

PROTECT FAMILY CEMETERIES

The St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission was first created on June 4, 1975.

The Commission is charged with educating the public about the benefits of historic preservation, as well as assisting them to understand how historic properties should be maintained and treated. As part of this effort, the Historic Preservation Commission created a Cemetery sub-committee and tasked it with the responsibility of documenting and recording all known public and private cemeteries in St. Mary's County.

The main goals of the Historic Preservation commission are:

1. To safeguard the heritage of the County by preserving sites, structures, or districts therein that reflect elements of cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological or architectural history;
2. To stabilize and improve property values of such sites, structures or districts;
3. To foster civic beauty;
4. To strengthen the local economy;
5. To promote the preservation and appreciation of these sites, structures and districts for the education and welfare of the residents of the County.



Destroyed marble ledger stone of John Chesley 1703-1767. Golden Beach



Slave Cemetery at the site of the Plains



Restored marble stones of the Dixon family. St. Inigoes



Example of foot marker found at private cemetery

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

At each county library, there is a copy of the cemetery database available at the Reference desk. Cemeteries are listed by community and election district. The public is asked to contribute to this effort by providing information on cemeteries or burial yards.

At the back of the Cemetery Database notebook there is a form for the public to add cemeteries to the database, or correct information for cemeteries that are already listed.

Please return these forms to: St. Mary's County Historic Preservation Commission, c/o Land Use and Growth Management, P. O. Box 653, Leonardtown, MD 20650. Information can also be e-mail to: Grace Mary Brady, Historic Preservation Planner at gracie.brady@stmarysmd.com or Robert Gibbs at zama4l@gmail.com.

If you have an interest in helping with this project please contact the County office at 301-475-4200 x 1549.

www.co.saint-marys.md.us

FAMILY CEMETERIES IN ST. MARY'S COUNTY

From Maryland's colonial beginnings through the twenty-first century, many people were buried on family farms and plantations. During that period the county was overwhelmingly rural, and land transfers were often between family members or, if not, an easement giving family access to graves was written into deeds. Cemeteries remained on farms, mostly intact and untouched, and cared for by family members.

Historic burial yards as well as pre-historic sites are important resources, providing information about those who came before us. As the population of St. Mary's County grows and land is developed, it is imperative that cemeteries and pre-historic sites be documented.

Using journal articles, published inventories, historical records and information provided by members of St. Mary's County Historical Society and by St. Mary's County Genealogical Society a database of two hundred cemeteries has been recorded as of June, 2013.



*Vandalized stone of Thomas Griffin died 1792.
Griffin family cemetery. Dameron*

LAWS GOVERNING CEMETERIES

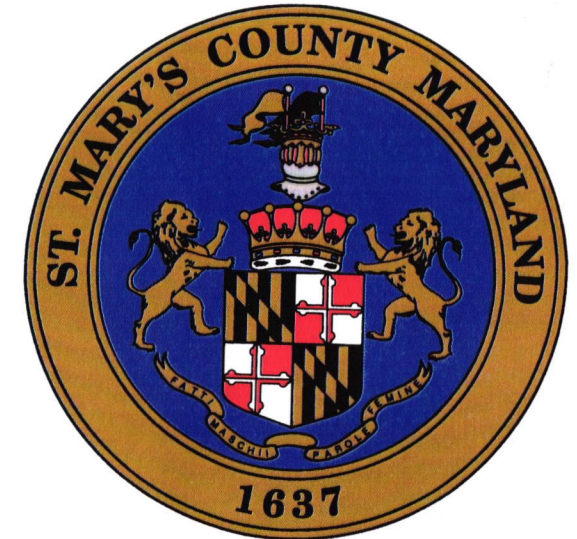
Marked and unmarked cemeteries are protected by Maryland statute. Any person who willfully destroys, mutilates, defaces, injures, or removes any gravestone, monument, tomb, or other structure in or directly associated with a burial site is subject to a fine up to \$10,000 or 5 years in jail, or both.

If you think that you have discovered a burial site, contact the Sheriff's Office. The Sheriff's Office investigates the site to determine the cause of death, to determine whether the human remains were interred erroneously, to determine if there is a purpose for reburial and to allow for a medical and scientific examination or study, as permitted by law.

If you have any questions,
contact the Historic Preservation Planner
at 301-475-4200 x 1549.



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