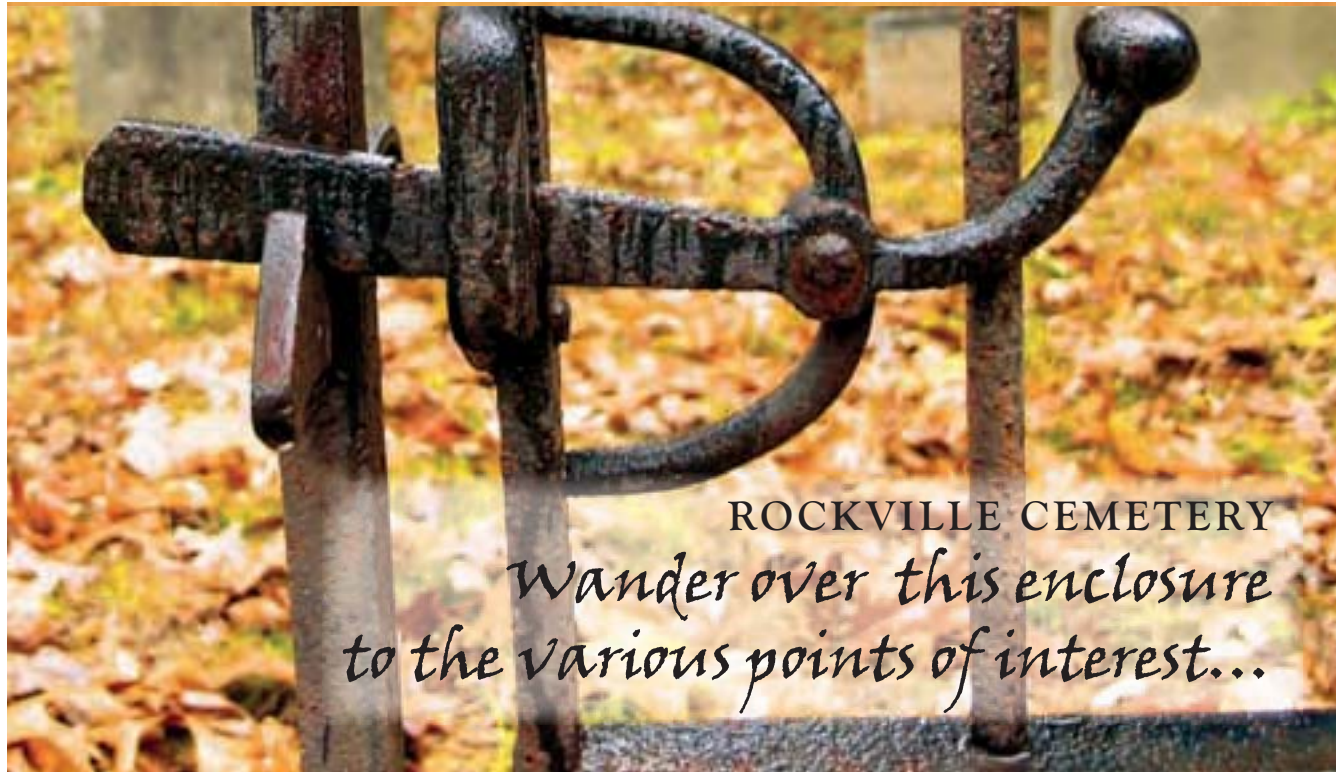


ROCKVILLE CEMETERY

*Spend an Hour or Two Among the Tombs...*



ROCKVILLE CEMETERY

*Wander over this enclosure  
to the various points of interest...*

*Rockville Cemetery,  
c. 1734*

*Spend an hour or  
two among the  
tombs of which the  
storms of more than  
a century have  
spent their force,  
the sleepers beneath  
unconscious of  
their fury.*



## ROCKVILLE CEMETERY

Dating back to the colonial era, Rockville Cemetery covers more than 26 acres and consists of two sections. The upper, older section is separated from the lower, newer section by Little Falls stream. The elevation changes 119 feet. Rockville Cemetery is the city's history book on the landscape and is still in use today.

## COLONIAL BURYING YARD

In 1728, the Anglican chapel in Georgetown became too inconvenient for the upper parish, and the vestry resolved "that as Mr. Thomas Williams was so kind as to offer two acres of land being part of land called Mill Land for the building of a Chappell on that the vestry accepts the same." In 1734, an assessment was made "toward a building a new church." Thomas Nicholls contracted in 1751 to build a fence around the Chapel Yard, or burying yard, "to measure 100 by 96 feet ..." Charles Haymond was hired to "grub the yard and to clear the trees all out of same and to fell the trees for 15 feet distant all around the laid rails." The oldest gravestones in the cemetery were located within this yard. In 1752, long-time vestryman and planter John Harding was buried here.

features an hourglass and skull and crossbones, images associated with finality and "the end." The 'Chappell' foundations are located near Mr. Harding's stone (*see no. 3 on cemetery map*). Unmarked colonial burials may be located here; burials in vaults under a church were common at this time.

Christ Episcopal Church relocated to Washington Street in the town of Rockville in 1822, but the cemetery soon became overcrowded. In 1860, the vestry resolved that no more burials could take place without consent – and only after public notice. An 1873 *Montgomery County Sentinel* editorial "The Old Graveyard" described the cemetery as "not an inviting spot."

## RURAL CEMETERY MOVEMENT

In 1880, the Rockville Cemetery Association, comprised of two members from each prominent Protestant congregation, incorporated, taking responsibility for the cemetery. Judge R. J. Bowie donated five acres of land from his adjacent estate. No longer associated only with the Episcopal Church, the cemetery became a true community cemetery for Rockville.

In 1889, the Cemetery

Association paid for a caretaker's cottage, built by Rockville carpenter and undertaker Reuben Pumphrey. In 1890, Rockville prohibited burials outside of existing cemeteries. To meet the increased demand for space, Catherine Bowie, Judge Bowie's widow, donated two additional acres. The 1897 construction of Van Buren Street required 16 burials from the Baptist Cemetery to be reinterred at this out-of-town cemetery.

The rural cemetery movement influenced the expansion of Rockville Cemetery. Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery inspired cemetery planners to de-

sign landscapes that incorporated topographic complexity, curvilinear roads, and picturesque vistas.

Family plots dominate the cemetery, with large markers, individual stones, and small boundary markers. The cemetery's terraces and curved carriage drives are consistent with the rural cemetery movement. Architectural influences – Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, and Victorian – add to the picturesque quality. With planned paths and carriage drives, cemeteries were places to visit and enjoy.

Societal perception of death changed. Previously regarded with horror and fear, Victorians saw death as a reunion with loved ones and God. Remembering the departed was combined with contemplating nature; the indulgence of grief was a transcendental experience. Markers had images symbolizing a welcome to the afterlife, or pointing upward, towards heaven.

## LAWN PLAN CEMETERY

The lower cemetery is on a flat terrain and is accessed by one paved road running north of the burial sites. The largest lots are adjacent to the drive, medium-sized lots in the center, and individual grave sites close to Baltimore Road. Robert Cridland designed the lower cemetery in 1936. The gridded plots are orderly, stones stand in straight lines, and trees are grouped.

The lack of topographical features emphasizes the unbroken lawn scenery and attempts to balance the formal cemetery with the natural environment.

Cridland believed that "drives and walks must be as direct as possible without being forced or twisted; they should approach by means of straight lines or easy graceful curves." The open lawn style dominated cemetery design in the 20th century. The aesthetics of efficiency and order in the landscape design provide an effective contrast to the variety of shapes and landforms in the upper, older section of Rockville Cemetery.



Portion of the  
Dennis Griffith Map  
of Maryland, 1794.  
Map Room,  
British Museum, London

Colonial church yards were crowded, unsecured and regarded as weed-choked bone yards. Tombstones were typically upright tablets with scrolled pediments. John Harding's stone

features an hourglass and skull and crossbones, images associated with finality and "the end."

The rural cemetery movement influenced the expansion of Rockville Cemetery. Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery inspired cemetery planners to de-

sign landscapes that incorporated topographic complexity, curvilinear roads, and picturesque vistas.

Family plots dominate the cemetery, with large markers, individual stones, and small boundary markers. The cemetery's terraces and curved carriage drives are consistent with the rural cemetery movement. Architectural influences – Gothic Revival, Classical Revival, and Victorian – add to the picturesque quality. With planned paths and carriage drives, cemeteries were places to visit and enjoy.

Societal perception of death changed. Previously regarded with horror and fear, Victorians saw death as a reunion with loved ones and God. Remembering the departed was combined with contemplating nature; the indulgence of grief was a transcendental experience. Markers had images symbolizing a welcome to the afterlife, or pointing upward, towards heaven.

## LAWN PLAN CEMETERY

The lower cemetery is on a flat terrain and is accessed by one paved road running north of the burial sites. The largest lots are adjacent to the drive, medium-sized lots in the center, and individual grave sites close to Baltimore Road. Robert Cridland designed the lower cemetery in 1936. The gridded plots are orderly, stones stand in straight lines, and trees are grouped.

The lack of topographical features emphasizes the unbroken lawn scenery and attempts to balance the formal cemetery with the natural environment.

Cridland believed that "drives and walks must be as direct as possible without being forced or twisted; they should approach by means of straight lines or easy graceful curves." The open lawn style dominated cemetery design in the 20th century. The aesthetics of efficiency and order in the landscape design provide an effective contrast to the variety of shapes and landforms in the upper, older section of Rockville Cemetery.

ROCKVILLE CEMETERY  
*Located there by ancestors  
of a generation passed away.*





# Rockville Cemetery, circa 1734



## PERSONS OF NOTE

Several historic figures buried in the cemetery are associated with local historical museums and sites open to the public. Use the letters on the map to locate the graves of people significant to Rockville and Montgomery County history. Visit the museums and sites described below to learn about their roles in our local heritage.

**1** **Richard Johns Bowie and Catherine Williams Bowie**  
The 19th century owners of Glenview at Rockville Civic Center Park located at 803 Edmonston Drive. 240-314-8660 • www.rockvillemd.gov/glenview

**2** **Dr. Edward Elisha Stonestreet**  
A prominent Civil War era doctor, Dr. Stonestreet's office is now a medical museum located on the grounds of the Beall-Dawson House, located at 103 W. Montgomery Avenue. 301-762-1492 • www.montgomeryhistory.org

**3** **Hylon Beall and Jane Neal Robb Beall**  
The 19th century owners of Beall-Dawson House, located at 103 W. Montgomery Avenue. 301-762-1492 • www.montgomeryhistory.org

**4** **Edwin Smith**  
Smith worked for the Coast and Geodetic Survey and was renowned for his study of the variation of latitude. His observatory, the Gaithersburg Latitude Observatory, is located at 100 DeSellum Ave., Gaithersburg. 301-258-6330 • www.gaithersburgmd.gov

**5** **Gude Family**  
A Gude Sons Company nursery was a prominent Rockville business during the 20th century. Son Gilbert Gude served in the United States Congress and was responsible for the designation of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. Located at Great Falls Tavern C&O Canal NHP, 11710 MacArthur Blvd, Potomac. 301-767-3714 • www.nps.gov/choh

## ROCKVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

The association incorporated in 2001 to recapture the spirit, beauty, usability, and enjoyment of historic Rockville Cemetery. Accomplishments of the association in its first decade include considerable clean-up and tree work, rebuilding and repairing interior roads, renovation of the caretaker's cottage, and repairing hundreds of deteriorated and broken gravestones. The association and cemetery have benefited from the kindness of Rockville Rotary, Our House, Marriott International, Inc., the City of Rockville, and numerous volunteers. The association connects with the community through newsletters, annual meetings, and invitations to occasional tours, events, and work sessions.

For information, including how to volunteer and the purchase of burial sites contact the association at 301-309-0919.



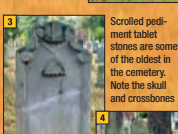
Mosko Memorials and Rockville Cemetery Assoc. volunteers resetting damaged and vandalized stones.

## SYMBOLS AND DESIGNS

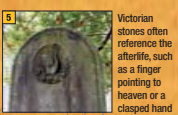
Different symbols on headstones and different shapes and arrangements of stones reflect how death was regarded during different time periods. Use the numbers identifying these features on the map to find the markers or sites described.



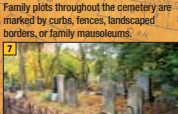
**1** Celtic and Russian Orthodox crosses reflect the cemetery's ethnic diversity.



**2** Many grave markers are emblematic of a particular custom or style, while others are unique expressions of the individual or family buried there.



**3** Scrolled pediment tablet stones are some of the oldest in the cemetery. Note the skull and crossbones and hourglasses on this 1752 stone, symbolizing the finality of death.



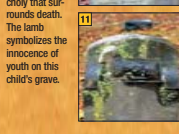
**4** Victorian stones often reference the afterlife, such as a finger pointing to heaven or a clasped hand suggesting a welcoming gesture.



**5** Family plots throughout the cemetery are marked by curbs, fences, landscaped borders, or family mausoleums.



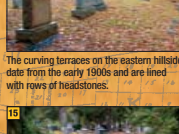
**9** Lily of the Valley symbolizes a return to happiness, purity and humility, while the Weeping Willow motif reflects melancholy that surrounds death.



**10** The lamb symbolizes the innocence of youth on this child's grave.



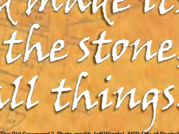
**11** Another popular Victorian motif, draped urns are based on ancient funerary urns with the drapery representing the last partition between life and death.



**12** The above-ground tomb often has sculptural features or elaborate text. This inscription tells the story of death at sea.



**13** The curving terraces on the eastern hillside date from the early 1900s and are lined with rows of headstones.



**14** The upper cemetery appears to have a random arrangement of stones while the 1936 lower cemetery features straight lines that reflect a business-like approach to cemetery management and maintenance.



*They shall be called to sleep with their fathers.*

Major and Council of Rockville, Department of Community Planning and Development Services, Historic Preservation Program

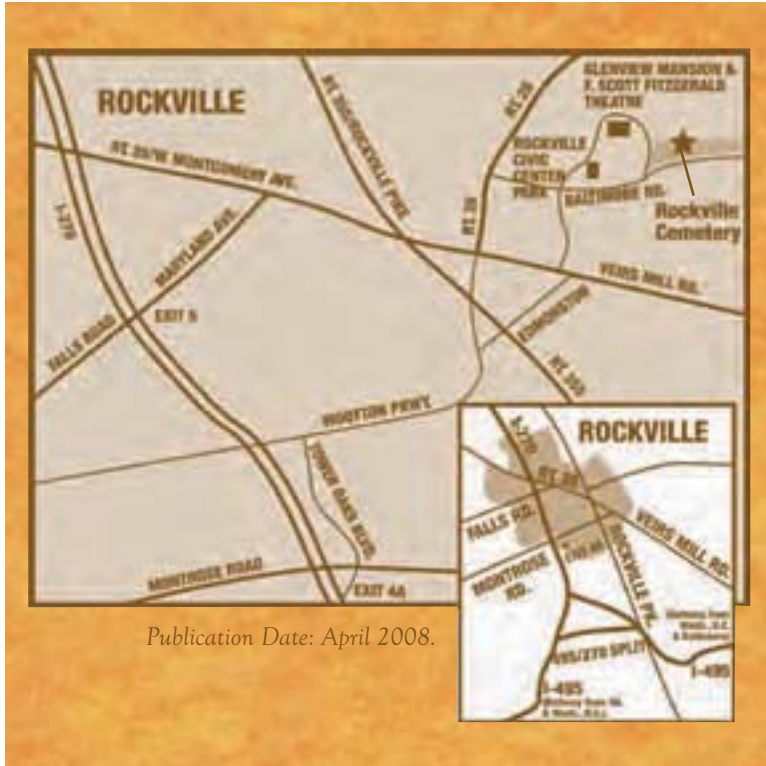
This publication has been financed in part by:

MARYLAND HERITAGE MONTGOMERY

This publication is made possible in part by funding from the Heritage Trustee, Museum of Montgomery County. The publication was prepared by the Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Montgomery County Department of Community Planning and Development Services. The publication is available for purchase from the Historic Preservation Program, 1000 Montgomery County Executive Center, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. For more information, contact the Historic Preservation Program at 301-281-1000 or visit our website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/hpp.

*Time had made its impress on the stone, as it does upon all things.*

All "184-189" text is from an 1873 edition in the Montgomery County Survey about Rockville Cemetery entitled "The Old Gravestones." Photo credit: Jeff Winick, ACP, City of Rockville.



*Publication Date: April 2008.*



City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850