

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: NOVEMBER 15, 2017

TO: CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA
DISTRICT BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

FROM: HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

SUBJECT: OAKLAND BAPTIST CHURCH CEMETERY

An application to list the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, located at 4195 West Braddock Road, on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places will be reviewed by the Virginia State Review Board and Historic Resources Board on Thursday, December 14, 2017. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the Boards of Architectural Review are entitled to review and comment upon a draft National Register nomination and relay any comments or concerns to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. The BAR's comments will be forwarded to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Boards will review the nomination and consider any comments made within the sixty-day comment period.

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is located immediately adjacent to Fort Ward Park. Although the cemetery is privately owned, Fort Ward Park (itself already listed on the National Register) surrounds the cemetery on three sides and is being visually included in the park's interpretation. It is a major focal point for African American heritage associated with "The Fort" community which developed at the site in the post-Civil War period, and a number of interpretive markers recently installed in the park reference the historic cemetery. The Office of Historic Alexandria supports this nomination.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the BAR support the designation of this resource and find the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery eligible for listing on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Attachment: *Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery National Register Nomination (DRAFT)*. Iburia Hall-Haynes, Ph.D., and Edwin Haynes, J.D., 2017.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources

Molly Joseph Ward
Secretary of Natural Resources

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Julie V. Langan
Director

Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391
www.dhr.virginia.gov

October 16, 2017

Mayor Allison Silberberg
City of Alexandria
301 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Re: Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, City of Alexandria

Dear Mayor Silberberg:

The Department of Historic Resources, Virginia's historic preservation office, has received completed nominations for the above referenced resources. The DHR is planning to present the proposed nominations to the Virginia State Review Board and the Virginia Board of Historic Resources for recommendation to the National Register of Historic Places and for inclusion in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Because these resources are within your Certified Local Government, the Architectural Review Board (ARB) is entitled to a sixty-day comment period during which the ARB may review the draft nominations and relay any comments or concerns to the DHR. For your review and comment, **enclosed** is a copy of the draft nominations as it is to be presented to the Boards on **Thursday, December 14, 2017**. A copy of the nominations has also been sent to your local CLG coordinator. Your comments will be forwarded to the SHPO Director and the Boards along with the nominations for consideration. Should you have any questions regarding the nominations or the register process, please call me directly at 804-482-6445.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hare".

James Hare
Director, Survey and Register Division

cc: Gloria A. Sitton; Catherine Miliaris

Enclosure

Western Region Office
962 Kime Lane
Salem, VA 24153
Tel: (540) 387-5443
Fax: (540) 387-5446

Northern Region Office
5357 Main Street
PO Box 519
Stephens City, VA 22655
Tel: (540) 868-7029
Fax: (540) 868-7033

Eastern Region Office
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 367-2323
Fax: (804) 367-2391

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources (DHR), 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221
(804) 482-6446; www.dhr.virginia.gov

Rights of Private Property Owners to Comment and/or Object to a Nomination for Listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR) is Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). DHR administers the Virginia Landmarks Register on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia and, as the SHPO, administers Virginia's participation in the National Register of Historic Places, which is managed by the National Park Service. DHR is your primary point of contact for all matters related to the Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Supporting and/or Commenting on a Nomination

A private property owner who supports a nomination for listing in either or both the VLR and the NRHP is invited to send a letter of support but is not required to do so in order for the nomination to proceed. Private property owners also are welcome to comment on a nomination even if they do not seek to go on record with either a vote of support for or an objection to a nomination. Copies of letters of support and/or comment are provided to the State Review Board (SRB) and the Board of Historic Resources (BHR) for review, along with the nomination to which they refer, and are included with the nomination if the SRB has recommended it to proceed to the NRHP.

Objecting to a Nomination

A private property owner has the right to object to listing in either the VLR or the NRHP, or object to listing in both registers. For a private property that is being individually nominated, each owner or partial owner of the private property may object to listing regardless of the portion of the property that party owns. For a historic district that is being nominated, each owner of private property in the proposed historic district is counted as one individual regardless of how many properties that party owns, and regardless of whether the properties contribute to the significance of the district.

The private property owner's objection to listing must be provided to DHR in writing. Any owner or partial owner of private property who chooses to object to listing shall submit to DHR a written statement of objection that has been attested and notarized by a notary public and that references the subject property by address and/or parcel number and certifying that the party is the sole or partial owner of the private property, as appropriate. Only upon such submission shall such objecting owner be counted by DHR in determining whether a majority of private property owners has objected to a nomination. An objection to both the VLR and NRHP designations can be submitted in the same letter. However, in order for an objection to listing in the VLR to be counted, it must be submitted to DHR a minimum of 7 business days prior to the scheduled Board meeting listed in the notification letter. An objection to NRHP listing will stand even if the letter arrives too late for consideration of the VLR listing.

For an individually nominated private property, if a **majority** of the private property's owners object according to the process described herein, the nomination will not proceed. For a historic district nomination, if a **majority** of the private property owners within the historic district boundary object according to the process described herein, the nomination will not proceed. In both types of cases, as the SHPO, DHR shall submit the nomination to the National Park Service's Keeper for a determination of eligibility of the property for listing in the NRHP. If the property is then determined eligible for listing, although not formally listed, Federal agencies will be required to allow for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to have an opportunity to comment before the agency may fund, license, or assist a project which will affect the property.

Letters of objection must be addressed to the State Historic Preservation Officer at the Department of Historic Resources, 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221.

Letters of objection received a minimum of 7 business days prior to the Board meeting will be copied to the members of the SRB and BHR for review, along with the nomination to which they refer. If, at the Board meeting, the nomination is approved to proceed to the NRHP, all letters of objection will be forwarded to the National Park Service to consider with their review of the nomination, along with any letters of support or comment that DHR has received. Letters of objection to listing in the National Register of Historic Places may be submitted to DHR even after the Board meeting at which the nomination is approved. DHR will forward any letters of objection to the National Park Service. The National Park Service continues to accept letters of objection up to the date of listing in the NRHP. The National Park Service typically concludes review and approval of a nomination within approximately 55 days of receipt of the nomination from DHR.

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Historic Resources (DHR), 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221

Key Points about the National and State Register Process for Property Owners

- Listing in the national and state registers is honorary. It recognizes a historic property's importance to its community, the State, and/or the Nation as well as encouraging good stewardship of the historic property.
- National and state register listings do not place restrictions on private property owners. Owners have no obligation to open their properties to the public, to restore them, or even to maintain them, if they choose not to do so.
- Under Federal and State laws, private property owners can do anything they wish with their Register-listed property, provided that no Federal or State license, permit, or funding is involved.
- If a listed property is destroyed or its integrity is greatly altered, it is removed from the registers.
- To ensure public participation in the nomination process, property owners and local officials are notified of proposed nominations to the National Register and provided the opportunity to comment. In addition, once a nomination is submitted to the National Park Service another public comment period is published in the *Federal Register*. Further details about the public participation process are available at http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/GuidanceMaterials/LegalNotificationForm_2016.pdf
- Federal agencies whose projects affect a listed property must give DHR (Virginia's State Historic Preservation Office) an opportunity to comment on the project and its effects on the property. Further details are provided below.
- Federal and State Investment Tax Credits for rehabilitation and other provisions are available, should a property owner choose to use them. Further details are provided below.
- Owners may also qualify for Federal grants for historic preservation when funding is available. Refer to the National Park Service web site for Federal grant information. Currently, Virginia has no grants available for privately owned properties.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

Established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), as amended, the national historic preservation program is a partnership between the Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments; private organizations; and the public. The Act and its provisions establish the framework within which citizens plan, identify, evaluate, register, and protect significant historic and archeological properties throughout the country. Central to this framework is the NRHP—the Nation's official list of historic properties worthy of preservation, administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior. Properties listed in the NRHP include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

Historic places are nominated to the NRHP by nominating authorities: the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), appointed by the Governor of the State in which the property is located; the Federal Preservation Officer (FPO) for properties under Federal ownership or control; or by the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) if the property is on tribal lands. Anyone can prepare a nomination to the NRHP, at which time the SHPO, FPO or THPO reviews the proposed nomination, and notifies property owners and local officials of the intent to nominate. Nominations submitted through the State must first be approved by a State Review Board (SRB) before being reviewed by the NPS. The members of the SRB, who are appointed by the SHPO, use the same criteria as the National Register to evaluate properties and then recommend them to the NPS for listing in the NRHP.

The NRHP continues to reflect the desire of Americans, as expressed in the NHPA, that “the historical and cultural foundation of the nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people.”

Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR)

In 1966, the Virginia General Assembly established the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, now the Department of Historic Resources (DHR). DHR is the State Historic Preservation Office responsible for managing

the VLR, the state's official list of properties important to Virginia's history. The Historic Resources Board (HRB), appointed by the Governor of Virginia, is responsible for listing properties to the VLR. Just as the same evaluation criteria are used for the National and State registers, the same register form is also used for both the VLR and the NRHP. Nearly 2300 historic properties are listed in the VLR. This number does not include the tens of thousands of properties within each listed historic district.

Federal and State Tax Provisions

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 revises the historic preservation tax incentives authorized by Congress in the Tax Reform Act of 1976, the Revenue Act of 1978, the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, and the Tax Reform Act of 1984, and, as of January 1, 1987, provides for a 20% Investment Tax Credit (ITC) with a full adjustment to basis for rehabilitating historic commercial, industrial and rental residential buildings. The former 15% and 20% ITCs for rehabilitations of older commercial buildings are combined into a single 10% ITC for commercial or industrial buildings built before 1936. The Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 provides Federal tax deductions for charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures. Whether these provisions are advantageous to a property owner is dependent upon the particular circumstances of the property and the owner.

Owners of properties listed in the VLR may be eligible for a 25% ITC for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing and non-income producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental or non-rental residential buildings. Owners who rehabilitate an income-producing building listed in both the National and State registers may use both Federal and State ITCs. Tax Credits are only available if a property owner chooses to use them and individuals should consult the appropriate local IRS office for assistance in determining the tax consequences of the above provisions. Refer also to 36 CFR 67 at the Heritage Preservation Services web site or to the Tax Credit Program on the DHR web site.

Results of Federal and State Listing

Historic District sponsoring organizations, local governments, and/or owners of listed properties may purchase an attractive official plaque noting designation. Owners of recognized historic properties are also eligible for the Virginia Preservation Easement Program, as well as technical assistance from the staff of DHR. Professional architects, architectural historians, and archaeologists are available to provide technical guidance in the care and maintenance of buildings and sites.

Planning for Federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects includes consideration of historic properties. Section 106 of the NHPA requires that Federal agencies allow the SHPO an opportunity to comment on all projects affecting historic properties either listed in or determined eligible for listing in the NRHP. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (www.achp.gov) oversees and ensures the consideration of historic properties in the Federal planning process. Buildings listed in the VLR may also be considered as part of a state-funded project, such as highway planning. Register listing also requires consideration in issuing a surface coal mining permit. In accordance with the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (30 U.S.C. 1201-1328; 91 Stat. 445), there must be consideration of historic values in the decision to issue a surface coal mining permit where coal is located. Staff at DHR are available to provide more information about these requirements.

Local governments may have laws to encourage the preservation of their historic places. Such programs are established at the local level and therefore are entirely separate from the Register process managed by DHR. Some local governments have enacted their own identification procedures; some use listing in the National and State registers as an indicator of historic significance. Local historic preservation programs can provide some protection against the possible harmful effects of State-funded, -licensed, or -assisted projects. Some provide limited financial assistance to owners in the form of grants, loans, or tax benefits. They may establish other protections or reviews for preservation purposes. Your local government's planning department can provide more information.

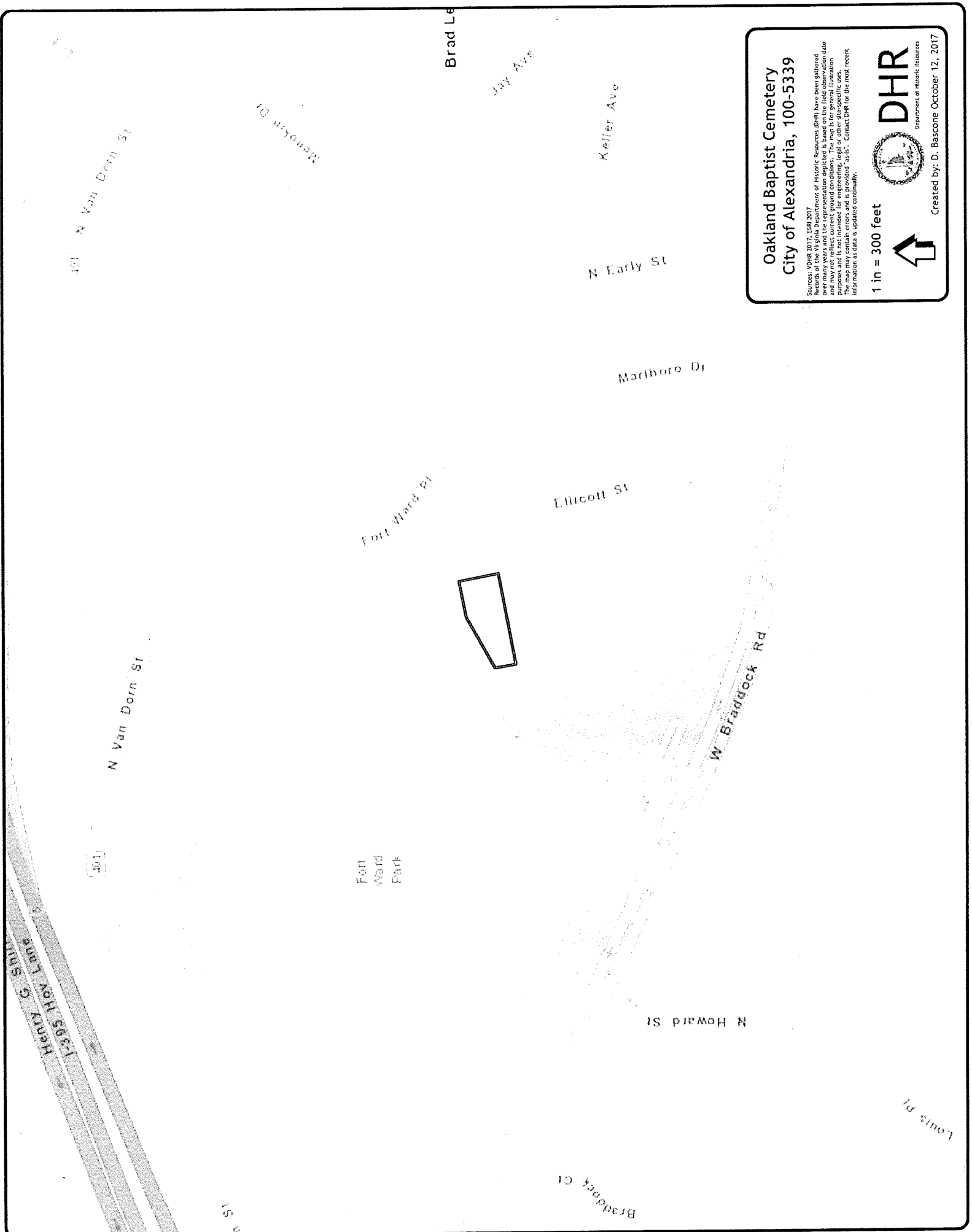
Websites with Additional Information

www.nps.gov/history - National Park Service's main website for Historic Preservation and History programs
www.nps.gov/nr/ - National Register of Historic Places main website
www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/nhpa1966.htm - Provides the full text of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
www.dhr.virginia.gov - Department of Historic Resources (DHR) main website
www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/register.htm - Registers Homepage of DHR's website

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, City of Alexandria, DHR No. 100-5339

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, founded around 1897, is a part of the “The Fort” community, a village formed by African Americans on the site of the dismantled Civil War-era Fort Ward. It does not have a specific style or construction style because it began as an unconstructed place for African Americans to bury their loved ones. The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is located on the eastern edge of Fort Ward Park and is on property donated by the Adams family. It is located in a sloping hill area and is surrounded by a chain-linked fence. The lot size of the cemetery is approximately 20,599 square feet. The acreage is approximately .47 acre. Rows of mature cedar trees line the peripheral of the chain-linked fence that surrounds the cemetery on three sides. There are an estimated 50 commemorative markers within the cemetery. The materials used for the markers vary -- the variations include metal, bronze, granite and stone. The graves, markers, and headstones of prominent families are found within the cemetery and they date back to a period after the Civil War. Several artifacts that exist within the cemetery indicate some of the religious and moral convictions of those buried there. The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is the only surviving, privately owned African American Cemetery in Alexandria, VA.

The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery has local significance under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage: African American and Social History. The cemetery has played a major role in the development of Alexandria’s historic African American community. It is located within a City-designated Maximum Cultural Resource Protection Area (MCRPA), and consists of burial sites that have been identified by the City of Alexandria’s Archaeological Office of Historic Preservation. Archaeological studies have been made to find more historical artifacts or burials. The property meets Criteria Consideration D because its primary significance is derived from association with historic events – such as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement and patterns of development and the settlement of an area by African Americans in “The Fort.” The cemetery represents several important elements of the African American experience in Alexandria, with a period of significance that impacted the City, surrounding areas, and the cemetery. The period of significance is from 1861–1965 – the Civil War to Civil Rights Movement. This cemetery represents a history, not unlike African American history across the nation where African Americans organized daily activities, economic resources, and methods for preserving life and burying their family members with constraints, limited resources, and segregated conditions.



Oakland Baptist Cemetery
City of Alexandria, 100-5339

Sources: VDH 2017, ES&B 2017
Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) have been gathered over many years and the representation depicted is based on the field observation date and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information only and is not intended for use in legal proceedings. The map may contain errors and is provided "as is." Contact DHR for the most recent information as data is updated continually.

 **DHR**
Department of Historic Resources

 **1 in = 300 feet**

Created by: D. Bascone October 12, 2017

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Oakland Baptist Cemetery

Other names/site number: Oakland Church Lot / VDHR No. 100-5339

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 4195 West Braddock Road

City or town: Alexandria State: VA County: Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery
Name of Property

City of Alexandria, VA
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐
- District ☐
- Site ☒
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery
Name of Property

City of Alexandria, VA
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery
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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: Marble, Granite, Limestone:

METAL: Bronze: CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, founded around 1897, is a part of the "The Fort" community, a village formed by African Americans on the site of the dismantled Civil War-era, Fort Ward. It does not have a specific style or construction style because it began as an unconstructed place for African Americans to bury their loved ones. The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is located on the eastern edge of Fort Ward Park and is on property donated by the Adams family. It is located in a sloping hill area and is surrounded by a chain linked fence. The lot size of the cemetery is approximately 20,599 square feet. The acreage is approximately .47 acres.¹ Rows of mature cedar trees align the peripheral of the chain linked fence that surrounds the cemetery on three sides. There are an estimated 50 commemorative markers within the cemetery². The materials used for the markers vary -- the variations include metal, bronze, granite and stone. The graves, markers, and headstones of prominent families are found within the cemetery and they date back to a period after the Civil War. Several artifacts that exist within the cemetery indicate some of the religious and moral convictions of

¹ GIS Parcel Viewer City of Alexandria, VA.

<https://geo.alexandriava.gov/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=parcelviewer>.

² Richard T. Eisenhour. *Oakland Baptist Church Alphabetized Markers*. Completed survey under the auspices of a George Washington University/Alexandria Archaeology course instructed by Pam Cressey called "Field and Laboratory Research in Archaeology" (July 18, 1991).

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those buried there.³ The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is the only surviving, privately owned African American Cemetery in Alexandria, VA.

Location and Setting

The Cemetery is bound by Braddock Road to the South, Van Dorn Street to the North, and a residential community to the East. It served the "The Fort" and "Seminary" communities since it was founded (1897). Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is located in the City of Alexandria Quad (DHR ID 100-

5339) and Fairfax, County Virginia.⁴ A marker is in Alexandria, Virginia. The marker can be reached from West Braddock Road east of North Howard Street on the right when traveling west and is located in Fort Ward Park. The postal address: 4195 W Braddock Rd, Alexandria VA 22304, United States of America. It is located in a sloping hill in the rear of a quiet residential cul-de-sac and on the outer peripheral it is surrounded by large trees.

Narrative Description (Historic and current physical appearance and condition of property).

Although there are an estimated 50 commemorative markers within the area designated for the cemetery, one of the major concerns of the descendants is that there are several unmarked and unidentified graves within the cemetery. This is based on oral testimonies of some of those who lived there and are still living.⁵ Several markers are engraved, while others have hand drawn inscriptions. The exact number of burials without markers is unknown. Contemporary markers were documented as block style, smaller in stature, with white marble vertical slabs. Gray granite, plastic vases with plastic flowers are found on many of the graves. The graves, markers, and headstones of prominent families are found within the cemetery and they date back to a period after the Civil War. James William Terrell, a founder of the Oakland Baptist Church, and wife, Burney McKnight Terrell, are two of the first people known to have been buried in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery.

The cemetery is owned by the Oakland Baptist Church and managed by the Oakland Baptist Church Trustees. Several residents of "The Fort" community were founders of the church, which is located at the intersection of King Street and Braddock Road. The congregation started worshiping as Oak Hill Baptist Mission in **1888** and moved to 3408 King Street in **1893**. Despite the hardships associated with the community's relocation and the development of Fort

³ Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, "Oakland Baptist Church and Cemetery," *African American Historic Sites Database*, accessed July 24, 2017, <http://www.aahistoricsitesva.org/items/show/315>.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Krystyn R. Moon, *Finding The Fort: A History of an African American Neighborhood in Northern Virginia, 1860s*

- 1960s University of Mary Washington September 2014.

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

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Ward into a historical park, the church and cemetery survive and stand as symbols of the self-sufficiency, integrity, and longevity of this distinctive African American community.⁶ (See *Photos 2 and 4* -- Photo of Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery). The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is the only surviving, privately owned African American Cemetery in Alexandria, VA and the memories and contributions of those interred there should be recognized, celebrated and commemorated.

The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is not owned by the City of Alexandria nor is it part of Fort Ward Park, but it does play an important role in understanding the development of the community at "The Fort". In addition to its historical relationship with the residents of this community, actions taken by the City on land within Fort Ward Park have a direct effect on conditions within the cemetery. Given that the cemetery can only be accessed by passing through Fort Ward Park, the relationship between cemetery conditions and park operations becomes particularly evident to anyone visiting the cemetery.⁷

The Fort Ward Park and Museum opened to the public on May 30, 1964. Fort Ward has been cited as one of the best Civil War restoration/preservation projects in the mid-Atlantic region, as well as the flagship of the Defenses of Washington.⁸ Fort Ward Park is an Earthwork Fort that is owned by the City of Alexandria and is in a stabilized condition. It was built in **1861** by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The materials used in the park are earth and timber. The actual fort was demolished in **1865**. Battles were fought in this fort during the American Civil War 1861-1865.⁹ After the Civil War, this site became the home of many African Americans in the area. Fort Ward Park is a part of the National Register of Historic Places.¹⁰ As the only surviving, privately owned African American Cemetery in Alexandria, it has historical integrity. This is based upon the contributions made during two of the most significant periods in the history of the United States of America, the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement and its impact on local, state and national levels. Fort Ward and the area surrounding the cemetery served as the home of slaves, a place of defense for the soldiers fighting in the Civil War, and the resting place for some of the founders and other residents of that community.¹¹

⁶ Virginia Department of Historic Resources PIF Resource Information Sheet.

http://dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Cities/Alexandria/100-5339_Oakland_Baptist_Church_Cemetery_2016_PIF.pdf

⁷ Doug Appler, *Inventory of Historical Resources Fort Ward Park*. City of Alexandria, Virginia. Prepared by for OHA/

Archaeology. September 10, 2009.

⁸ The City of Alexandria. *The Fort: A Post-Civil War African American Community*.

<http://www.alexandriava.gov/fortward>

⁹ Fort Ward (Virginia.) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Ward_\(Virginia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Ward_(Virginia)).

¹⁰ Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan October 2014 Final Draft.

¹¹ African Americans and the Civil War. Fleeing, fighting and working for freedom. Undated.

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Some of the original families continued to own the land until the City of Alexandria established Fort Ward Park and Museum in the early 1960s. Residents of this neighborhood included the Adams, Ashby, Jackson, Javins, Shorts, McKnight and Terrell families, and several others. The experiences of these early Alexandria families, etched into the park's landscape in the form of building foundations, cemeteries, cultivated plants, roads and other features, help to tell part of the story of what life was like for African Americans living in Alexandria from Reconstruction into the Civil Rights era. Some historic resources, such as the headstones outside of the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, are easily identifiable and clearly indicate the presence of the families that lived and died there. Other resources hidden from view, such as burial sites whose markers are gone, and building foundations that are below grade, require archaeological investigation before they can be identified at specific locations and given appropriate investigation, preservation and interpretation. In addition to the resources present in the cemetery, some of those who lived at the Fort until the early 1960s still live in or near Alexandria and are willing to share their experiences. The memories and histories of these residents and their families help to instill the physical remains of the past with meaning for those using the park and viewing the cemetery today.¹²

Site Evolution

The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery evolved out of a need to bury the residents (African Americans) who lived in the "Fort". There were homes in the "Fort" and at that time, some of the inhabitants buried their loved ones in their yards. Some of that area evolved into the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery.

The cemetery sits in an area that has sloping hills and greenery. While at certain times of the year, this is a beautiful view, that landscaping has caused a "run off" problem that has disrupted the graves and markers of many of those buried there. The monuments in the cemetery consist of headstones -- some broken, with no specific burial pattern. There is a Trail Marker that sits at the entrance of the burial site. There have not been any burials since 1986, but many of the remaining families of "The Fort" visit the graves and put flowers on the graves of family members. The area is enclosed by a chain linked fence. Many of the families used the same marker or headstone with several names inscribed. Several of the markers have inscriptions that exemplify family traditions and sentiments of endearment.¹³

In 1879, family ownership of the site began when Burr Shorts, "The Fort" founder, Harriett Stuart McKnight Shorts' husband, began purchasing 10 acres after living at "The Fort" for at least 9 years. The Shorts-McKnight extended family was one of the principal founding families of "The Fort," a post-Civil War African American community. Family members continued living on some of the original "Shorts" land until the 1960s.¹⁴

¹² Appler, Doug. *Inventory of Historical Resources Fort Ward Park*.

¹³ Richard T. Eisenhour. *Oakland Baptist Church Alphabetized Markers*.

¹⁴ African Americans and the Civil War. Fleeing, fighting and working for freedom. Undated.

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In 1939, Samuel Javins conveyed the land which was referred to as "Oakland Church Lot" nine years earlier, to the Oakland Baptist Church, after the death of his wife, Florence McKnight Javins. She inherited the property from her mother, Harriet Stuart McKnight Shorts, one of the founders of the Church.¹⁵ Three McKnight family graves are the earliest known in the Cemetery and predate Church ownership of the land: James W. Terrell, Maria McKnight Blackburn (1925), and Burney Terrell, wife of James and sister of Maria (1930). A land exchange with the City of Alexandria reconfigured the burial lot, extending it to the north and shortening the west side.¹⁶ What began as a place to bury the loved ones of "The Fort" has resulted in The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery being the only surviving, privately owned African American Cemetery in Alexandria, VA.

Current Physical Appearance and Condition of the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

The Cemetery sits within a Maximum Cultural Resource Protection Area (MCRPA), and consists of burial sites that have been identified by the City of Alexandria's Archaeological Office of Historic Preservation. There have been some problems with erosion, flooding and deterioration. Attempts are being made to preserve the cemetery through the efforts of the Oakland Baptist Church. Today, the area surrounding the cemetery has been landscaped to include berms that prevent some of the erosion that existed since the beginning.¹⁷ The Trustees of the Oakland Baptist Church continue to seek resources that will assist with the prevention and further erosion and deterioration of the cemetery. The cemetery has historical integrity, not only because of the contributions made during two of the most significant periods in the history of the United States of America, the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement, but also because of its impact on the community at-large. Fort Ward and the area surrounding the

cemetery served as the home of slaves, a place of defense for the soldiers fighting in the Civil War, and the resting place for some of the founders and other residents of that community.¹⁸

A current assessment of the cemetery reveals that there are many fallen and broken headstones. The integrity of the cemetery is maintained through, its location, setting, materials, workmanship and the legacy associated with the families and descendants of the cemetery. The graphic representations of the area and the surrounding areas remain intact as described as a period of significance. It is a location where families survived segregated schools, hospitals, and public facilities. The area surrounding the cemetery is a location where families worshiped and played together and where families lived, achieved and died. The Oakland Baptist Cemetery is

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Fort Ward Plan. October 2014.

¹⁸ African Americans and the Civil War. Fleeing, fighting and working for freedom. Undated.

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the only remaining African American Cemetery in Alexandria, VA and every effort should be made to preserve the legacy left by those buried in the Cemetery.

In addition to this evidence, which creates some locational focus and corresponds with the visible headstones, is the oral history of Sgt. Lee Thomas Young. Sgt. Young recalls that there were 17 or 18 grave sites between his house and the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, and that they were old and broken by the time he lived at the Fort, beginning in 1947. That the stones were broken over sixty years ago, and that the remaining stones are in such poor shape, makes it seem likely that more stones may have been removed from the yard through the years.¹⁹

The existing woodlands surrounding the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery are in serious decline. Tree count is down by one-quarter or more, based on a survey of approximately 600 trees in the park. No new trees or shrubs have been planted since 2010 due to ground disturbance concerns related to unknown archaeological resources. Now that more information is known about the archaeological resources and a process has been established for ground disturbing activities as part of the management plan, new trees and shrubs need to be planted on an annual basis. Additional effort must be invested in maintaining the remaining trees, shrubs and turf.²⁰

Names, Dates, Ages, & Markers of Those Interred in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

Listed below are the names found on the surviving grave markers in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. The documented ages of those buried in the cemetery range from a three-month-old infant to a 94-year-old female, Mrs. Goldie M. Wanzer. Ms. Wanzer passed away in 1975 which means she lived through the Civil Rights Era, Jim Crow, segregated schools, inadequate health care systems, make shift burial sites and the hardships associated with these historical events. The average age for those living in the Fort was 63 years old. The descendants have maintained the integrity of the site through their contributions to the City of Alexandria and the State of Virginia²¹.

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Marker Number</u>
Baby Thomas	Unknown,	Unknown	3 months	(29)
Bennett,	Evette D.,	1984 -1984 (3 months),		(24)
Blackburn,	Maria,	1841 - Oct. 10, 1925,	84	(27)
Campbell,	Annabelle,	Nov. 28, 1927 - July 29, 1986,	59	(43)
Chambers,	Ethel,	May 30, 1889 - March 9, 1977,	88	(45)
Crone,	John	Died Feb. 28, 1969,	78	(25A)

¹⁹Alexandria Legacies Project: *Interview with Sgt. Lee Thomas Young*, March 7, 2009. Interviewer: Pam Cressey.
Transcriber: Gabby Faundez

²⁰ Fort Ward Management Plan, 2016

²¹ Richard T. Eisenhour. *Oakland Baptist Church Alphabetized Markers*.

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Crone,		Died? 1948 (?),	Unknown	(25)
Dorey,	Clarence	--	Unknown	(1A)
Douglass	John	--	Unknown	(41)
Douglass,	Lula	--	Unknown	(41)
Fitzhugh,	Virginia,	Died Jan. 18, 1918,	65	(52)
Grant,	Anne Bell,	Dec. 7, 1908 - Nov. 16, 1980,	72	(30)
Hall,	Evelyn N.,	June 5, 1930 - Nov. 17, 1981,	51	(42)
Hall,	Mary M.,	Feb. 23, 1892 - Aug. 28, 1961,	69	(42)
Harris,	Gladys,	April 26, 1920 - Oct. 31, 1969,	49	(22)
Hawthway,	Mary,	--	Unknown	(29)
Henry,	Jean C.,	1928 - 1985,	57	(12)
Henry,	Rev. Frank,	April 12, 1904 - July 26, 1963,	59	(35)
Henry,	Clarence,	Died Sept. 16, 1936,	Unknown	(36)
J.	J,	--	Unknown	(18)
Javins,	W. E.,	June 15, 188 - Feb. 27, 1907	Unknown	(51)
Jones,	W. Strother,	Died Jan. 31, 1937,	Unknown	(49)
Lewis,	Russell,	Jan. 1929 - Jul. 1929,	Unknown	(6)
Lewis,	Minnie,	Nov. 1886 - Aug. 1	Unknown	(6)
Mallory,	Sarah,	Dec. 29, 1901 - Oct. 4, 1969,	68	(34)
Mallory,	William Buck,	Died July 28, 1974,	Unknown	(33)
Moore, Rev.	Samuel Thomas Family,	1868-1956, (1) (Rev. Moore	88	(1)
Morgan,	Lucille T. R.,		Unknown	(17)
Penn,	James Finley,	July 1, 1911-Dec. 24, 1970,	59	(31)
Randall,	Irene Oleander	(?), 1927 - 1980,	53	(11)
Randall,	William J., Sr.,	April 9, 1888 - Aug. 17, 1946	58	(9)
Randall,	Mamie w.,	July 30, 1887 - Feb. 7, 1950,	63	(9)
Randall,	L. J.,	May 1, 1926 - March 13, 1973,	47	(10)
Rollins,	Estelle Roy,	1914-1937,	23	(18)
Roy,	Earnest E.,	Jan. 12, 1911 - Sept. 23, 1973,	62	(19)
Roy,	Elnora,	1890 - 1936,	46	(16)
Rust,	Herman J.,	Jul. 12, 1930 - Dec. 21, 1979,	49	(13)
Rust,	John,	1900-1951,	51	(14)
Rust,	James S.,	1888-1951,	63	(28)
Rust,	Bertha,	1904-1946,	42	(14)
Rust,	Isabelle,	1891-1973,	82	(21)
Rust,	Fredericka,	--	Unknown	(29)
Scales,	Everett, Jr.,	April 17, 1970 - August 2, 1970,	Unknown	(23)
Smith,	A.,	Died 189 (?),	Unknown	(4)
Spence,	Cornelia,	1842-Oct. 13, 1897,	55	(50)

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Terrell,	J. W.,	Died May 25, 1925,	72	(26)
Terrell,	Burney,	Died July 4, 1930,	82	(26)
Thomas	Baby	--	Unknown	(29)
Unknown	Unknown		Unknown	(5)
Unknown	Unknown,		Unknown	(15)
Unknown,	Unknown,		Unknown	(3)
W.	F.		Unknown	(38) ²²
W.	R.		Unknown	(40)
W.	J.		Unknown	(39) ¹
Wanzer,	William,	March 4, 1883 - Sept 1, 1950,	67	(7)
Wanzer,	Roland R., Sr.,	Apr. 18, 1909 - Apr. 9, 1978,	69	(4)
Wanzer,	Charlotte, B.	November 30, 1900 - May 21, 1976,	76	(48)
Wanzer,	Gladys	Feb. 4, 1908 - May 18, 1982	74	(46)
Wanzer,	Clarence, Sr.,	Feb. 1, 1897 - July 17, 1980,	83	(47)
Wanzer,	M. Goldie,	April 1881 - April 1975,	94	(8)
Wanzer,	Rebecca,		Unknown	(29)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☒ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ETHNIC HERITAGE; AFRICAN AMERICAN

Period of Significance

1861 – 1965 – Civil War to Civil Rights Movement

Significant Dates

1861 – Beginning of Civil War

1865 – “The Fort” Community Established/End of Civil War

1891 – Founding of Oakland Baptist Church

1897 – “The Fort” Family Cemetery (Oakland Church Lot)

1939 -- Founding of Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

1965 – Last members of “The Fort” leave after four generations living there.

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, a historic African American Cemetery, is located within the Fort Ward Park and Museum. It has local significance under **Criterion A** in the area of African American Ethnic Heritage and Social History. The cemetery has played a major role in the development of Alexandria's historic African American community. It is located within a Maximum Cultural Resource Protection Area (MCRPA), and consists of burial sites that have been identified by the City of Alexandria's Archaeological Office of Historic Preservation. Archaeological studies have been made to find more historical artifacts or burials. The property meets Criteria **Consideration D** because its primary significance is derived from association with historic events – such as the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement and patterns of development and the settlement of an area by African Americans in “The Fort”. The cemetery represents several important elements of the African American experience in Alexandria, with a period of significance that impacted the City, surrounding areas, and the cemetery. The period of significance is from 1861–1965 – the Civil War to Civil Rights Movement.²³ This cemetery represents a history, not unlike African American History across the nation where African Americans organized daily activities, economic resources, and methods for preserving life and burying their family members with constraints, limited resources, and segregated conditions. It is the only surviving privately owned, African American Cemetery in Alexandria, Virginia and we pray that the contributions made by those who lived and died there are memorialized and preserved.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery continues to bridge the gap between the descendants of “The Fort” Community, the Seminary Community at-large and the memories of those buried there.²⁴ The Civil War and the Civil Rights Eras are two of the most significant periods in American History. The land where the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery originated and the surrounding areas are where many historical acts took place and African Americans were significant contributors to each period.²⁵ The land owned by African Americans provided shelter for union soldiers and a place where they were able to live, grow, and foster education and civic responsibility. Sketches of the Cemetery, photographs and markers are shown in an archaeological study conducted in 1991.²⁶ (See **Photo 5 – Example of grave markers**).

“The Fort” community began, in large part, as a result of the Civil War. Freedom, rights, and opportunities for enslaved African Americans were achieved after this war. Ironically, “The

²³ The “Fort” and “Seminary” Community -- *Civil War to Civil Rights*. City of Alexandria, Virginia.
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignFromCivilWarToCivilRights.pdf>

²⁴ Adrienne Washington, Undated.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Richard Eisenhour T. *Oakland Baptist Church Alphabetized Markers*. Completed survey under the auspices of a George Washington University/Alexandria Archaeology course instructed by Pam Cressey called “Field and Laboratory Research in Archaeology” (July 18, 1991).

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Fort” ended almost a century later as civil rights expanded. The City of Alexandria dedicated the Fort Ward and Museum for the Civil War Centennial in 1964. People were displaced, buildings demolished, and graves were lost as the African American presence faded from view. Yet, “The Fort” endures. The remains of its homes and school/chapel, fragments of household items, and numerous graves survive underground. Descendants of “The Fort” retain memories, images and traditions. New generations of those who founded “The Fort” and larger “Seminary” community still live nearby.²⁷

Clara Shorts Adams and Robert Adams conveyed a quarter-acre to the Falls Church School District of Fairfax County in 1898 for the purpose of educating African American children. The one-room "Colored School Building at Seminary" was the first public schoolhouse for African Americans living in "The Fort" and "Seminary" community. This school closed in 1925, but School House Lane can still be discerned in the park's landscape. The new Seminary School for African Americans opened in 1927 on King Street where T.C. Williams High School stands today. By conveying this land to the county for African American education, Robert and Clara Adams assisted in bringing a public school to their community. Married in 1886, they grew up in the post-Civil War era as neighbors on land purchased by Clara's father.²⁸

As one of the founders of the Oakland Baptist Church, Clara Adams continued as a pillar of the community beyond Robert's (her husband) death in 1930. She was buried in 1952 next to her husband just east of the school she helped establish. Her headstone stands today on land once owned by her parents, Burr and Harriett Stuart McKnight Shorts. James William Terrell, a founder of the Oakland Baptist Church, and wife, Burney McKnight Terrell, are two of the first people known to have been buried in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. The northern end of the fenced area was bequeathed to Burney by her mother, Harriet McKnight Shorts. The Terrells were early owners of property in "The Fort." Burney and her brother, Searles, appear in the 1870 federal census living at the nearby "Menokin" estate owned by Cassius Lee, a cousin of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, who visited in May 1870. The Terrells later lived on Leesburg Pike (now King Street), and James operated a small grocery store for "coloreds" where T.C. Williams High School stands today.²⁹

According to a survey completed by Richard T. Eisenhour, July 18, 1991, under the auspices of a George Washington University Alexandria Archaeology course instructed by Pam Cressey called “Field and Laboratory Research in Archaeology” (May 1991), there are 62 marked graves and an unknown number of unmarked graves. The first person, as indicated in the George Washington Archaeological Study, to be buried there was J. W. Terrell, (marker 26) who died May 25, 1925. The last person buried there was Annabelle Campbell (marker 43)

who died July 29, 1986. Members of several prominent families were buried in the Oakland

²⁷ Within Its Walls -- A Foundation for Education and Opportunity.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignWithinItsWalls.pdf>. Undated

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ The Oakland Baptist Church.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignOaklandBaptistChurch.pdf>. Undated

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Baptist Cemetery. Some of them are the Rusts', Wanzers', Randalls'.³⁰

The Shorts-McKnight extended family was one of the principal founding families of "The Fort," a post-Civil War African American community. Family members continued living on some of the original Shorts land until the 1960s. Three McKnight family graves are the earliest known in the cemetery and predate church ownership of the land: James W. Terrell and Maria McKnight Blackburn (1925), and Burney Terrell, wife of James and sister of Maria (1930). A land exchange with the City of Alexandria reconfigured the burial lot, extending it to the north and shortening the Westside.

Mollie Nelson, one of the founders of Oakland Baptist Church, was a midwife and one of the pillars of "The Fort" and "Seminary" community. Born in 1886, she was buried in the cemetery in 1976. Elizabeth Henry Douglas, a descendant of "The Fort", remembers:

"We had to go right up to Aunt Mollie's house, and you crossed the bridge and go right up. She wasn't any relation to us, but she was the one that delivered babies all throughout the county."

Her role as a midwife was one of necessity for African Americans during that time, many of the hospitals were segregated and many of the families were uninsured. The contributions made by Ms. Nelson to the health and happiness of the members of "The Fort" cannot be enumerated or dismissed; however, bringing new life into the "Fort" guaranteed families that their legacy could continue to grow and thrive. As the list of families living in "The Fort" and "Seminary" community with members buried in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is viewed, the Henry family is listed. Ms. Elizabeth Douglas, one of the members of that family, provided oral accounts and contributed significantly to the community by being a loyal worker, Sunday School teacher and role model for both the young and old in Alexandria. She also published a book of poetry in 1998, entitled "Sister Elizabeth Douglas: Her Life and Her Poems".³¹ In addition, she often sang in the choir at the Oakland Baptist Church. The Lewis and Roy families are additional families represented in this cemetery. Minnie Roy Lewis was buried here in 1952; the Earnest and Elnora Roy graves are also here. Minnie's baby, Russell Lewis, shares her gravestone. Her husband, James Lewis, Sr., worked as sexton and groundskeeper at the Episcopal High School for Boys and the Virginia Theological Seminary.³²

The couple lived at the school until buying their own home on Quaker Lane. James was a deacon and active member of Oakland Baptist Church for 55 years. Their eldest child, James Lewis, Jr., was born on the school grounds and was employed there until 1941. He then worked as chauffeur and personal assistant to John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America. Lewis continued to assist all UMWA presidents until retirement in 2002 at age 90. Mr. Lewis was a pillar of the community and many of the members of the Oakland Baptist Church still discuss his faithfulness to the church and the community.³³

³⁰ Richard T. Eisenhour. *Oakland Baptist Church Alphabetized Markers*.

³¹ Elizabeth Douglas, *Sister Elizabeth Douglas: Her Life and Her Poems*, EBH & T Associate, 2008.

³² *Within Its Walls -- A Foundation for Education and Opportunity*.

³³ Ibid

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"The Fort" Community

African Americans established "The Fort" a community that continued after **the Civil War (1861-1865)** for nearly a century into the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s.³⁴ "The Fort" received its name from its location on and around the remnants of Fort Ward, one of the fortifications that were built as part of the Defenses of Washington. The Civil War opened the door for opportunity and civil rights for African American Virginians, about 90 percent of whom were enslaved in 1860. The upheaval from battles and the federal presence in Alexandria and eastern Fairfax County offered the chance and destination for thousands to escape slavery, seek refuge and jobs behind Union lines, and create new lives. At the end of the War in May 1865, African Americans in Alexandria surrounding areas numbered 10,000, nearly half of whom were under 12 years of age.³⁵

In the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, families living at "The Fort" and in the larger "Seminary" community-located around the Virginia Theological Seminary and Episcopal High School on Braddock, Howard, King, and Quaker Streets-were connected, through shared kinship, marriage, church, and work, particularly at the two Episcopal educational institutions. Four generations sustained "The Fort", through these associations, faith, heritage to a strict moral code, and emphasis on education.³⁶

The freed people aided the Union cause by working as hospital attendants, gravediggers, stevedores, teamsters, cooks, laundresses, and in labor gangs to build roads, construct fortifications and trenches, and maintain rail lines. More than 200,000 men enlisted in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), and a quarter of those lost their lives fighting for freedom. Many USCT soldiers escaped slavery before enlistment, such as the fathers of two long-time residents at "The Fort" and the larger "Seminary" community.³⁷

The Oakland Baptist Church

The Oakland Baptist Church is a historic African American Church located in Alexandria, Virginia. It still has an active congregation and it was founded in 1891 by African Americans living in "The Fort", a village formed on the site of the dismantled Civil War-era, Fort Ward. The Church was an outgrowth of the Oak Hill Baptist Mission, started in 1888 at Oak Hill plantation, part of the 22,000-acre tract developed in the 18th century by the Fitzhugh family. Initially, the congregation met in a small school house. In 1893 they relocated to a site purchased by the Falls Church School Board from Robert and Clara Adams, founding members of the

³⁴ The "Fort" and "Seminary" Community -- *Civil War to Civil Rights*. City of Alexandria, Virginia.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignFromCivilWarToCivilRights.pdf>

³⁵ *African Americans and the Civil War*. Fleeing, fighting and working for freedom.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignsAfricanAmericansAndTheCivilWar.pdf>

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Ibid

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church. The relocation closer to “The Fort” community may have been prompted in part by the sale of Oak Hill by the Fitzhugh family in 1889. The existing church building was constructed in 1931 after a fire that also destroyed the church’s records. Founding members of the congregation included Clara Adams, William Carpenter, J.W. Casey, Maggie Hall, Brooks Johnson, William Terrell, Nancy Shepherd, Harriett Shorts, Daniel Simms, Sr. and Smith Wanzer.³⁸

The Oakland Baptist Church stands on King Street as a landmark to the community’s founders and members. (*See Photo 6 of Oakland Baptist Church as it looks today*). The Virginia Theological Seminary and Episcopal High School are witnesses to African American craftsmanship, care, and service of those who once worked there. The City of Alexandria honors “The Fort” as an enduring African American legacy. After the war, freed slaves settled on abandoned land around “The Fort”. Those workers who built and maintained the Virginia Theological Seminary are the people whose graves are now believed to be scattered throughout Fort Ward Park.

“Through sheer strength of will, determination, fortitude, guts, and against all odds, our ancestors fashioned a life here at Fort Ward, an abandoned Union Fort. Then, out of necessity, they developed an entire viable, self-sustaining community that is still very much in existence today. It’s undergone many changes, but we’re still here. In the 1950s and 1960s, the City moved the residents out of Fort Ward to establish the Park and Museum, which disrupted their tranquility.

In 1962, the City displaced our community once again to build T.C. Williams High School,” (Remarks by Francis Terrell, undated).³⁹ Adrienne Washington, Descendant of the Fort stated:

The African American Descendants of “The Fort” and Seminary communities have only one dutiful and determined goal, the restoration and preservation of our sacred heritage. Where others view deeds, cannons, and picnic pavilions, we see people buried on this hallowed ground whose blood runs through our veins and four generations of our families’ veins. Countless unmarked graves of our ancestors are buried under the very soil that joggers, dog walkers and Civil War buffs unknowingly tread today. Where others see “open space,” we see familiar faces, family memories and challenges on land that our ancestors—from slavery to freedom to Jim Crow to urban renewal— families toiled, bought and successively seeded to grow a sustainable community. Through self-sufficiency, small farms, churches, schools and community, values were instilled and

they contributed to the prosperity of this city and nation for 150 years. “The Fort” conveys endurance and excellence.⁴⁰

³⁸ The Oakland Baptist Church.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignOaklandBaptistChurch.pdf>

³⁹ The Fort Heritage Trail. *An Enduring African American Community*. City of Alexandria, Virginia

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/FortHeritageTrailBrochure.pdf>.

³⁹ Within Its Walls – A Foundation for Education and Opportunity, Undated. Remarks by Frances Terrell.

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignWithinItsWalls.pdf>

Remarks by Frances Terrell, Undated.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Remarks by Adrienne Terrell, Undated.

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William Wood escaped slavery and served in the U. S. Colored Troops. His son, Douglass donated land for the public Seminary School in 1926, and his great grand-daughter Crozel, served in the armed services.

A Chronology of Legacy & Landmark Events

1861 – U. S. Civil War begins.

1863 - James M. Peters escaped slavery and joins the United States Colored Troops (USCT). His son, John Peters established homes in the Fort by 1910.

1863 – Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves in areas of rebellion and opens military service to African Americans.

1965 – 13th Amendment to Constitution abolishes slavery.

1867 - African American men who were later documented as living in the community, were Wallace (Wanser) Wanzer and Daniel Simms, register in a referendum to rewrite the state constitution outlawing slavery, which led to Virginia's readmission to the Union.

1868 – 14th Amendment to Constitution broadens citizenship; prohibits state and local governments from depriving people of life, liberty and property; and requires equal protection.

1870 – Burr and Harriet McKnight Shorts are the first family African American documented household.

1884 – First African American at “The Fort”, Burr Shorts, buys 10 acres. Children of wife Harriet McKnight Shorts, including Burney McKnight Terrell with husband James Woods buy nearby land.

1898 – Clara Shorts Adams and Robert Adams convey ¼ acre to Fairfax County for “Colored School Building at Seminary,” School operates until 1925.

1927 – Fairfax County Opens Seminary School for African Americans on King Street due to Douglas Wood's land donation and community contributions to match Rosenwald Fund grant.

1932 – St. Cyprian's merges with Meade Episcopal Church and the Chapel at Fort closes.⁴¹

1959 – Madell Casey Belk (granddaughter of Oakland Baptist Church founder, John Wesley Casey) and Julia Bradby (a descendant of the Adams and Roy families and mentor to community

⁴¹ Ibid

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children) are two plaintiffs in Jones v School Board of City of Alexandria, resulting in school integration.

1963 – Martin Luther King, Jr. delivers his “I Have a Dream” Speech” advocating racial equality at the March on Washington.

1964 – Beatrice Terrell becomes the first African American in Alexandria to work at the polls. Fort Ward Park and Museum open to commemorate the Centennial of the Civil War.

24th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes poll tax. Congress passes Civil Rights Acts that outlaws discrimination, including racial segregation.

Crozet Wood Johnson, granddaughter of Douglas Wood, only woman to serve in the armed services.

Some of the oral accounts of those who lived at “The Fort”

Growing up in my beloved Seminary was like living in one great big house. Everyone was family, and if they were not, you thought they were. There were gardens at every home; some people had chickens, a few pigs, horses, and many dogs and cats. The families provided for themselves with these gardens and livestock, so eating fresh foods was a natural for us. As children, we grew up happy and care free despite of the happening of the times. -- Gerald Wanzer

I remember that we always had a nice neighborhood and the people were always kind and nice and they looked out for one another...We all lived like one family. --Julia Adams Bradby

The Cemetery As Hallowed Ground

The City of Alexandria affirms that significant parts of Fort Ward Park, namely the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery, are hallowed ground. The cemetery has historic and cultural resources, including sacred burial grounds of the families that lived there. The City of Alexandria recognizes that the burial sites identified in the future shall be protected from disturbance and treated with respect and dignity. Because the cemetery is in Fort Ward Park, the Museum Area Management Plan provides a sensitive approach to acknowledging, protecting and interpreting the resources on this property, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places along with guidelines for managing the area's natural resources and compatible passive recreation uses.⁴²

Contributions to Education & Local Community

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery continues to bridge the gap between the descendants of “The Fort” Community, the Seminary Community at-large and the memories of those buried there.⁴³

⁴² Fort Ward Park and Museum Area Management Plan October 2014 -- Final Draft.

⁴³ Adrienne Washington, Undated.

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Born enslaved in 1854, Douglass Wood became a major contributor to education in "The Fort" and "Seminary" community. His father, William Wood, escaped slavery in Fauquier County, Virginia and served in the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War before dying in an Alexandria military hospital. Douglass Wood contributed the land for the Seminary School, often the type of personal initiative needed for the establishment of African American public schools.⁴⁴

Today, Woods Avenue and Woods Place, in the Seminary area off Quaker Lane, commemorate his legacy. Descendants of The Fort and Seminary families still live there. T.C. Williams High School is nearby on the site of the Seminary School.⁴⁵

The Seminary School opened in 1927 due to community efforts and outside support. Douglass Wood donated the land. The African American community raised \$1,000 to receive \$900 from the Rosenwald Fund and over \$4000 in public funding. This school was one of more than 5000 "Rosenwald School" buildings constructed in the first part of the 20th century due to this innovative program to improve chronically underfunded African American education in the South. Highly influenced by Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald encouraged cooperation between blacks and whites by requiring both public funds and cash donations to obtain construction seed money from the Fund. Rosenwald, was a German-Jewish immigrant and chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company. By his death in 1932, Rosenwald schools provided facilities for one third of Southern African American students.⁴⁶

Ms. Elizabeth Douglas, (1919- 2014), one of the members of the "Fort" Community spoke fondly about her education in a one room school house in 1992 during an interview conducted by Dr. Henry Mitchell, Bradford Henderlong and Patricia Knock.

It was a great big room, and those children, about 40 or 50 children, was in that one room. I have a picture in there. You can see the picture. And then, they used to have the lodge meetings upstairs because it was Art Fellows and Daughters of Liberty and they had it upstairs. But that big room downstairs was the school we went in. And then, when they had entertainments there, they would have that big room down there for the dancing and all right down there. Of course, I was a little girl, I never attended them, but they had them.⁴⁷

History shows that this area was segregated and it became pronounced when two young African American boys were unable to swim in the "Whites Only" swimming pool. Because they were not allowed to swim in the pool, they attempted to swim in the Potomac River in a situation that was unsupervised and inadequate and they drowned. This was a catalyst for the opening of the Johnson Memorial Pool for African Americans. Each era has challenges -- many are recognized

⁴⁴ Within Its Walls – A Foundation for Education and Opportunity, Undated.
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignWithinItsWalls.pdf>

⁴⁵ Within Its Walls – A Foundation for Education and Opportunity.
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignWithinItsWalls.pdf>

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Dr. Henry Mitchell, Bradford Henderlong & Patricia Knock *Legacies: Interview with Elizabeth Douglas*. Alexandria, VA. March 28, 1992.

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through the progress that has been made in the City of Alexandria, the school division, churches and business establishments.

Contributions & Attributes Identified Through Grave Markings

As the cemetery is surveyed, it is easy to see the significant contributions and sacrifices made by those buried there through grave markings, artifacts and sentiments left behind. The cemetery is filled with various colors of plastic flowers, vertical slabs, and square slabs made of marble and granite. Floral arrangements and drawn crosses are found on many of the markers and this speaks to the religious convictions of many of them. Contemporary markers were documented as block style, smaller white marble, vertical slab. Round topped, vertical slabs were also placed intermittently throughout the cemetery.⁴⁸

At least two of the grave markers indicated men who fought in the Korean War and World War II. They were:

- Herman A. Rust who was in the United States Army and he fought in the Korean War. He was born in 1930 and he died in 1979 and James Finley Penn who fought in World War II (31). He died in 1970.

Some of the other markers were engraved:

- "Cornelia spencer mother born in Jefferson Texas 1842 -- Died October 13, 1897. Her headstone was placed against a tree.
- Joan and Bethea Rust shared the same head stone, and with

The names Rebecca R. Wanzer, Mary Hawthway, Baby Thomas and Baby Ray were written on one headstone which indicated that there was the custom of some families to bury their loved using the same marker.

Although the last person was interred in the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery in 1986, some of the descendants still gather to commemorate those who are buried there and they voice their concerns about the work that needs to be done there to restore the broken headstones, eliminate the "run off" that causes erosion and the maintain of the cemetery in general.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Richard Eisenhour, 2009.

⁴⁹ Ibid

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Adrienne Terrell Washington &
Frances Colbert Terrell

Adrienne Terrell Washington & Frances Colbert Terrell represent generations of the Terrell family and others who once resided in the Fort Ward neighborhood and those buried in the Oakland Baptist Cemetery. They have honored their displaced, but once tightknit community with a walking tour, signage and continuing studies about where post-civil War freed African Americans lived and died.⁵⁰

Lingering Concerns: Finding the Graves

At a hearing before the City Council of Alexandria, VA on January 24, 2015, Frances Terrell, "Fort" Descendant, addressed the Council regarding the allocation of more funds to allow for the acquisition of equipment needed to get the best results in "uncovering" and "finding graves."

She made the following remarks:

Mr. Mayor and Council, thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Frances Colbert Terrell. I am President of the Seminary Civic Association and speak for my community. Their plea to you is "Find the graves". If it involves more funding -- I am reminded of the response made by Mayor Euille in a Mayoral and City Council Candidates' Forum on October 2, 2012 when asked a question by a moderator from the Alexandria League of Women Voters. The question posed to the candidates was: In the 1950 'sand 60's the city acquired land to create Fort Ward Park. Public information shows that there are many unidentified graves in the park.⁵¹

Mrs. Terrell asked the question, "What do you think should be done to make sure that all of Fort Ward's lost graves are found and treated with respect?"

She further stated:

I am a descendant of Fort Ward; my ancestors are buried there. My great grandparents, uncle and two young cousins for whom the Johnsons Memorial Swimming Pool was named in honor of and many other relatives as well. I know where they are. Except for the desecration resulting from the water running into the Oakland Cemetery, they are resting where I can go and pay homage and respect to them.⁵²

At the same hearing, Adrienne Washington, "Fort" Descendant, stated:

As descendants, we feel it is our ultimate responsibility to make sure that our ancestors, who worked the land, lived on the land and are buried in marked and unmarked graves throughout the 33 acres of soil at Ft. Ward, are not forgotten. Many of those graves faced further desecration had we, the descendants and members of the Oakland Baptist Church, not joined forces with the residents of the adjacent Marlboro Estates and the Seminary Hill communities to work with city agencies and elected officials to get the resources to start rectifying pressing problems, including rescuing graves as well as abating the

⁵⁰ Living Legends of Alexandria – 2015 Nominees. *Alexandria News*. <http://www.alexandrianews.org/2014/living-legends-of-alexandria-2015-nominees/>

⁵¹ Testimony by Frances Terrell before the City Council of Alexandria, VA on January 24, 2015.

⁵² Ibid

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storm water runoff and soil erosion that continues to threaten those graves, known and unknown, in the Fort. While we are still ironing out inherent differences, our project is an example of how solutions can come out of city efforts to listen and work WITH citizens, not supposedly FOR, or AROUND them. "The Fort" which includes the old cemeteries, the site of an old school and church, **is sacred ground to us.**⁵³

The concerns raised on that evening by Frances Terrell and Adrienne Washington still linger. The problem of "finding graves" and additional burial places still exist. *The Oakland Baptist Church, Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society*, the *Seminary Civic Association* and other interested community organizations and individuals will continue to seek solutions for these issues and concerns.

Acknowledgments

Due to the tireless efforts of Deaconess Lena Rainey; Deaconess Frances Colbert (Johnson) Terrell, great-great-granddaughter of Seminary community founders, Wallace and Virginia Roy Wanzer; Michael Williams, Chair of the Oakland Baptist Church Trustees; Adrienne Terrell Washington, great-great-granddaughter of "The Fort" founder, Harriett Stuart McKnight Shorts, *Fort Ward and Seminary African American Descendants Society*, *Seminary Civic Association*, and others, significant progress has been made to restore and maintain the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. Edwin Haynes, J.D. and Iburia Hall-Haynes, Ph.D., members of the Oakland Baptist Church, served as consultants for the *Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery Project* and preparers of this document.

The Oakland Baptist Church represents the strength and dedication of early Church founders and descendant families of the Oakland Baptist Cemetery, many of whom still live in the area. The mission statement of the Church is "To Know God, Follow Christ, and Share by the Spirit's Power."⁵⁴

⁵³ Testimony by Adrienne Washington before the City Council of Alexandria, VA on January 24, 2015.

⁵⁴ Ibid

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The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery. Originally a small family cemetery, the land was conveyed to the Oakland Baptist Church in 1939. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignOaklandBaptistChurchCemetery.pdf>

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Within Its Walls – A Foundation for Education and Opportunity, Undated. <https://www.alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/historic/info/archaeology/TrailSignWithinItsWalls.pdf>

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

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Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, VA; City of Alexandria, VA

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): DHR No. 100-5339

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately .47 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38° 49.794' N | Longitude: 77° 6.052' W |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery is located on the eastern edge of Fort Ward Park and was founded around 1897 on property donated by the Adams family. The cemetery is located within the boundaries of Fort Ward Park. It is bound by Braddock Road to the South, Van Dorn Street to the North, and a residential community to the East. It has served "Fort" and "Seminary" communities since it was founded.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These boundaries were selected because they show a clear demarcation of the property on all sides.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Iburia Hall-Haynes, Ph.D. and Edwin Haynes, J.D.
organization: E B H & T Associates Consulting
street & number: 5908 Ewing Place
city or town: Alexandria state: VA zip code: 22310
e-mail: iburiayahaynes@aol.com and edhaynes@aol.com
telephone: 571-371-2637 or 703-203-3462
date: August 2, 2017

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Alexandria

County: Independent City

State: Virginia

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

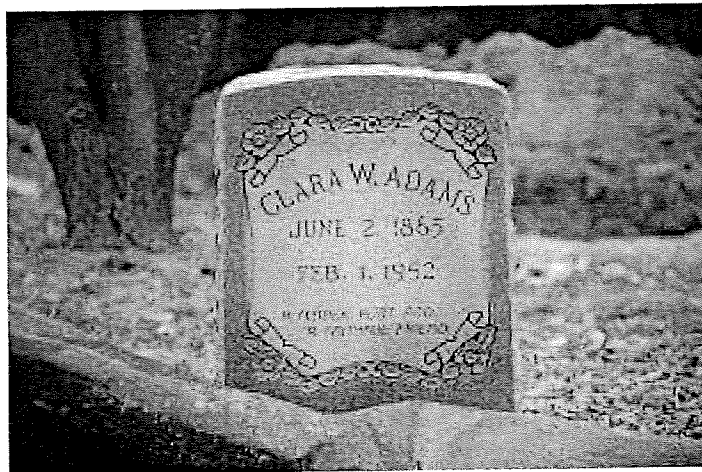


Photo 1 -- Photo of Head Stone for Clara Adams

This is a photograph of Head Stone for Clara Adams. Clara Adams was a founder of the Oakland Baptist Church. She continued as a pillar of the community beyond her husband Robert's death in 1930. She was buried in 1952 next to her husband just east of the school she helped establish. Her headstone stands today on land once owned by her parents, Burr and Harriett Stuart McKnight Shorts. Camera is pointing in north direction.

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Photo 2 -- Photo of Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery at Fort Ward Park March 18, 2011 in Alexandria, Va. *Washington Post*. March 19, 2011.

This is a photograph of the Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery showing the gated entrance from the southern side. Some of the grave markers are shown. Camera is pointing towards the north.

2 of 10.

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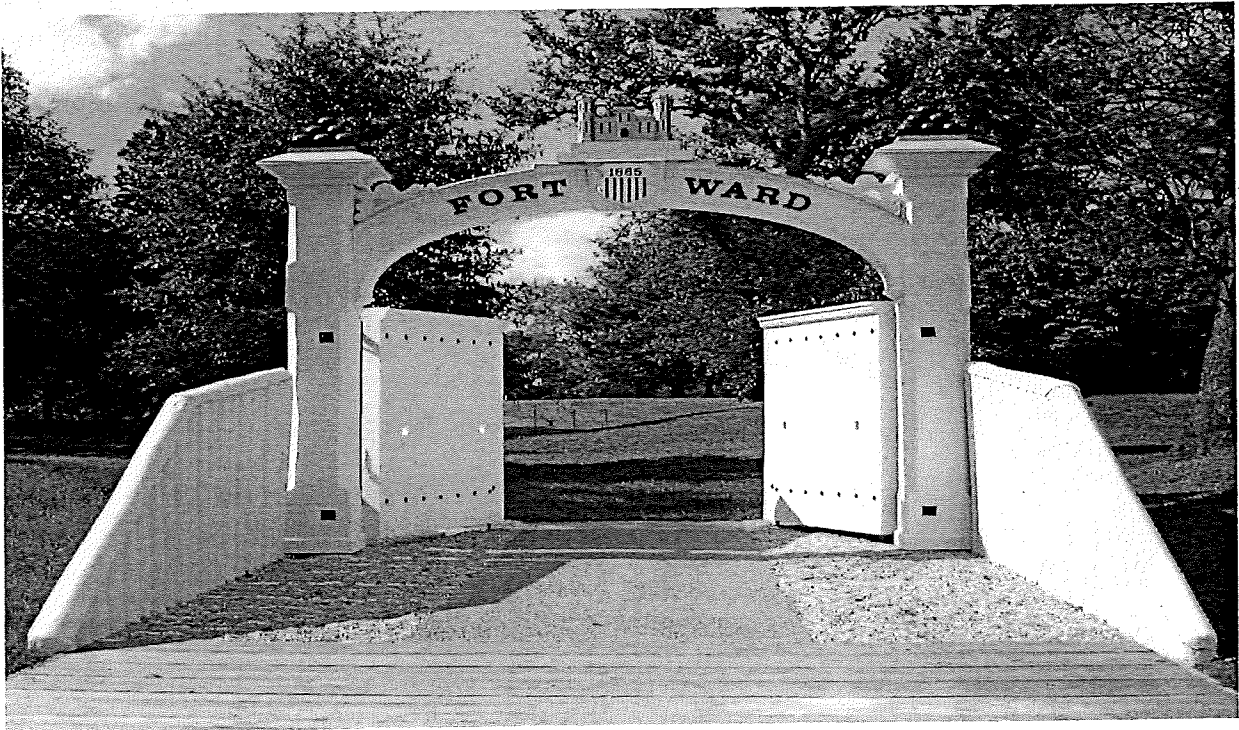


Photo 3 -- Photo of Fort Ward Park entrance.

Name of Property: Fort Ward
City or Vicinity: Alexandria
County: City of Alexandria State: VA
Photographer: <http://tangledtrees.blogspot.com/2010/12/>
Date Photographed: Tuesday, December 28, 2010

This is a picture of the entrance to Fort Ward Park. The Oakland Baptist Cemetery is shown to the right of this entrance. Camera is pointing towards the northeast.

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Photo 4 -- Photo of Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

Name of Property: Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Alexandria
County: City of Alexandria **State:** VA
Photographer: City of Alexandria
Date Photographed: October 2014

This is a wider view of the Oakland Baptist Cemetery. Camera is pointing northeast.

4 of 10.

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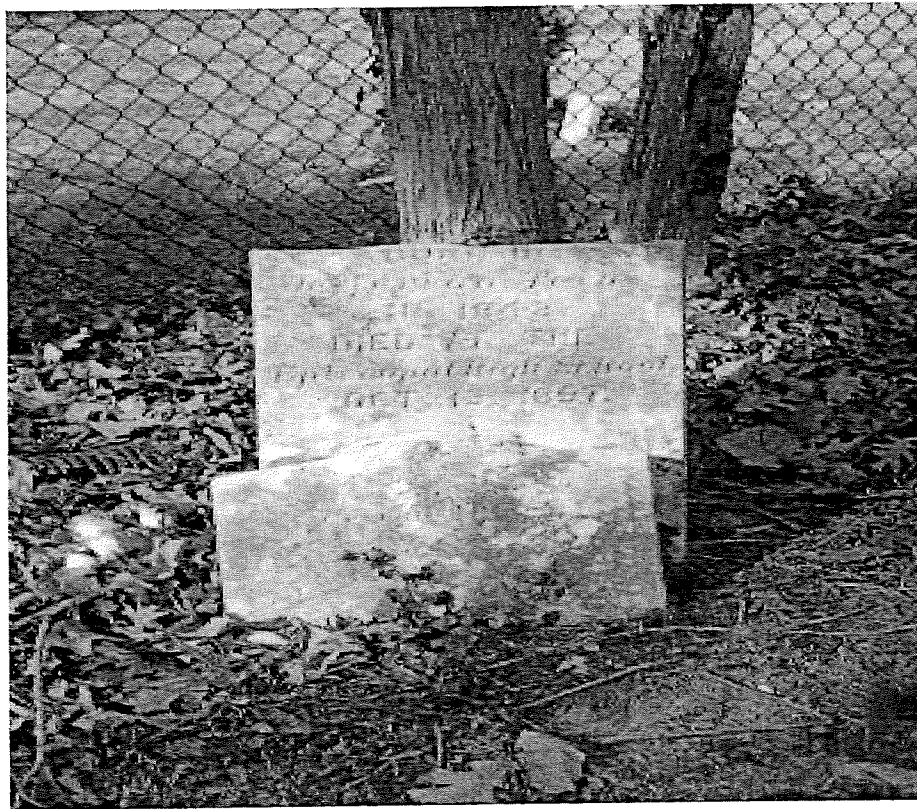


Photo 5 -- Photo of Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery Grave Marker.

Name of Property:	Oakland Baptist Cemetery	
City or Vicinity:	Alexandria	
County:	City of Alexandria	State: VA
Photographer:	Unknown	
Date Photographed:	Unknown	

This is an example of the kinds of grave markers that are found in the Oakland Baptist Cemetery.

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Photo 6 -- Photo of Oakland Baptist Church -- 2014.

Name of Property:	Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery	
City or Vicinity:	Alexandria	
County:	City of Alexandria	State: VA
Photographer:	Unknown	
Date Photographed:	Unknown	

This is a picture of the Oakland Baptist Church as it looks today. The Oakland Baptist Church, still has an active congregation.

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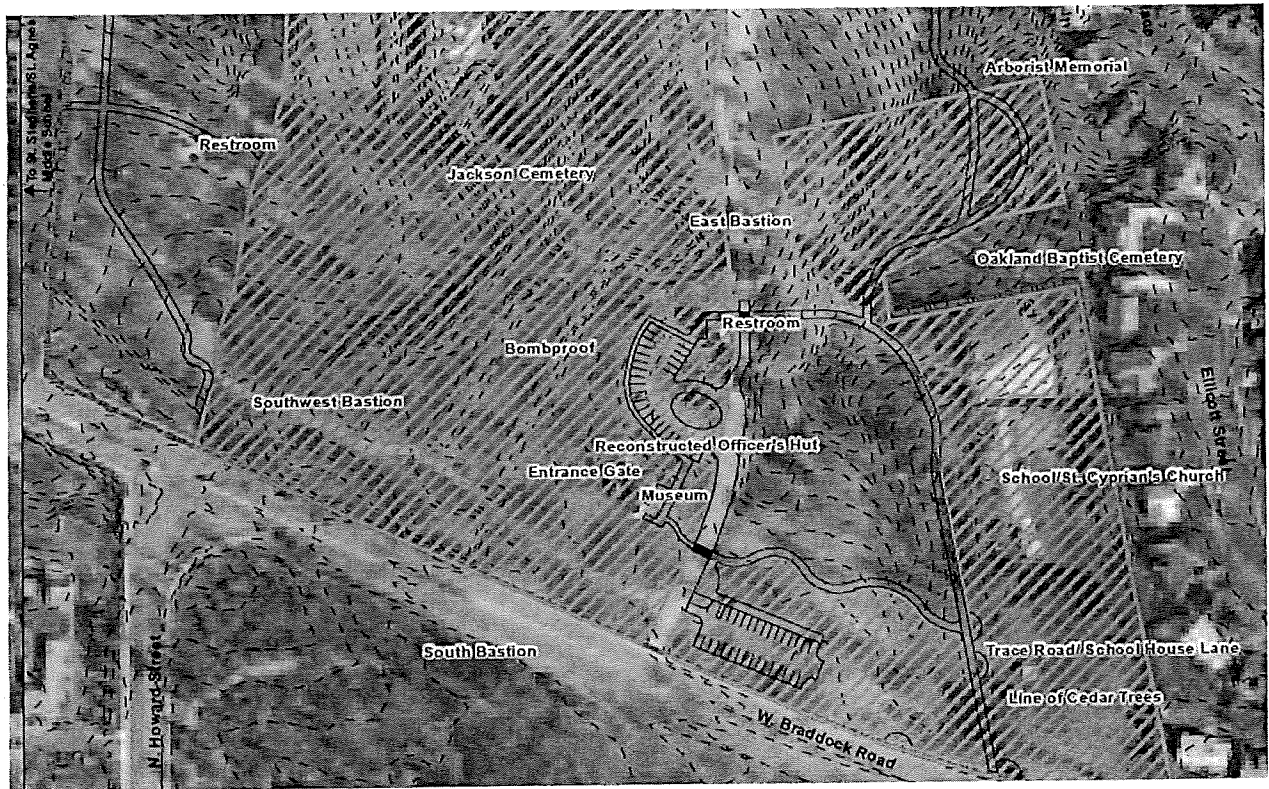


Photo 7 – Aerial Sketch of the Fort Ward and Oakland Baptist Cemetery.
The Oakland Baptist Cemetery is outlined.

Name of Property:	Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery	
City or Vicinity:	Alexandria	
County:	City of Alexandria	State: VA
Photographer:	Unknown	
Date Photographed:	Unknown	

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Photo 8 – An undated picture of Clara Adams, looking left at Fort Ward in Alexandria. Her great-granddaughter is helping lead the fight to recognize Alexandria's Black History.

Name of Property:	Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery
City or Vicinity:	Alexandria
County:	City of Alexandria
Photographer:	State: VA Unknown - Taken from Article Washington Post Article Dated, Sunday, March 15, 2009
Date Photographed:	Unknown - Courtesy of the Office of Historic Alexandria

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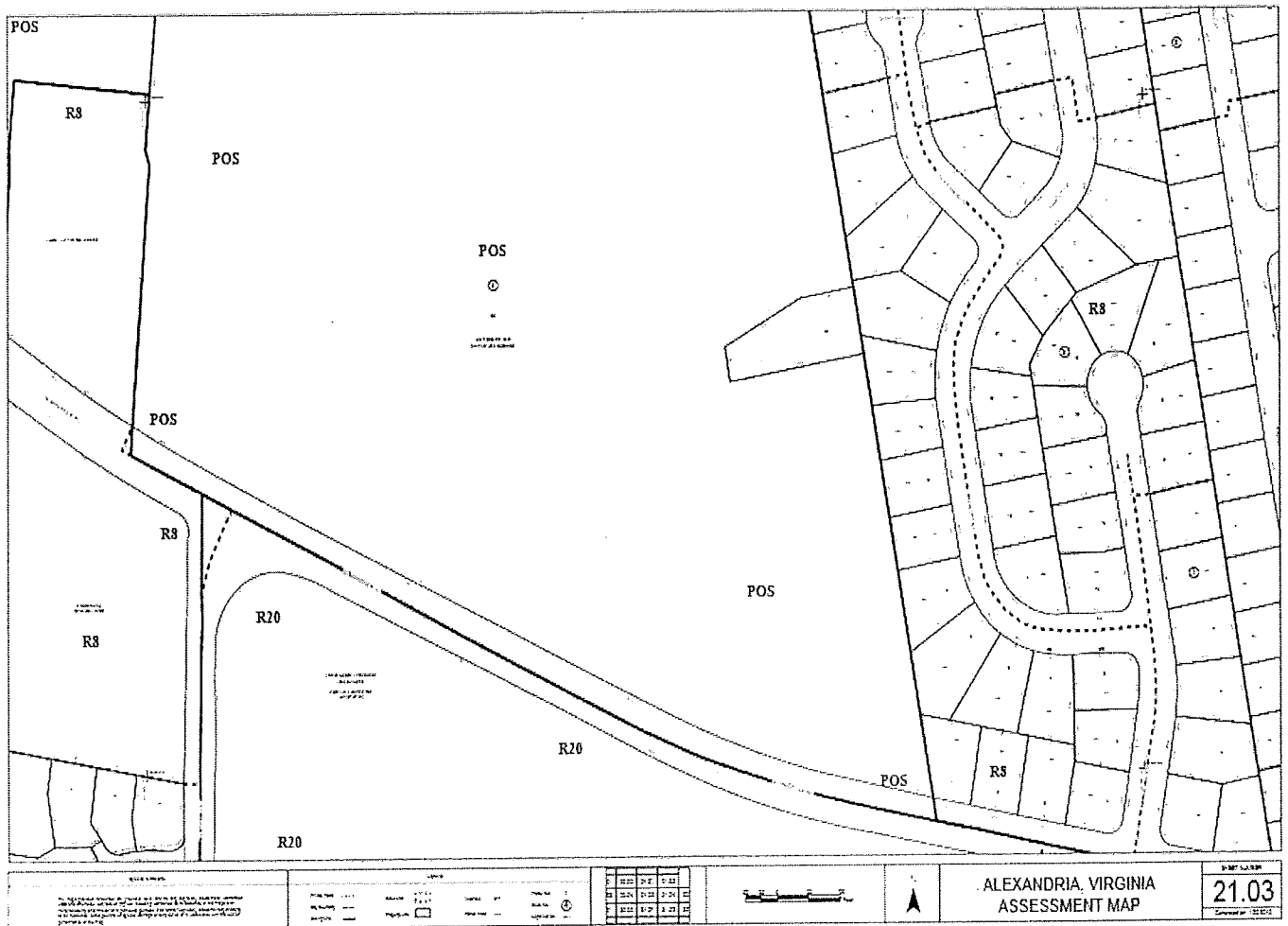


Photo 9 – Alexandria, Virginia Assessment Map – Map Lot 21.03. Tax Assessment View – City of Alexandria Tax Assessment

Name of Property:

Oakland Baptist Church Cemetery

City or Vicinity:

Alexandria

County:

City of Alexandria

State: VA

Photographer:

Unknown -

Date Photographed:

Unknown -

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