



House Bill 1099 Will Assist Historic African American Cemeteries in Maryland

On February 4, Delegate Al Carr (District 18) filed a bill that would assist Marylanders who care about burial sites related to black communities. While many sites are cared for, throughout time too many others have been neglected, abandoned, even vandalized. Owners may no longer be connected to burials on their land. Often, African American cemeteries seemingly disappear.

The need is evident. Maryland's historically large black population is evidenced in its proportion of cemeteries, but it is over-represented in the numbers of abandoned and unmaintained sites today. This bill addresses a true need and expresses a meritorious priority.

House Bill 1099 seeks to help individuals and organizations to "identify, preserve, restore, protect, maintain, or commemorate graves, monuments, or markers at historic African American cemeteries." It builds on the experience of the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture and the Maryland Historical Trust and mandates a one-year study of the issues facing historic black cemeteries, including how other jurisdictions are managing these historic resources, and how this initiative would be funded.

The Coalition supports House Bill 1099 and urges you to do the same. Contact your Delegates to let them know that African American cemeteries are an important part of Maryland heritage. Below is the link to the bill, which will be heard on Wednesday, February 24, at 1:30 pm in the House Appropriations Committee; online sign-up for written or oral testimony is on Monday, February 22, 8 am-3 pm.

The Coalition will post updates on our website. Contact Eileen McGuckian at phileen3@verizon.net or 301-468-7331 with questions, concerns, and offers to help. Link to HB 1099: <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgaweb/Legislation/Details/hb1099?ys=2021RS>

Cemetery Groundwork: Digging In

Your Coalition has embarked on an initiative that will help cemeteries during the pandemic and beyond. Building on *The Coalition's Guide to Burial Site Stewardship* (which can be seen at <https://cpmbs.org/coalition-guide/>), experienced burial site experts will share their thoughts and suggestions through crisp video presentations on preservation and maintenance topics.

Some topics to be covered are: What to do when you discover a cemetery, researching your cemetery's history, assessing cemetery conditions and needs, mapping a site, opportunities for volunteer participation, and when to call a professional conservator. You are invited to contact coalitionpmb@gmail.com with suggestions.

Whether you are a newcomer to cemetery preservation or just need some professional tips, these presentations will build your knowledge and skills. The videos are being produced this winter and spring, with the first ones debuting virtually at the annual conference on May 1, 2021.



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COALITION CALENDAR

2021 CPMBS Annual Meeting & Conference:
Saturday, May 1, 2021 — Virtual, via Zoom

Trader Foundation grant applications are due:
July 1, 2021 and January 1, 2022

Historic Designation of Maryland Cemeteries, Part Two - State and National Levels

by Anne Brockett, February 2021

As discussed in the last *Courier*, local designation as a historic site is a powerful means of protecting cemeteries in Maryland. Historic designation by a city or county government provides protection from inappropriate changes to keep the historic character of cemeteries intact.

While local designation often affords the strongest level of physical protection, cemeteries can also receive protection and recognition by inclusion in the one or more of the following:

- Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties
- National Register of Historic Places
- National Historic Landmark listing

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

Many states have their own designation programs for historic properties, including cemeteries. These listings are handled by the State Historic Preservation Office, which is called the Maryland Historical Trust here. Maryland, however, does not have a state level of designation. Instead, the Maryland Historical Trust maintains the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) which, according to its website, is a “repository of information on districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of known or potential value to the prehistory and history of the State of Maryland.” The MIHP contains information on nearly 60,000 historic, architectural, archaeological, and cultural sites across the state, including at least 500 cemeteries.

The MIHP is used primarily for research and identification purposes. It does not mean formal designation as a historic site and carries no protections or regulatory oversight. However, if a cemetery is considered for local or National Register listing, the MIHP form provides basic historical information. Inclusion in the MIHP means that the state has already recognized a burial ground for its historic, architectural, or cultural significance. In addition, anyone can request that a property be included in the MIHP, which is especially helpful for documenting the existence of small, hard-to-find, or threatened cemeteries. Inclusion in the MIHP “is a crucial step in their protection and management.”

The MIHP currently contains over 500 burial places including churchyards, military, family, pet, institutional, and commercial cemeteries and is searchable online at https://mht.maryland.gov/research_mihp.shtml. More information is available at https://mht.maryland.gov/research_cemeteries.shtml.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register is our country’s list of properties considered worthy of preservation. The National Park Service maintains the National Register and defines its purpose as providing “formal recognition of a property’s historical, architectural, or archeological significance based on national standards used by every state.” Properties listed in the National Register can be of national, state, or local significance.

For cemeteries, listing provides a number of benefits, including:

- Recognition of significance to a community
- Encourages preservation and investment
- Eligibility for financial assistance from a variety of federal, state, and local sources, including Maryland Historical Trust Capital Grants
- Places no restrictions or design review requirements
- Does not necessitate public access
- Adds protections in federal and state-funded projects that impact the cemetery (i.e. road widening, stormwater projects, or work involving a federal license or permit)

Individually listed cemeteries in Maryland include Greenmount, Mount Auburn, and St. Paul’s Cemeteries in Baltimore; Christ Episcopal Church and Cemetery in Dorchester County; and several National (veterans) Cemeteries. Emmitsburg and West Montgomery Avenue (Rockville) Historic Districts are examples of National Register-listed historic districts that contain burial grounds.

National Register listings are searchable online at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>. More information is available at <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm> and <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB41-Complete.pdf>

National Historic Landmarks

Designation as a National Historic Landmark (NHL) is recognition of historic significance at the highest level possible and is largely honorific. To achieve NHL status, a cemetery must already be listed in the National Register and must be of national, not just state or local, significance. Only a handful of cemeteries or gravesites have been designated as NHLs. In Maryland, there are no individually designated NHL burial places, but several are within NHL historic districts (i.e. Annapolis) or associated with an NHL property (i.e. Darnall’s Chance). For more information, see <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1582/index.htm>



St. Anne’s in Colonial Annapolis NHL historic district

The three levels of historic recognition and designation – local, state and national – each carry specific rights and protections and each may have benefits for preserving a cemetery in your community. If you know of a burial site that would benefit from historic designation, please contact your local historic preservation office, the Maryland Historical Trust, or the Coalition for more information.

The Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites was created in 2016 to assist Maryland cemeteries and the individuals and groups who care for them. As we approach the nonprofit's fifth anniversary, we'd like to update you about the many successful grants that have been issued.

The Board of Directors has reviewed 32 applications and provided grant funding to 28 qualified applicants. Some projects required guidance and suggestions to achieve a desirable outcome.

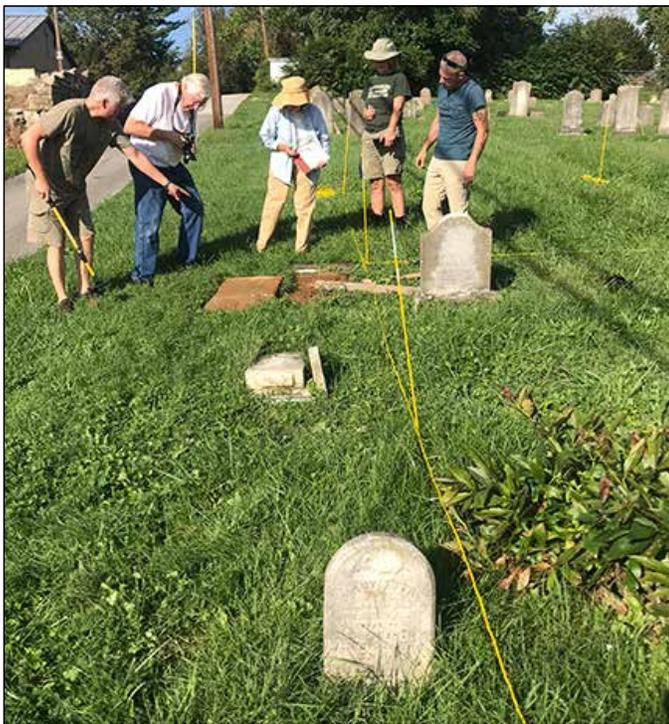
Applications came from Allegheny, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's, Talbot, and Washington counties. We hope to assist cemetery projects in the other Maryland counties and Baltimore City in the future.

Projects varied in scope -- including fencing, signage, mapping, landscaping, gravestone conservation, noting unmarked graves, cleanup efforts, site restoration, nonprofit identification, and publications -- each helping advocates and owners to protect and preserve a cemetery in Maryland.

Photos and detailed descriptions of each project are available on www.cpmbs.org, under Resources/Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites. Some of the projects are pictured here.

For more information or assistance with future projects, contact traderfoundationmd@gmail.com. Annual submission deadlines are January 1 and July 1. And tax-deductible donations are welcome.

John E. Higgins, Jr., president
Trader Foundation for Maryland Burial Sites, Inc.



Left: Mapping of Sharpsburg Cemetery, Washington Co.

Top: Property Fencing at Savage Cemetery, Howard Co.

Right: Rehabilitation of Barnesville Cemetery, Montgomery Co.



Major Actions of the CPMBS Board of Directors Summer and Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 Meetings

For meetings of August 8 and November 14, 2020, and January 30, 2021, the Board met virtually on Zoom. Directors reported the Coalition to be in sound financial condition and in Good Standing with the State of Maryland, and noted that many members were renewing through the website.

During this period, the Board agreed to conduct a survey of members to learn their interests, satisfaction with Coalition activities, and suggestions. It determined this is a good time to review the corporate By-Laws for relevance to operations and needed updates; a committee returned with proposed changes that elicited much discussion.

All agreed to support an amicus brief to the MD Court of Special Appeals on behalf of a beleaguered burial site, and

to cancel the 2020 Cemetery Conference and conduct the annual election virtually. The Board also decided to create a series on various topics of cemetery issues, to be developed by individuals having specific expertise, and to debut the first of these at the May 2021 virtual conference. This project will complement the Coalition Guide as a service to cemetery preservation and to assist those who care for burial sites.

All CPMBS members are urged to complete and submit their membership survey forms before March 15. Please write to CoalitionPMBS@gmail.com if you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors.

• Anne Arundel County

In late 2019, when Tina Simmons and Dennis Green volunteered to re-inventory known cemeteries for Anne Arundel County's Cultural Resources Division, Planning & Zoning, little did they envision a shutdown. Determined to make lemonade while socially distancing, they visited out-of-the-way locations that would be difficult for others to find, to date 153 of them!

This effort coincides with Tina's latest enhancement for public benefit... a beautiful brochure of local cemetery artwork. Aided by grants from the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County and The Trader Foundation, this free Anne Arundel Genealogical Society publication has been widely distributed and can be downloaded at: https://aagensoc.org/upload/files/Cemeteries/AAGS_Cemetery-Art_20200910_Web.pdf

This dynamic duo continues to share their expertise. Dennis and Tina worked with Preservation Maryland to map Alexandria Chapel in Charles County, helped to document graves at St. John AME Zion Church in Odenton, assisted Eagle Scouts and graduate students with Annapolis projects, and continued to spark interest in the Patuxent Research Refuge, among other activities.

• Montgomery County

Descendants of Isaac Shoemaker are continuing efforts to preserve his burial site located in Bethesda, supported by Montgomery Preservation and the Coalition. A decision from a Circuit Court ruling has been appealed by the family to the Maryland Court of Special Appeals. The action challenges the lower Court's finding that the Shoemaker family no longer holds title to the burial ground, that the current owner acquired title through adverse possession, and that the Court improperly excluded certain testimony from trial witnesses regarding the existence of the burial ground.

Thus far, appellants have filed a record extract and main brief totaling nearly 500 pages. Next the appellee will file an opposition brief, to which the Shoemakers will reply. A panel of three Court of Special Appeals judges will hear oral argument, then issue a written decision likely to hold implications for all Maryland cemeteries.