CAPSULE SUMMARY
FOR
TOBYTOWN CEMETERY
REAR OF 12649 TOBYTOWN DRIVE, TRAVILAH

Montgomery County Survey Prefix & Site Number: M-25/14
Approximate Building Date: late 19th century/20th century
Town or Vicinity in which Resource is Located: Travilah
Access: Private

This cemetery is located at the rear of a group of houses on Tobytown Drive. Approximately rectangular in form, the cemetery is surrounded by a chain link fence and contains about two dozen scattered reddish sandstones, which may be headstones or footstones. The Tobytown Cemetery is the only historical resource remaining connected with the early black kinship community of Tobytown. All other structures associated with Tobytown were demolished in the early 1970s and replaced with a townhouse community - in which descendants of many of Tobytown’s original families still live. The cemetery contains the remains of former slaves and their descendants.
1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic
Tobytown Cemetery
and/or common

2. Location

street & number Rear of 12649 Tobytown Drive not for publication

city, town Tobytown vicinity of congressional district 8

state MD county Montgomery

3. Classification

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4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Housing Opportunities Commission of Montgomery Cty., MD

street & number 8580 Second Avenue telephone no.: (703)495-2340

city, town Silver Spring state and zip code MD 20910

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse liber 03007

street & number 51 Monroe Street folio 0028

city, town Rockville state MD

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title Montgomery County Locational Atlas of Historic Sites

date 1976 federal state county local

pository for survey records M-NCPPC

city, town Silver Spring state MD
Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Tobytown Cemetery is located at the rear (north) of a group of houses on Tobytown Drive, with the eastern end of the cemetery located behind 12649 Tobytown Drive. River Road is adjacent and parallel to the north boundary of the cemetery.

Approximately rectangular in form, and running east-west, the cemetery is surrounded by a chain link fence, with entrance through a gate at the southwest corner. At the time of the site visit (12/93), the cemetery was clear of underbrush and what appeared to be grave-stones were clearly visible.

There are about two dozen scattered red sandstones which may be headstones or footstones. The stones are generally small, irregular in shape, and without inscription. The only stone with recognizable markings is a small stone leaning against the base of a tree, which reads, “Marrishh, b. --- 27, 1888, d. --- 2, 1890.” Another notable stone is large and rectangular, lying flat on the ground, with no visible inscription.

A number of stones are grouped near a tree with a triple trunk located near the fence on the north side of the cemetery. Other smaller trees are scattered throughout the site.
8. Significance

Period                          Areas of Significance—Check and justify below
---                             ___________________________                     ___________________________                     ___________________________                     ___________________________
archeology-prehistoric          community planning                     landscape architecture                     religion
archeology-historic             conservation                           law                                           science
agriculture                     economics                             literature                                     sculpture
architecture                    education                             military                                      social/
art                             engineering                          music                                          humanitarian
commerce                        exploration/settlement                  philosophy                                   theater
communications                 industry                             politics/government                          transportation

Specific dates: c.1875          Builder/Architect: XXX Unknown
check: Applicable Criteria: ✔A _B _C _D
and/or
Applicable Exception: _A _B _C _D _E _F _G
Level of Significance: _national _state _local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

Summary: The Tobytown Cemetery is the only historical resource left connected with this black community which is still active, though small. The cemetery contains the remains of former slaves and their descendants.

The community known as Tobytown was established by William Davis, Ailsie Martin, and Emory Genus. Davis was given four acres of land by John and Susan Rouzee (for consideration of $8.00) in 1875. According to a grandson, Davis was a Tennessee native who was an emancipated slave working on a Seneca vicinity farm at the time of purchase. Martin and Genus bought a five-acre parcel from the Rouzees for $100. The land was part of a tract known as Brackenridge.1

Pennyfield Lock Road, which runs from River Road to the C&O Canal, was known at this time as Warehouse Road, Muddy Branch Warehouse Road or DuFief Warehouse Road. John L. DuFief operated a warehouse along the canal by 1865.

The cemetery is located on the parcel which was owned by Ailsie Martin. By 1878, Tobias Martin had a residence in this vicinity. Emory Genus lived on the opposite side of Pennyfield Lock Road (southeast). Two story house shown in aerial photo.2 William Davis lived west on River Road, near Muddy Branch. Supplies were available at the store located approximately three-quarters of a mile down the road, at the canal lock.3

In 1887, Ailsie Martin dedicated a small parcel of land "for the purpose of erecting a meeting house or place of worship for the colored Baptist congregation worshiping in the neighborhood of Travillah." The original church burned by 1917. A later church, probably on the same lot, was located directly west of the intersec-

(Continued)
This was one of the few black Baptist churches in the upper county. The church and lot were claimed by the Department of Public Works when River Road was widened in 1956. Methodist residents of Tobytown attended Union Wesley Methodist Church, which was located at the corner of Piney Meetinghouse Road and Piney Glen Lane.

Among those believed to be buried in cemetery:
- Charles Davis (d1914), father of Henson Davis (born c1893)
- Grandfather of Henson’s wife
- Henson’s [older?] brother (William Davis Jr?)
- Henson’s son
- Most graves were unmarked.

Tobytown was a small kinship community. Many of the residents still related today. Unlike most other black communities, Tobytown residents, for the most part, did not form ties with other communities. The closest black communities were Berryville, Seneca, and The Pines (near Piney Meetinghouse and Glen Roads). Little physical evidence is left of these other communities.

School classes were held in the first church. The community requested its own school in 1917, after the church burned, but it was never built. After construction of the second church, it undoubtedly was also used for classes. By the early 20th century, most other black communities had their own school building, however inadequate, and many, unlike Tobytown, had a post office.

Through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, residents worked on surrounding farms as laborers, domestics, cooks, and gardeners. In the second quarter of the 20th century, the community began to suffer. The Potomac area underwent a transformation from working farms to exclusive estates. The demand for rural labor dropped off significantly and residents were unable to acquire the skills needed for a changing job market.

Over the next 25 years, the standard of living dropped and living conditions declined. In 1965, the community was impoverished. The majority of the seventy-five residents lived without benefit of electricity, indoor plumbing, or garbage collection. Meals were prepared on wood stoves, drinking and cooking water came from a single well, and sanitary facilities consisted of one outdoor privy.
The original Tobytown houses were smaller than most other post-Civil War era black settlements where two story houses with two floors per level as the norm. Only one two story house stood in Tobytown.11 The other fourteen houses were single story structures of one, tow and three rooms each. In these houses lived 21 families consisting of 38 adults and 33 children living in 15 houses.

In 1967, the Montgomery County Council designated Tobytown an urban renewal area. Tobytown Development Corporation appointed, consisting of residents, interested citizens, and government staff. Housing polan approved by HUD in 1972.

Today, Tobytown is a community of approximately 125 people living on 16.34 acres of land. Twenty six brick and wood Shed Style townhouses, ranging in size from one bedroom to six bedrooms, were constructed in 1972, replacing the original houses.12
10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property ____________________________

Quadrangle name ________________________________ Quadrangle scale ____________________________

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Clare Lise Cavicchi

organization M-NCPPC

date May, 1994

street & number 8787 Georgia Avenue

telephone (301)495-4570

city or town Silver Spring

state MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
DHCP/DHCD
100 COMMUNITY PLACE
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023
(301) 614-7615

PS-2746
Preservation Planning Data

a. Geographic Organization: Piedmont

b. Chronological/Developmental Period:
   Industrial/Urban Dominance - A.D. 1870-1930

c. Historic Period Themes:
   Agriculture
   Economic (Commercial and Industrial)
   Religion
   Social/Education/Cultural

e. Resource Type:
   Category: Site
   Historic Environment: Rural
   Historic Function: Cemetery
   Use: Residential, Religious

Endnotes

1 Rouzee may have been Davis' former master, since he gave him the land while selling the other parcel to Davis and Genus. Henson Davis recalled that Tobytown land was formerly "part of the Riley Farm." Ann Harris, *History of Potomac*, 77. The only known Riley farm in the remote vicinity was the Isaac Riley Farm, where Josiah "Uncle Tom" Henson was a slave, located south of Rockville, 11420 Old Georgetown Road (#30/6). Deeds EBP 13:245 & 246 (3-29-1875). List of Patrons in Hopkins 1879 Atlas includes R. Rouzell in Darnestown District, 18.


4 Deed JA 6:122 (12-27-1887). Plats: 56:4505; 92:10038. The parcel was 13 square perches or 3539.25 square feet (less than 1/8 acre).

5 Plat Book 56: 4505. Nina Clarke, *History of black public Schools*, 27. By the early 20th century, the church was known as Refuge Church of Lord Jesus Christ. The building was a two bay wide, one story masonry structure with stepped ziggurat style gable which places it in the second quarter of the 20th century. *History of Potomac*, Potomac Almanac (1970), n.p. Photo in 1991 reinterment program shows "shell of Elder Settle's church."

7 "Summary of Tobytown Land Acquisitions and Commitments," 3-14-90, HOC Tobytown file.


10 Tobytown "Historical Overview," HOC file, c. 1977.

11 A discussion of post Emancipation black communities is found in George W. McDaniel, *Black Historical Resources in Upper Western Montgomery County* (1979), 19-31 This was probably the five room dwelling described as housing 14 residents. Montgomery County Office of Community Development, Plan for the Redevelopment of Tobytown. c1967. HOC file.

Unpublished Sources


Deeds, Land Records Office. (Montgomery County Courthouse)

Dwyer, Michael F. Senior Park Historian. Maryland Historical Trust Worksheet: Nomination Form for the National Register of Historic Places. #25-14:Tobytown Cemetery. 1975.


Housing Opportunities Commission. Tobytown file.

---------------. Tobytown Report. "Historical Overview" (c1977), 6-10. (HOC file)


Published Sources


Tobytown Cemetery
M-25/14

Tobytown, near Penny Field, Lock 4 River Rds.

POTOMAC, MD

L. Snyderman

11/93

EAST

NEG: MDO SHPO

10-7

4297-18
TOBYTOWN CEMETERY

4/25/14

TOBYTOWN, NEAR PENNYFIELD LOCK & RIVER RDS.
POTOMAC, MD

L. SNYDER MAN

1/93

EAST

NEG: MD SHPO

297-7

9297-17
TOBYTOWN CEMETERY

M-25/14

TOBYTOWN, NEAR PENNYFIELD LOCK & RIVER RDS

POTOMAC, MD

L. SNYDERMAN 11/93

EAST

NEG. MD SHPO

36F7

9297-16
TOBYTOWN CEMETERY (GEN'L VIEW)

M-2514

TOBYTOWN, NEAR PEKKYFIELD LOCK & RIVER RDs
POTOMAC, MD
L. SYNDERMANN

EAST 11/93

(N. OF TOBYTOWN DR & AT REAR OF 12649 TOBYTOWN DR)

NEG: MD SHPO

4057

9297-22
TObYTOWN CEMETERY
M 25/14
TObYTOWN, NEAR PENNYFIELD LOCK & RIVER RDS.
POTOMAC, MD
L. SnyDerman
EAST 11/93

(N. OF TOBYTOWN DR
& AT NEAR OF 12649
TOBYTOWN DR)

NEG: MD Shpo

5 of 7

9297-19
Tobytown Cemetery

Tobytown, near Pennyfield Lock & River Rds.
Potomac, MD
L. Snyderman
West 11/93

Neg: MD SHPO

Cof 7

9297-20
Tobytown Cemetery (Gen'l View)

Tobytown, near Pennyfield Lock 4 River Rds.
Potomac MD
L. Snyderman 11/93
East

Neg: MD SHPO
70 sf7

9297-24
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM for the NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

1. NAME

COMMON: Tobytown Cemetery

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Tobytown, near Pennyfield Lock & River Rd.

CITY OR TOWN: Potomac/Seneca

STATE: Maryland

COUNTY: Montgomery

3. CLASSIFICATION

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Public Acquisition: [ ] In Process [ ] Being Considered

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

[ ] Agricultural [ ] Government [ ] Park [ ] Transportation
[ ] Commercial [ ] Industrial [ ] Private Residence [ ] Other (Specify)
[ ] Educational [ ] Military [ ] Religious [ ] Comments
[ ] Entertainment [ ] Museum [ ] Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Montgomery County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Rockville

STATE: Maryland

Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:

[ ] Federal [ ] State [ ] County [ ] Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:
This is a small, overgrown plot behind the present house of Henson Davis in this county-sponsored housing project. Reportedly, a few small markers are still visible. (Old photos of the community in *HISTORY OF POTOMAC*.)
**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

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**SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)**

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**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

This was reportedly a slave graveyard over 100 years ago. This is apparently one of the older Negro communities in the County. Maps indicate free blacks had established a settlement here between 1865 and 1878. At that latter date, several families had erected homes here, including members of the Martin and Davis families.

(See articles with photos in **HISTORY OF POTOMAC** and **MONT. JOURNAL** newspaper.)
1) MONTGOMERY JOURNAL, (8/21/75), story re graveyard clean-up.

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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

NAME AND TITLE:
Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian

ORGANIZATION:
M-NCPPC

STREET AND NUMBER:
8787 Georgia Ave.

CITY OR TOWN:
Silver Spring

STATE:
Maryland

Significance of this property is:
National □ State □ Local □

Signature