 20833 240-351-2954

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

UTM _____

Additional sources of information:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CEMETERY INVENTORY

Survey ID _____

Cemetery name Griffith Family

Alternate name(s) Far View

Address (or direction from nearest intersection) _____
21450 New Hampshire Ave

ADC Map Page 12 Grid H-9/10? Town Sunshine (vic)

Type
 Religious _____
 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) _____

Approximate no. of burials _____ Date range of burials _____

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

In Farquahr - children of John Griffith buried in orchard

Same as ~~Eastell Cem~~ / ~~21420-24-28 Denit Estates Dr~~? No.

Surveyor(s) _____ Survey date _____
 Photographer _____ Date _____ Photo no. _____

Current owner _____
 Address/Phone No. _____

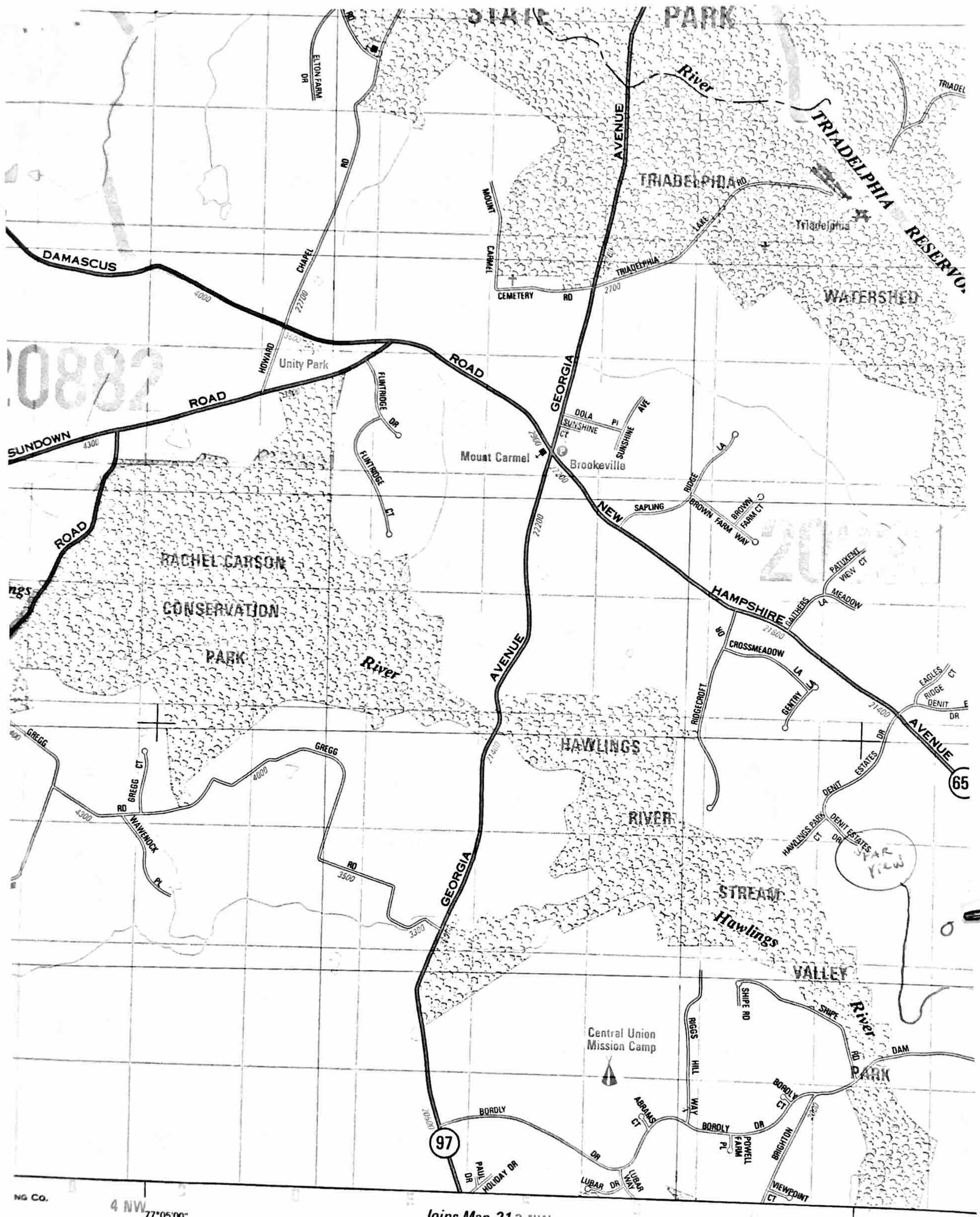
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Far View

IN the eastern part of upper Montgomery County native building stone is abundant, and being on or near the surface it is easily quarried. The historian is thus impressed by the numerous stone houses standing in that area.

One of these, Far View, now covered with cement-mortar, is a fine example, and, like a number of others, was built by some of the Gaithers, who were the outstanding stone masons of the area for a century. But the Gaithers who built them, in name at least, seem to have nearly disappeared from the area of their early industry.

There is a rugged stone barn near the stone house of Far View with the date 1836 cut into the gable end. It is to the lasting regret of historians that few early houses have the dates when they were built cut into them. It is believed that the house here was built before 1800 for either Basil or John Griffith by the Gaither builders.

As the name indicates, there is an extensive distant view over the county toward the south and west from the site of the house, which stands on a hill just 500 feet above tidewater, overlooking the lovely Hawlings River Valley. Five miles north of Ashton, it is near Sunshine and is twenty-five miles from downtown Washington.

The land was part of an old grant known as "Gartrell's Adventure," the Gartrell family settling in this area before the Revolutionary War. Part was also on a land grant of 517 acres made in 1724 to Thomas Sprigg and Richard Simmons called "Gittings Ha! Ha!"

The first owner of which there is a record was Basil Griffith, born about 1775, who married a Gartrell, and thus inherited the plantation of several hundred acres. Following Basil Griffith came John Griffith (died in 1883) whose wife is unknown. Their children were John, Junior, who owned the place in 1865, Davidge, and Sally, all of whom died unmarried before 1891 and are buried in the orchard near the house. Another child, Nancy Griffith, married Charles G. Holland, and inherited the estate. Their son, James

Thomas Holland, then fell heir to the property and owned the farm from about 1881 to 1893, although he never lived in the old stone house, but for many years resided on the adjoining farm, Prospect Hill.



NO. 34 C-9 BASIL OR JOHN GRIFFITH
CA. 1790-'80 STONE, CEMENT COVERED

The next owner was Charles G. Holland II, who owned the property for a short time only, 1893 to 1898, when it was sold to the widow of Washington William Brown. From her it passed to her son, James William Brown. It is of interest to note that Mrs. Brown was a Gartrell descended from the first members of the family who took up the land known as "Gartrell's Adventure." Mrs. James W. Brown passed away in June 1959, and Mr. Brown built a fine modern home on the hill in the front part of the farm, and sold the old home to Mr. Wm. P. Bundy, son-in-law of the ex Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

An attractive old house with brick interior partitions, small window sash, fine mantels, old pine floors, and panelled doors, it has a number of interior features that indicate it may have been built before 1800. The center hall leads straight through to a terraced garden with old box bushes in the rear of the house.

Since the house is only one room deep, sunshine floods the interior from both sides. Hand-rail, spindles, and newel posts are delicately turned. The old slave quarters, a rugged stone

building with four rooms and a large fireplace, stands only a few yards from the rear of the main house. A cellar for storage under the

house includes a walled-off room used as a jail for unruly slaves. Iron bars still screen the window.

Fertile Meadows

THE attractive house shown is an excellent example of early architecture in Western Maryland. Part of the house was undoubtedly built shortly after 1800 although part may have been built about the time of the American Revolution.

The author has visited scores of Colonial houses in many states of the Union. In studying this authentic house he has been impressed with the sympathetic regard displayed by the present owners for its antique features. They have scrupulously preserved the charm of the old house. In their preservation of Fertile Meadows they have demonstrated that obliteration of such features is unnecessary to obtain attractive modern comforts and conveniences. Many priceless houses of early days have been ruined by their new owners who lacked regard for the antique. No "disenchantment of modernization" here.

From the lawn, lovely views are observed to the north, south and west, over the well named "fertile meadows," a name given the place one hundred and fifty years ago. The survey of the landscape is especially appealing if a flock of sheep are within view, usually to be seen grazing on the rolling bluegrass fields.

The land records dating back to Colonial days reveal the owners of this and some adjoining lands to have been numerous. On March 14, 1797, Edward Crowe obtained part of Benjamin's Square from William Willcoxon, and in September of the same year, Crowe purchased four additional plots totaling about 150 acres from Ignatius Pigman for the sum of 125 pounds sterling. The properties are identified by names of old grants as parts of Land O'Goshen, Pigman's Purchase and Benjamin's Square as well as Fertile Meadows. The several plots are stated to be contiguous to each other.

In March, 1803, Edward Crowe conveyed to Samuel Robertson 150 acres of land named Fertile Meadows. In 1809 Robertson acquired additional tracts from Samuel Howard and Josiah

and Amos Willcoxon and others. Samuel Robertson owned a number of other tracts in the area. But before the year 1816, Robertson had passed from this life, for in that year the General Assembly of Maryland at its December session appointed three trustees to sell "the lands of Samuel Robertson deceased."

There is an undated tombstone on the slope of a hill not far from the manor house into which is chiseled, "Samuel and Rachel Robertson." Beside it is a marble shaft encrusted by age upon which can barely be read, "In memory of our children" followed by four given names, "Henry, Samuel, Maria, and —" the last unreadable. No dates on it.

The trustees named by the Legislature were Thomas Davis, William Robertson and John H. Riggs. On November 13, 1819, they conveyed the several tracts to George Washington Riggs of Baltimore. Fertile Meadows remained in the Riggs family for about a century until after the death of the wife of Remus D. Riggs in 1916.

George Washington Riggs was born at the old Riggs home, Pleasant Hill, near Brookeville, in 1777 and died in 1864 at his home, Woodville, near Baltimore. His first wife was Eliza Robertson who died in 1819. He then married Rebecca (Smith) Norris in 1820, widow of William Norris of Baltimore. She survived him by about four years. His son Remus Dorsey Riggs was the last child of his second marriage and he inherited the Goshen farm. The name Fertile Meadows was used by the Counselmans, present owners, from one of the old land grants.

George W. Riggs was an important and very successful businessman, first in Georgetown where he was a silversmith and real estate dealer, and in 1812 when he moved to Baltimore and established a mercantile business which engaged in the export of tobacco. He served in the war of 1812. George W. Riggs signed his will on August 8, 1862. It had four codicils added from time to time and was finally admitted to

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