



Parsons Cemetery's Historic Walking Tour  
Part One (1873-1914)

# TOUR OVERVIEW

## HISTORIC SECTION WALKING TOUR

This tour provides a general overview of Parsons Cemetery's early history (1873-1914).

It focuses on Section OP (Old Part) and includes information about some of the more notable persons interred within.

The total walking distance is ½ mile and it should take approximately 1 hour to complete.

This tour is designed to be viewed on a standard-sized cell phone held in landscape view.

The tour starts and ends at the Main Gates on Lane 3.



All photos by Brent Zaprowski unless otherwise noted

# Stop 1 – The Main Gates

This walking tour begins at the Main Gate on North Division Street.

Parsons Cemetery began its existence as a public cemetery in 1873 when Benjamin Parsons bequeathed part of his family's farm to [St. Peter's Episcopal Church](#).

St. Peter's Church is in downtown Salisbury on St. Peter's Street. They have owned and operated the cemetery since that time.

The cemetery is currently managed by an advisory board appointed by the church.

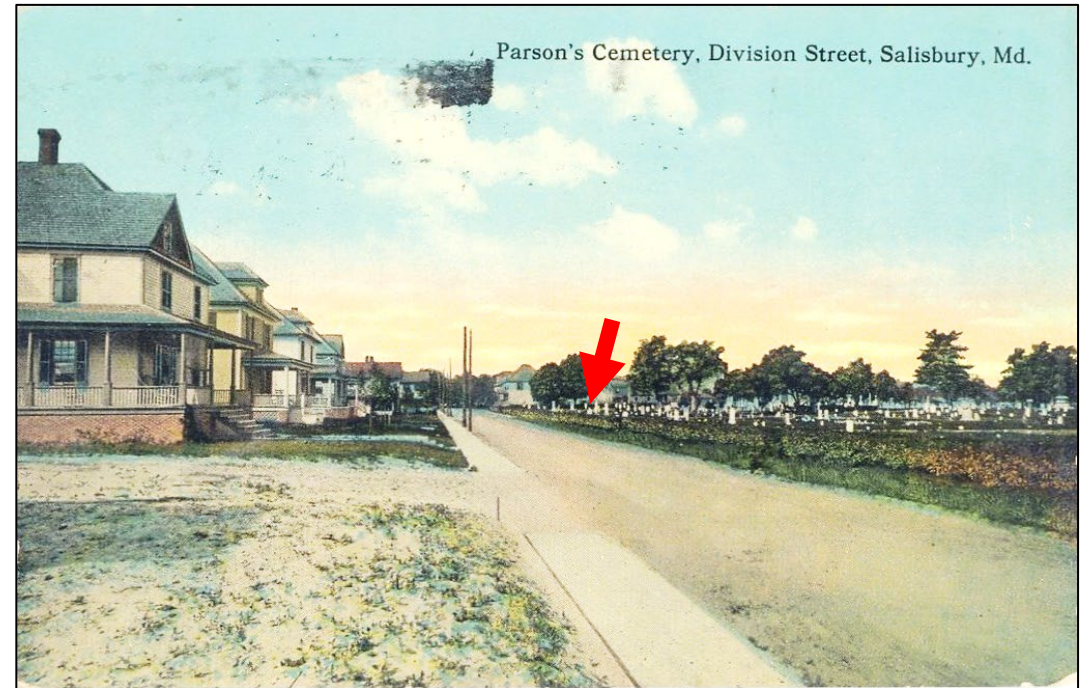


*(Postcard image courtesy of the [Nabb Center](#) at Salisbury University)*

# Stop 1 – The Main Gates

In 1967, Alison J. Parsons gifted the gates and brick wall in honor of his parents and other ancestors resting here. The gates were created by artisans from the Williamsburg, VA area. The gates were repaired and refurbished in 2017 with a grant from the Alison J. and Ella W. Parsons Fund of the Hampton Roads Community Foundation.

The original main entrance used to be off New York Avenue, behind the current office (a house sits there now).



On the right is an old postcard of the cemetery circa the 1920s. The view is towards the south along North Division St. and the cemetery is on the right. The arrow shows approximately where you are standing now.

*(Postcard image courtesy of the [Nabb Center](#) at Salisbury University)*

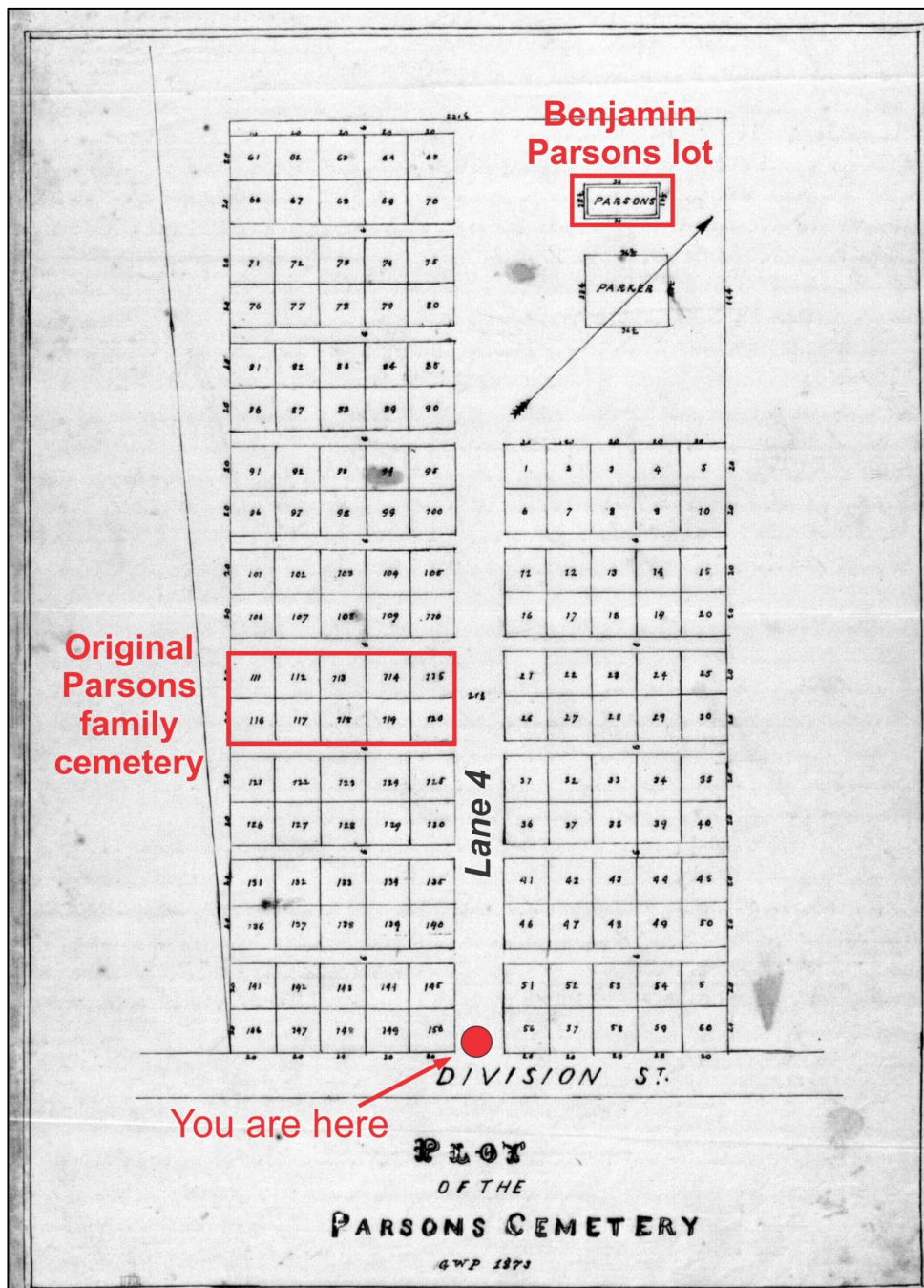
## Next Stop: 2

Please proceed south along N. Division St. until you reach the gate at Lane 2.

Enter the gates and move to the next slide.



## Stop 2 – The Original 1873 Cemetery



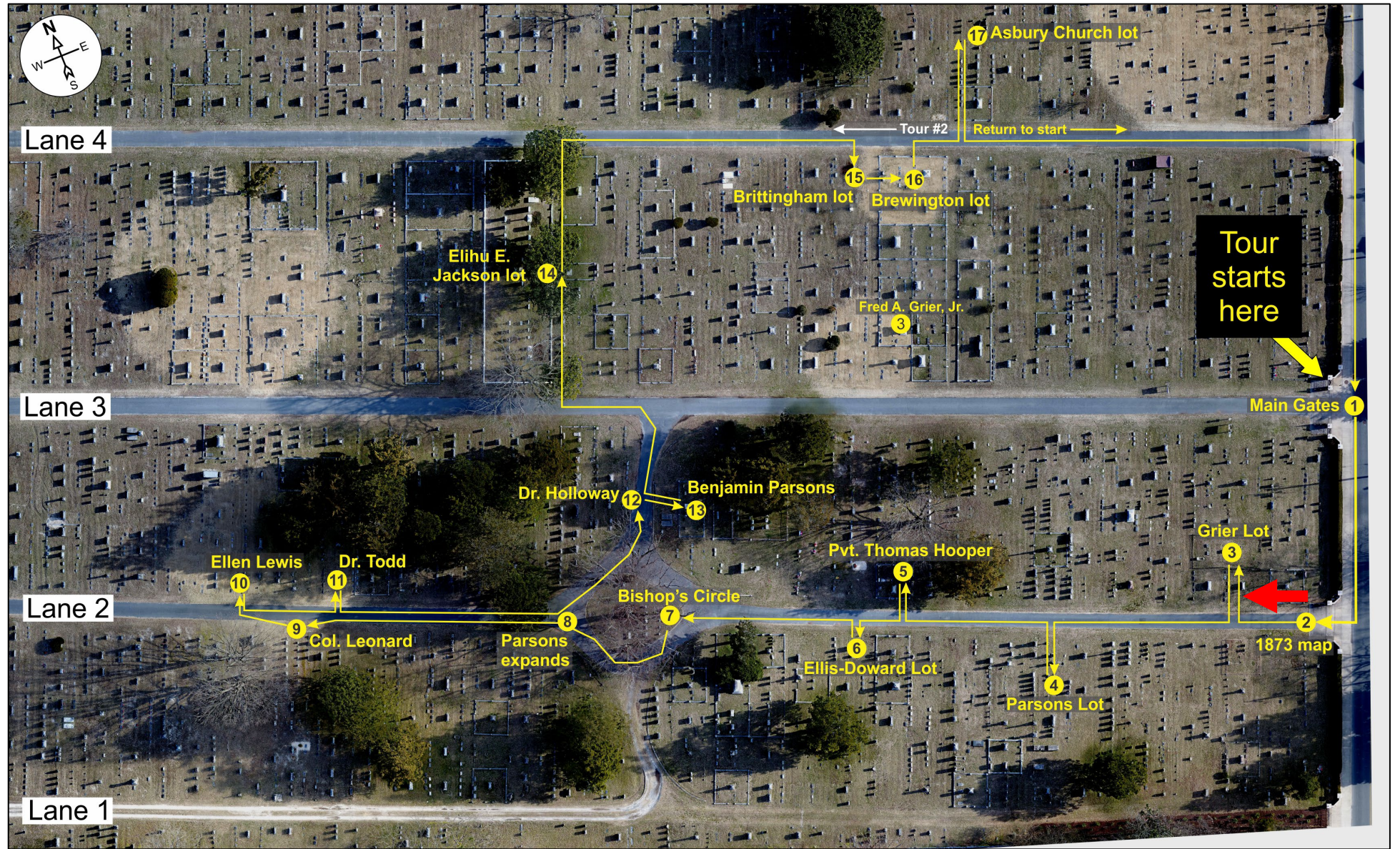
In front of you is the original 1873 cemetery, defined in [Benjamin Parsons' will](#) as:  
"a lot of ground on the road to Laurel Delaware (N. Division Street) from Salisbury where my family burying ground is; the graveyard now enclosed to be extended 30' west and north and south until it is 90' wide and east up said road."

This map was created by General George W. Parsons, who is interred in the Parsons family lot (more on him at Stop 4).

### Next Stop: 3

Please proceed west along Lane 2 about 50 feet. Stop three is off to your right.

Look for a low iron fence as shown in the next slide.



## Stop 3 – The Grier Family Lot

If you now pivot to your right, you will see a family lot surrounded by a low cast-iron fencing. This the family lot of Chief Frederick A. Grier.

*“Fred Grier Sr. was a machinist by trade from Wilmington, Delaware. After helping to fight the Great Fire of 1886 he moved his family to Salisbury and started in business with his brother Robert. The business remains to this day known as R.D. Grier & Sons.”*

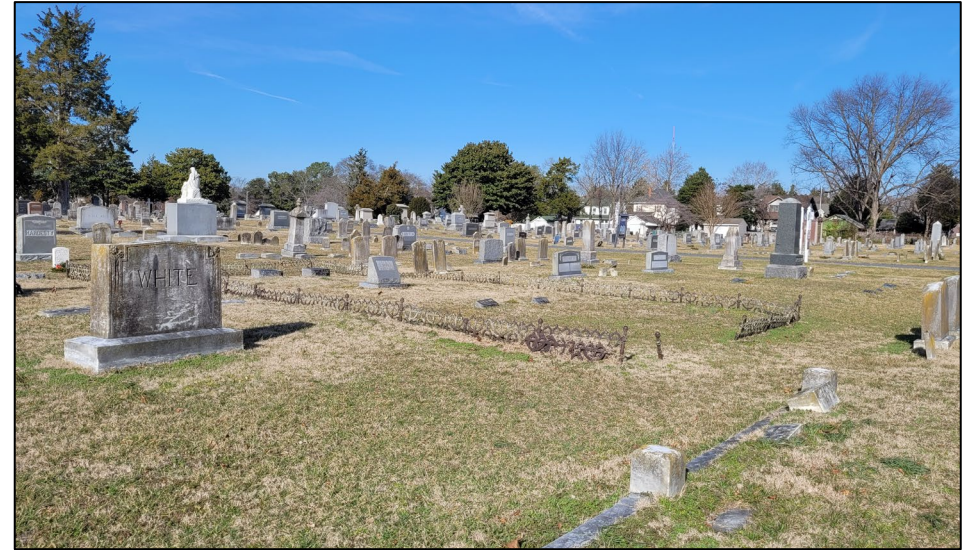
Source: [Salisbury Fire Department](#)

The company forged the fence that surrounds the Grier family lot.

Legend has it that Fred Grier, Sr. loved his horse so much, he supposedly had it buried on his lot. Unfortunately, there are no Parsons burial records left in existence for this period of time, so we had no way of knowing for sure, at least until recently.

Dr. Brent Zaprowski from Salisbury University recently surveyed the lot using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) and discovered an anomaly in one part of the lot (orange box, lower photo) which could very well be the remains of his horse!

But Fred Grier is famous for more important reasons....







Source: [Historic Salisbury Maryland blog](#)



Source: [City of Salisbury](#)

## Stop 3 – The Grier Family Lot

### Chief Frederick A. Grier, Sr.

Chiefs Fred A. Grier Sr. and his son, Fred A. Grier Jr., are two of the most notable firefighters in Salisbury's History.



*“It would be virtually impossible to tell the history of the Salisbury Fire Department without mentioning the Grier name. Fred Grier Sr. was a machinist by trade from Wilmington, Delaware. As a volunteer fireman with the Washington Hose Company 7, Grier Sr. had traveled to Salisbury several times to battle large fires in Salisbury. After helping to fight the Great Fire of 1886 he moved his family to Salisbury.*”

*Grier Sr. served as Chief from 1889 to 1900 and was able institute some of the first modern firefighting techniques of that era. Chief Grier's greatest mark in Salisbury history occurred on March 13, 1899, when a fire broke out in the Jackson's Mill on Mills St. The fire engulfed the mill and threatened to destroy Salisbury for a third time. Under the leadership of Chief Grier, the fire was stopped where the West bound lane of Route 50 now stands and neighboring homes were destroyed.”*

Source: [Salisbury Fire Department](#)

## Stop 3 – The Grier Family Lot

### Chief Frederick A. Grier, Jr.



Fred Jr. is buried on his wife's family's lot (see map).



Source: [Salisbury Fire Department](#)

*“Fred Grier Jr. followed in his father’s footsteps and joined the department in 1910. He was quickly appointed to the rank of Assistant Engineer and then Chief Engineer in 1916. As Chief Engineer he was instrumental in purchasing the department’s first motorized fire engine in 1916. Engine 2 was the first motorized fire apparatus on the entire Eastern Shore of Maryland. At the time of the purchase Grier Jr. was the only person in Salisbury with a license to drive a motorized vehicle. In 1922 Grier Jr. became Fire Chief and would serve eight years as Chief between 1922-1933. By the end of his first year as Chief the department was completely motorized.”*

*“Chief Grier saw the need for a larger and more modern station to house a rapidly growing department. In 1928 a new Fire Headquarters opened on South Division Street and would serve the city well until 2008....In 1939 Chief Grier secured the city’s first ambulance with donations from the Salisbury Lions Club. In 1943 he helped form the Marine Firefighting Division of the department with the acquisition of its first fire boat.... In all, Fred A. Grier Jr. would give fifty-five years of dedicated service to the Salisbury Fire Department, The City of Salisbury and Wicomico County. His record of loyal, faithful and dedicated service serves as an inspiration to members past, present and future.”*

Source: [Salisbury Fire Department](#)



Source: [Salisbury Fire Department](#)

## Next Stop: 4

Please return to Lane 2 and continue west about 100 feet. Stop 4 is off to your left.

Look for a kiosk as shown below. (This contains additional information). Then go to the next slide.



# Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

The lot you see in front of you is the original Parsons family cemetery. The most senior Parsons family member buried on this lot is Jehu Parsons (1780-1859) and his wife Esther Sommers (1789-1874). The Parsons Family arrived on Eastern Shore in the 1600's in what was then Somerset County MD.

**Jehu and Esther have 6 children buried with them in the family cemetery:**  
Amanda Parsons Toadvine (1815-1863)  
Alison C. Parsons (1818-1868)  
William Sydney Parsons (1820-1897)  
Milton A. Parsons (1826-1910)  
Esther Anna Parsons Byrd (1830-1851)  
Gen. George Washington Parsons (1839-1888)



# Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

## Parsons Cemetery has three major Parsons Family Benefactors:

Benjamin Parsons (1789-1873) gifted his family's farm property to St. Peters Episcopal Church for use as a cemetery in 1873. The land included the existing Parsons family lot. Benjamin had already opened his family cemetery to community members – as a result, some burials in Parsons Cemetery predate 1873. You will see Benjamin's lot at Stop 13.

Alison Jehu Parsons (1899-1983), donated the Cemetery's entrances in 1967 to honor his parents and other ancestors resting therein. Alison and his wife Margaret are buried in this lot. Alison was also a veteran of WWI (obituary follows).

George W. Parsons (1915-2000), another cousin, bequeathed substantial funding to the [Parsons Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund](#), managed by the Community Foundation of Eastern Shore. George and his wife Katherine are interred in Section B (Historic Tour #2, Stop 8).



[Alison Jehu Parsons](#) – photo downloaded from Find-a-Grave. Submitted by "Andrew"

**George William Parsons**  
PITTSVILLE — George William Parsons, 85, died Saturday, Oct. 21, 2000 at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury.  
Born in Wicomico County, he was the son of the late W. Joseph and Alice Records Parsons. His wife, Katherine Collins Parsons, died in October 1995.  
Parsons was a farmer his entire life. He loved farming and had also been a poultry grower.

*The Daily Times*, Oct. 23, 2000



# Alison J. Parsons Is Remembered

By RICHARD W. COOPER

SALISBURY — A few weeks ago, the death of Alison J. Parsons of Norfolk, Va., was reported among the obituaries in the *Daily Times*. As a long-time friend and admirer of Parsons, I would like to mention a few items that I feel should be remembered about him by the citizens of his native town of Salisbury.

Although his main residence and his business interests were in the Norfolk area, he had continually maintained a residence in Wicomico County where he made frequent visits and kept up with the happenings in the community and in touch with his many friends and contemporaries.

A member of a prominent family in Salisbury's early days, he was the son of the fourth mayor of the city, Jehu T. Parsons, whose term of office was from May 16, 1898 to May 14, 1900. His forebears during the 1800s held a leading role in the development of Wicomico County and the Salisbury area. Their interests extended not only into the political life of the community, but also encompassed the cultural, religious and economic life of the growing county and city.

When Wicomico County was formed in 1867, the 5th Election District was given the name of Parsons, perhaps the largest and most populated district in the county at that time.

Pemberton Hall and the farm on which it was located was Parsons' childhood home. Because of his very close connection with this historic landmark, Parsons has been one of the strongest supporters and benefactors in the ongoing restoration work that has taken place over the last two decades.

His steadfast interest and early gifts of money have

been prime factors in carrying out the costly and tedious work in bringing back the structure to its Colonial condition. Reflecting his contributions to its present successful restoration, his name has been given to the new section now under reconstruction.

The Pemberton Foundation has designated this to be known as the "Parsons Wing." Years ago when Polly White Burnett had her dream of saving Pemberton Hall from total deterioration, it was Parsons whom she called upon to give his support to make the dream become its present reality. When the wing is completed, living quarters will then be available for a custodian. The matter of security will be answered, relieving the concern for the safety of valuable furnishings expected to be placed in this historic monument of the past.

It is expected that some of the original Parsons family furnishings and artifacts, dating back to their years of occupancy, will eventually become a part of the final restoration.

The success story of Parsons' business career is somewhat like the classic Horatio Alger stories that were so popular when he was a young man. The Norfolk area was where he found his challenge and reached his success. However he never forgot his birthplace nor his roots with the past.

Early in his life he joined the local Company I and soon went overseas into combat during World War I. He was proud of this service to his country and kept in close contact with his fellow comrades-in-arms. For several years, he hosted an annual reunion of the surviving members of Company I for a dinner in Salisbury. The *Daily Times* has carried these events over the years with pictures of the soldiers, many of

whom are in their 80s.

A confirmed member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Salisbury, his interest in its well-being never diminished over the years. Over a century ago, one of his ancestors bequeathed to St. Peter's Church the land on the northerly end of the town and on the westerly side of North Division Street for an endowed and perpetually maintained cemetery.

Recognizing the need for a protective wall and gates along the street, Parsons gave the funds for the design and construction of this much-needed project. He enlisted the services of a noted Williamsburg landscape architect who designed what was called a "living wall," with evergreens growing from the top of the brick wall.

The effect is one of unusual beauty and has added a tremendous boost to the esthetics of the North Division Street area and its historic district. The wrought iron gates were hand fabricated by an old craftsman in Norfolk. One of his most notable works was the execution of the chapel on one of the last aircraft carriers built in Newport News, using wrought iron for the basic material.

One of the last acts of philanthropy of Parsons was the deeding to the City of Salisbury an area in the W. Main Street and W. Isabella Street section for the nucleus of a public park and playground. Certainly it is not intended to attempt to enumerate all the acts of generosity of Alison Parsons in this space.

His gifts and benefactions in the Norfolk area are indeed another whole story. Moreover what has been mentioned here are but a few of his known and public contributions to his community and his fellowmen.

## Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

Below is the genealogy of our three Parsons benefactors. We worked with obituaries and the wonderfully thorough research of Ruth Dryden. *The Parsons Family of Maryland Genealogy* was compiled by Ruth T. Dryden in 1993, and there is a reference copy in the Maryland Room of the Wicomico County Main Library.

<b>Generations</b>	<b>Benjamin Parsons</b>	<b>Alison J. Parsons</b>	<b>George W. Parsons</b>
1st	John Parsons 1600's	John Parsons 1600's	John Parsons 1600's
2nd	Peter Parsons 1658-1687	Peter Parsons 1658-1687	Peter Parsons 1658-1687
3rd	Peter Parsons 1658-1687	Peter Parsons 1658-1687	Peter Parsons 1658-1687
4th	George Parsons 1708-1782	George Parsons 1708-1782	John Parsons 1704-1758
5th	William Parsons 1733-1793	George Parsons 1734-1809	John Parsons 1736-1795
6th	William Parsons Jr. 1767-1843	Jehu Parsons 1780-1859	Peter Parsons 1762-1823
7th	<b>Benjamin 1789-1873</b>	Alison C. Parsons 1818-1868	Peter R. Parsons 1792-1830
8th	<i>No Descendants</i>	Jehu T. Parsons 1849-1916	George Parsons 1821-1880
9th		<b>Alison J. Parsons 1899-1983</b>	Joseph W. Parsons 1857-1925
10th		<i>No Descendants</i>	<b>George W. Parsons 1916-2000</b>
11th			<i>No Descendants</i>

# Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

## Death of Gen. Geo. W. Parsons.

SALISBURY, MD., Oct. 31.—Gen. George W. Parsons died at twenty minutes of ten to-night at the residence of Senator E. Stanley Toadvin. Gen. Parsons was born at the Parsons homestead in 1839. He received a liberal education at the Salisbury High School. He soon developed wonderful engineering capacities, and during the past ten years he has stood among the ranks of the best engineers of the State. During the past five years Gen. Parsons has been prominently identified with the river and harbor improvements of the Wicomico, Pocomoke and Choptank rivers. During the past ten years Gen. Parsons has had complete control of the wharves and dock of the Maryland Steamboat Company. In 1896 Gen. Parsons was appointed Colonel by Gov. Lloyd and served with the staff at Atlantic City. Gov. Jackson appointed Col. Parsons general of engineers at the last session of the Legislature. There was, perhaps, no better known man in the State than General Parsons, as his family is the oldest in this county and one of the oldest in the State. His nearest relatives are the surviving brothers, Mr. Milton A. Parsons and Sydney A. Parsons, of this town. He was an uncle of Senator E. Stanley Toadvin, John T. Parsons, of the Custom-House, Baltimore, F. A. Parsons, Salisbury, J. Augustus Parsons, of Washington, and many other distinguished and well-known people.

*Democratic Messenger (Snow Hill) Nov. 3, 1888*



General George Washington Parsons, son of Jehu and Esther Parsons, was a noted surveyor and engineer who specialized in dredging and harbor improvements, including on the Wicomico River.

Mr. George W. Parsons has been awarded the contract for excavating the channel in the Wicomico River at this place, at about 24 cents per cubic yard. Mr. Parsons expects to begin the work about the first of December. He has been December 1874, until June 1875 to complete the dredging.

*Salisbury Advertiser, Oct. 24, 1874*





## Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

### The Parsons and Handy Families – 200+ Years of History Entwined

Isaac Handy 1706-1762 was the son of a former indentured servant. He married Anne Dashiell in 1726 and purchased Pemberton Plantation that same year. In 1741 Isaac built [Pemberton Hall](#), which is on the Wicomico River (~3 miles southwest of downtown Salisbury). Jehu Parsons purchased Pemberton Hall in 1835 and Alison Chapman Parsons inherited Pemberton Hall from his father in 1859.



*“During the Civil War, the Hall was the home of Allison C. Parsons, a southern sympathizer. Despite the Federal troops encamped in Salisbury, Parsons insisted on firing a cannon upon the receipt of news of each Confederate victory.*

*After issuing several ultimatums to Parsons, the U.S. Army soldiers raided Pemberton Hall in order to silence the cannon. However, Parsons had buried it before their arrival!”*

Source: [Maryland Historic Trust](#)



# Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

## What happened to the Handy family?

No one is quite sure what happened to Isaac Handy, his wife Ann Dashiell or their son Henry Handy. In a 1934 family letter, it was reported that the Handy family was moved to Parsons Cemetery by Jehu T. Parsons and buried on the lot of Alison C. Parsons. A large depression on the lot adds to the intrigue. However, debate continues over the letter.

Norfolk, Va.  
Sept. 12, 1934

My dear Aunt Martha:

I was real glad to receive your letter last week and while I have few Minutes I am going to answer it.

*[skipping ahead]*

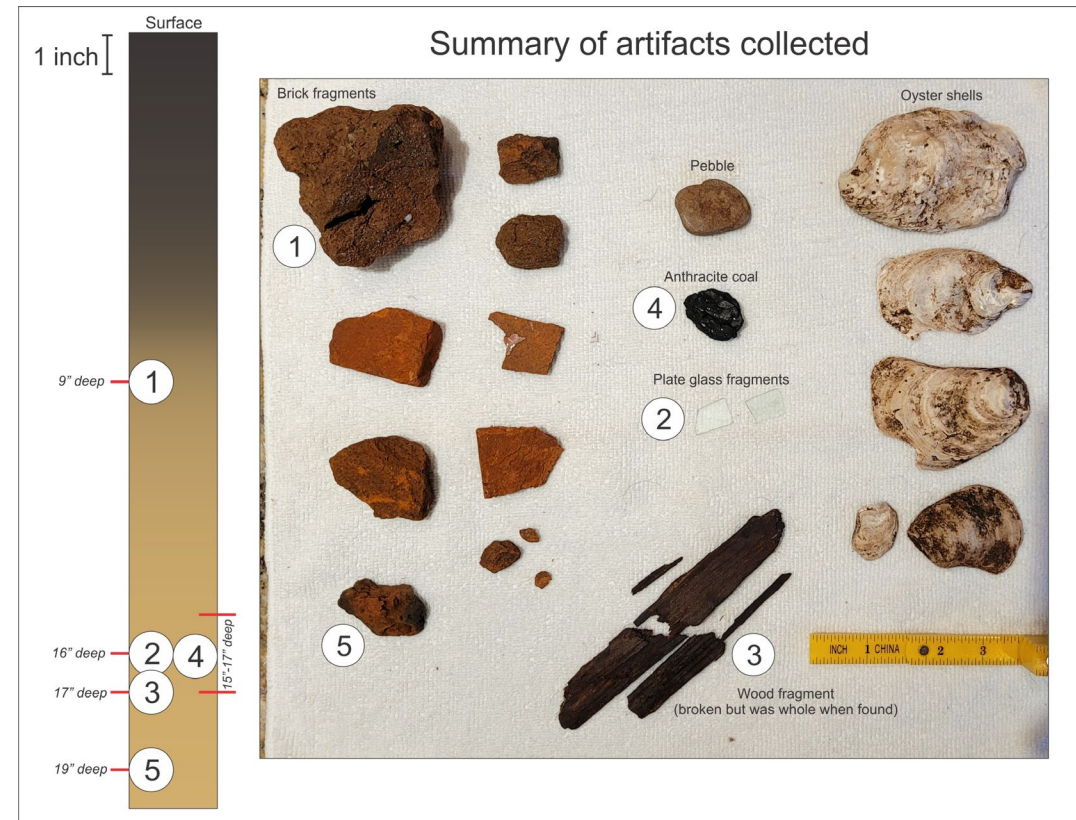
Alison's Great-Grandfather, Mr. Alison Jehu Parsons, for who Alison is named, purchased it from the original owner Mr. Isaac Handy. Alison's Grandfather, Mr. Alison C. Parsons and also his father, Mr. Jehu Toadvine Parsons, were both born in the house. Alison's Father lived there until he was eleven years of age and when he grew up, he had all the bodies taken up and put in his lot in the Parsons Cemetery in Salisbury and they are all still there. The family burying ground was just in back of the old house. Alison had seen that before the bodies were removed and he remembered exactly where it was.



# Stop 4 – The Parsons Original Family Cemetery

## What happened to the Handy family?

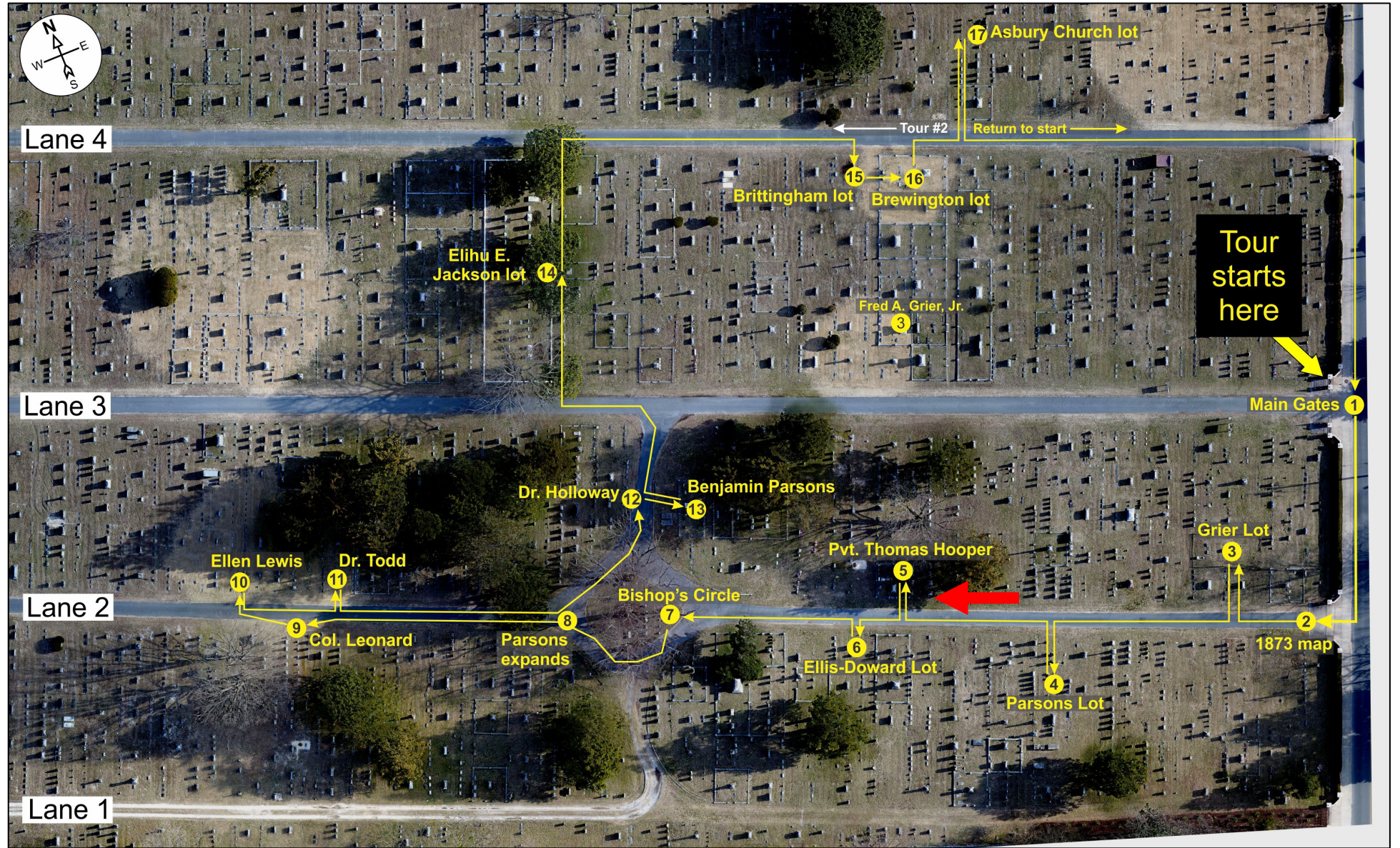
A shallow trench was dug across part of the site in question with the goal of finding an obvious “cut line” in the soil. Although a clear “cut line” was not observed, several human artifacts were excavated below 15” depth. These artifacts prove that the ground must have been dug up at some point in the past. None of the artifacts, however, prove that a burial occurred. Further analysis of the artifacts themselves may yield additional clues about the age of disturbance.



## Next Stop: 5

Please return to Lane 2 and continue west about 75 feet. Stop 5 is off to your right.

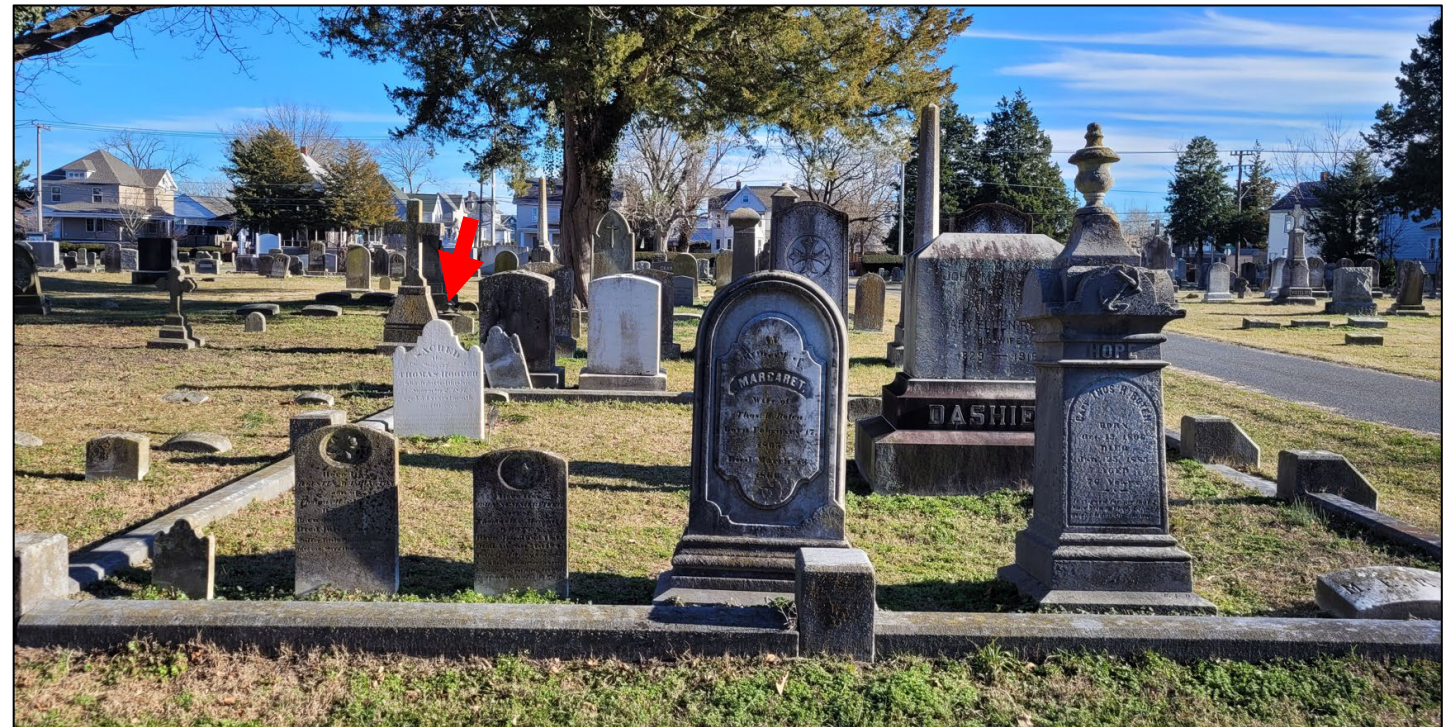
Look for the lot shown on the next slide. There should be a trash container nearby.



## Stop 5 – An Early American Veteran

Pvt. Thomas H. Hooper (1779-1833) rests in the John M. Dashiell Family lot. Since Thomas died in 1833, we know he was reinterred in Parsons, but we don't know when or why. The Wicomico County 1812 Veteran Burial Records show that Pvt. Hooper served under Capt. William Mackey in 1813 and Capt. Charles K. Bryan 1814, both listed in the Dorchester County 1812 Veteran Burial Records along with five other Hoopers.

***If you want to learn more about the early veterans in Parsons, we encourage you to walk our 19th Century Veterans Tour!***

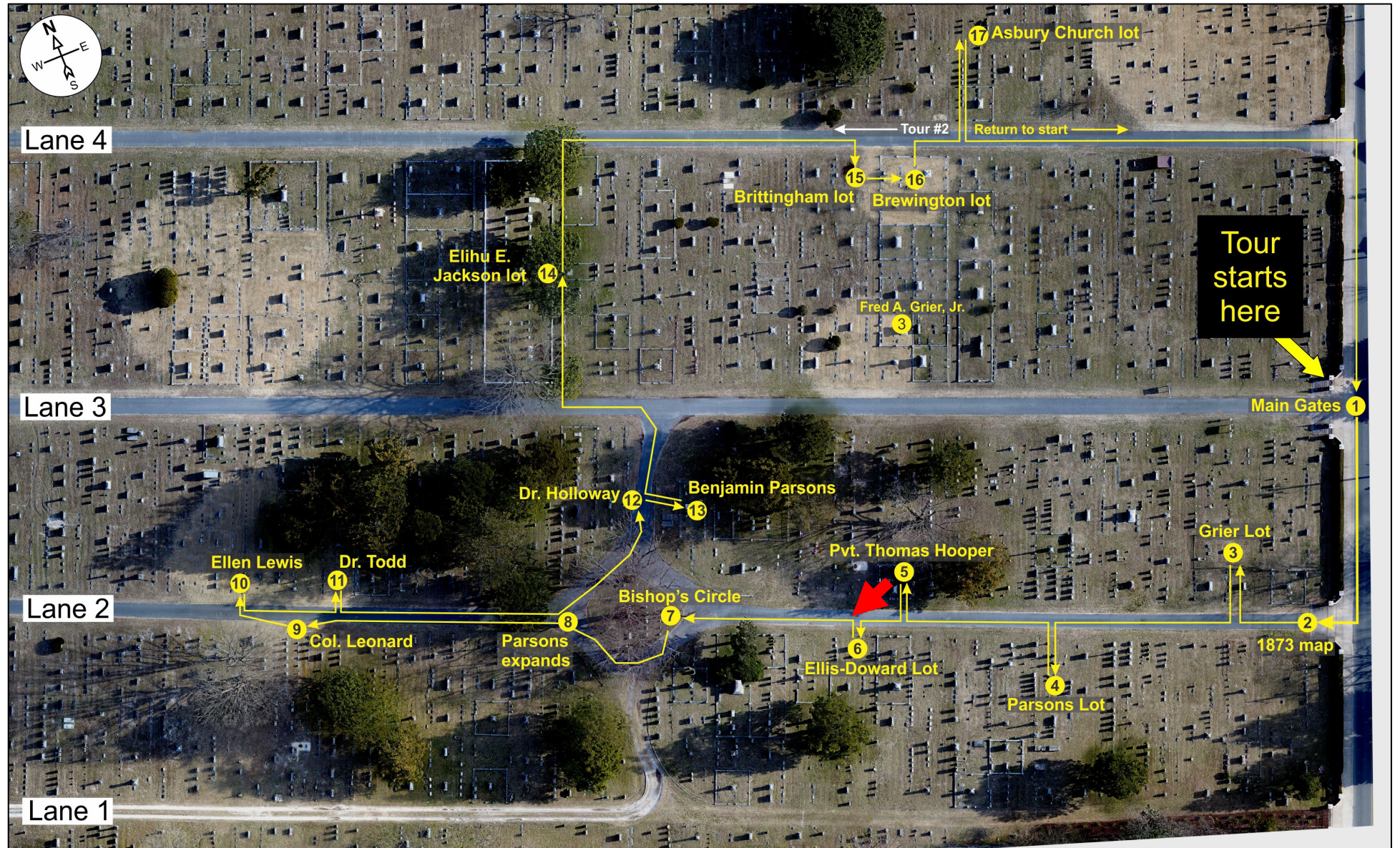


## Next Stop: 6

Please return to Lane 2 and continue west about 10 feet. Stop 6 is off to your left.

Look for the lot shown on the next slide.

The “Doward” marker is particularly obvious.



# Stop 6 – The Ellis-Doward Lot

As you continue walking down the lane, we are sure you have noticed many of the old ornate markers. Quite a few of these markers were carved by John T. Ellis. John and his partner Joseph H. Doward were partners of the firm Ellis & Doward, Salisbury marble dealers. When Joseph retired, the company became J.T. Ellis & Son. Some of the markers in Parsons have John's initials on them. Sadly, some of best work can be seen on his own children's markers.

John Ellis's sister, Maggie, married Joseph Doward, and both families are interred on this lot.



Interestingly, John's own marker is quite simple



This can be seen at Stop 7 →

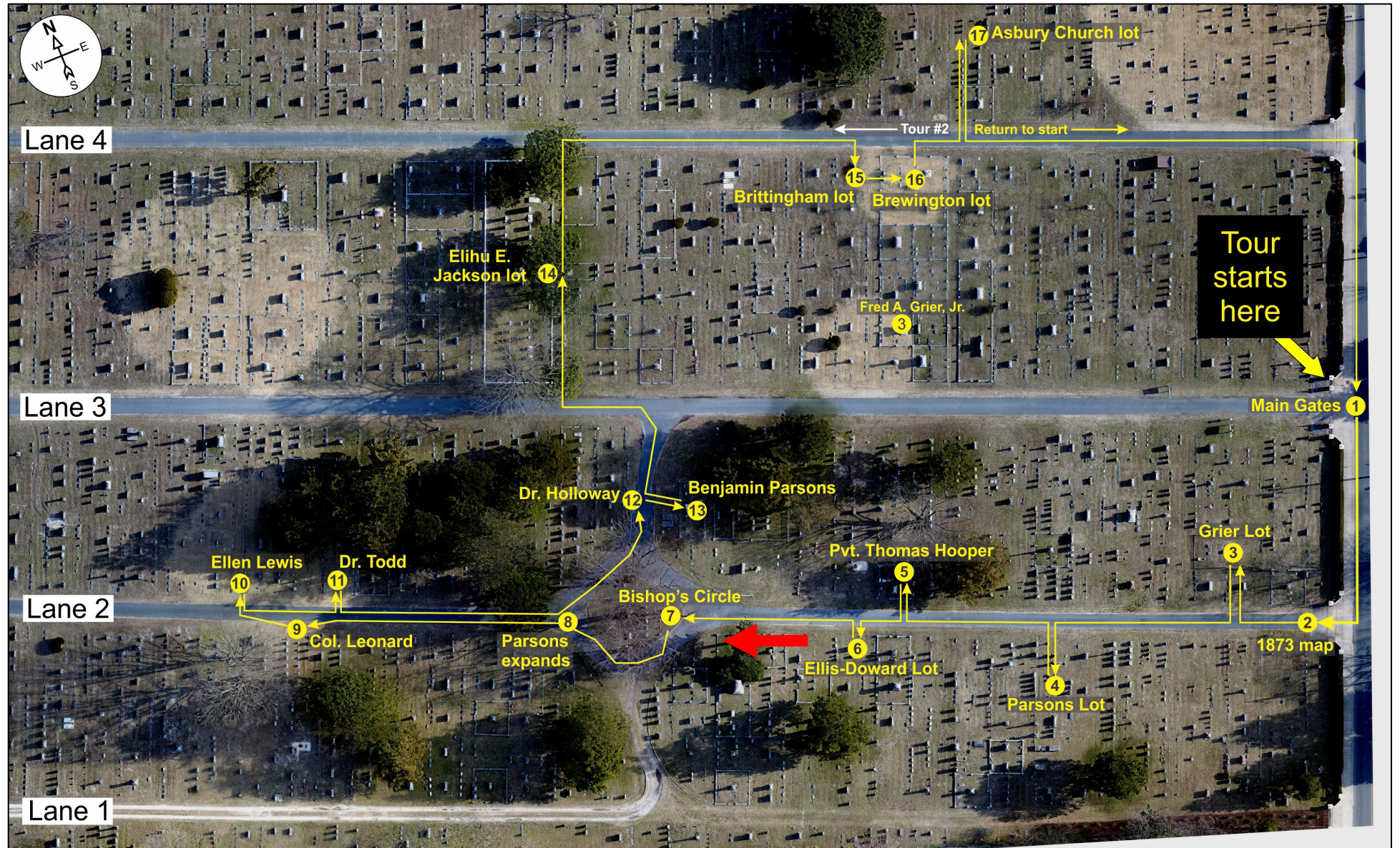


—J. T. Ellis & Son have just erected in Parsons Cemetery a beautiful Celtic cross over the grave of Mrs. David Howard. The cross is a handsome specimen of the stonemason's art and the only one of its kind in this section.  
*The Courier, Apr. 28, 1906*

***If you want to learn more about the markers and monuments in Parsons Cemetery, consider walking the Historic Monuments tour!***

## Next Stop: 7

Please return to Lane 2 and continue west about 100 feet. Stop 7 is the where the road splits around a cluster of graves as shown in the next slide.

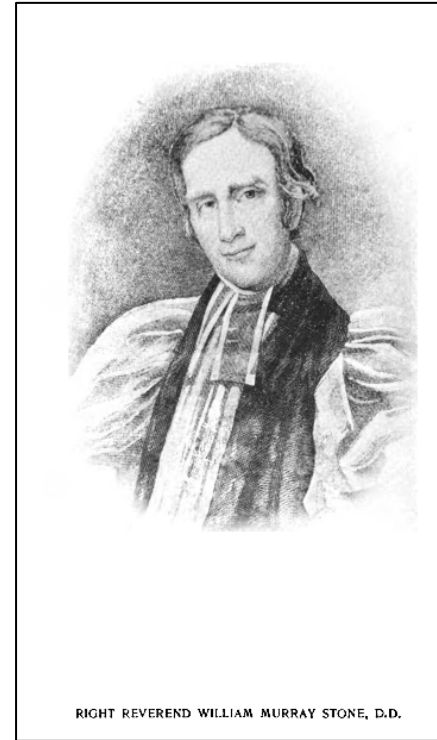
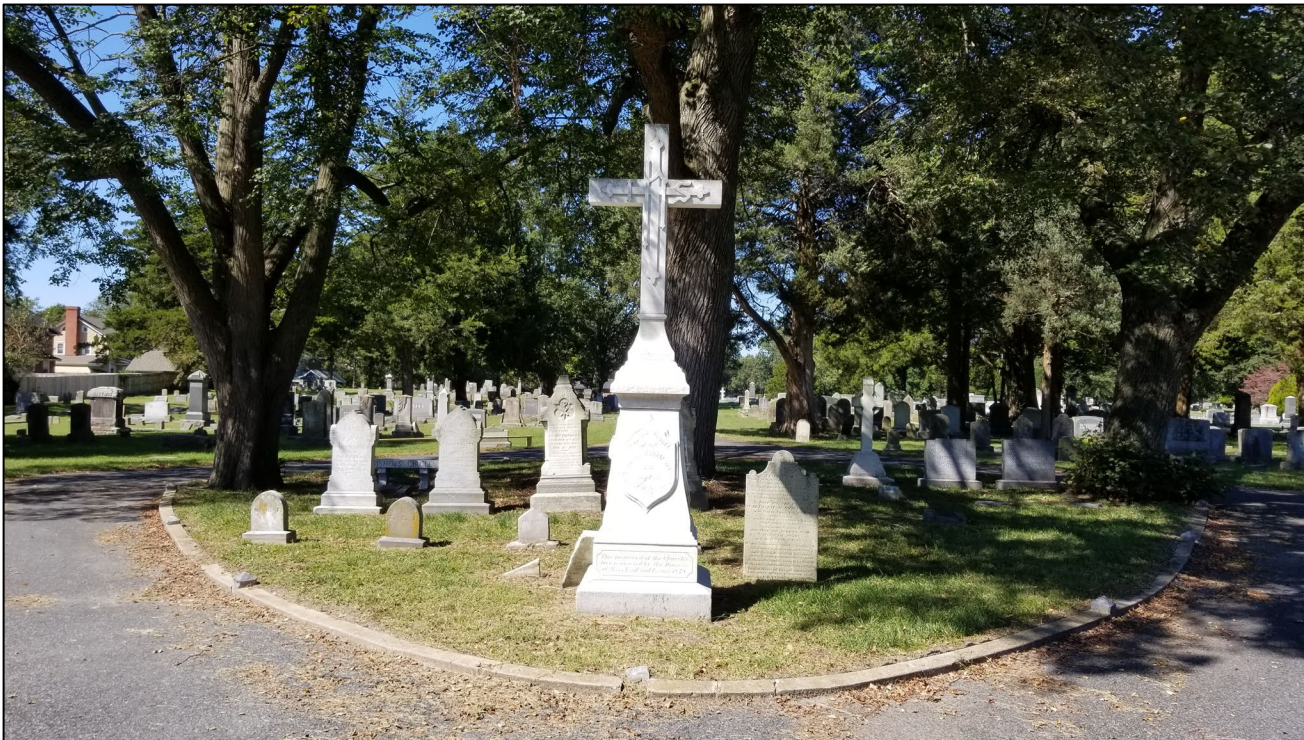




## Stop 7 – Bishop’s Circle

Bishop’s Circle is named for Rev. William Murray Stone, the Third Bishop of the American Episcopal Church, Diocese of Maryland. Bishops Circle is also the final resting place for several former clergy from St. Peter’s Episcopal Church and their families. From 1803 to 1829 Rev. Stone, a native of the historic Stepney Parish (which dates to the early 1600’s), was the rector the P.E. Church in Spring Hill. At the Diocesan Convention of 1830 he was unanimously elected Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland, serving until his death on February 26, 1838.

His tympanum-type headstone dates to the early 1800’s and is typical for the Colonial period. You will see more examples of colonial-period markers at the end of the tour.



RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM MURRAY STONE, D.D.



# Stop 7 – Bishop’s Circle

Bishop Stone was moved to Parsons Cemetery from his old family burial ground in 1876.

## The Removal of Bishop Stone's Remains.

The Rt. Rev. Wm. M. Stone, D. D., for twenty-five years Rector of the P. E. Church in the Spring Hill and Stepney Parishes, and for eight years Bishop of the same church in the Diocese of Maryland, died at his home near Salisbury Feb. 26, 1838. According to the custom which prevailed in the neighborhood, and prevails there still, he was buried in the family burying-ground in a field near the old homestead. The fate of all or nearly all such burying grounds speedily overtook this one. The land passed into the possession of strangers. The family of the deceased were scattered, no one of them remaining in the neighborhood. The resting-place of the dead was uncared for. The fence decayed and fell into ruins. The ground became overgrown with briars and bushes, and if the owner of the field had driven his plow over the spot he could hardly have been blamed. The signs of neglect would at least have been obliterated.

For many years the ground continued thus neglected and desolate, to the scandal of those who either remembered the deceased, or had heard their fathers speak of him. Often the propriety of removing his remains to a more fitting resting-place was spoken of, but from one cause or another the matter went no further. Last Spring, however, on the occasion of his official visit to the parish, the attention of Bishop Lay was called to the condition of the resting-place of his predecessor, and he, with the Rector of the parish, visited the spot. At the next meeting of the Diocesan Convention he reported the facts to that body, and, while giving it as his opinion that from the lapse of time since the interment it was unadvisable to disturb the remains, he remarked on the impropriety of using private burying grounds when the church yards and public cemeteries could be used. The convention were interested in the report, but did not agree with the Bishop as to the removal, and appointed a committee, consisting of the Bishop, the Rector of the Parish, and its lay delegate, J. Aug. Parsons, Esq., to make arrangements for the removal.

In accordance with this resolution, last Friday afternoon, the committee proceeded to the spot and, in the presence of one of the surviving sons of the deceased, Dr. Thomas Stone, the grave was opened, and the scanty remains of the late Bishop and those of his wife were reverently collected, and removed to the lot selected for them in the Parsons' Cemetery. It is contemplated to erect a fitting monument over the place where they now rest, as soon as the facts of the case can be brought to the knowledge of the church in the two Dioceses into which the one over which Bishop Stone presided has been divided, and the necessary funds collected.

The head stones which marked the old graves were also removed and re-erected at the head of the new ones. The inscription on that of the Bishop, showing the estimation in which he was held by his cotemporaries, is as follows:

Salisbury Advertiser, Sep. 16, 1876

THIS STONE  
Marks the hallowed resting place  
Of one who  
Faithful until Death  
Now rejoices in the possession of the Crown of Life  
Which God has prepared  
For those who love Him.  
**THE RIGHT REV.**  
**WILLIAM M. STONE, D. D.,**  
Was born June 1st 1779  
Was Rector  
Of Spring Hill and Stepney Parishes  
More than 25 years;  
Was consecrated  
BISHOP OF MARYLAND  
Oct. 21, 1830  
And died 26 Feb. 1838  
He was eminently meek and had no foes;  
his heart was warm and true,  
and he had cordial friends;  
OFFICE AND HONOR SOUGHT HIM  
In the retirement which he loved;  
Patience and Faith sustained him  
In the trials of his pilgrimage;  
AND HOPE NEVER FORSOOK HIM.  
until she beheld him in the fruition  
of the everlasting promises  
OF THE MASTER.

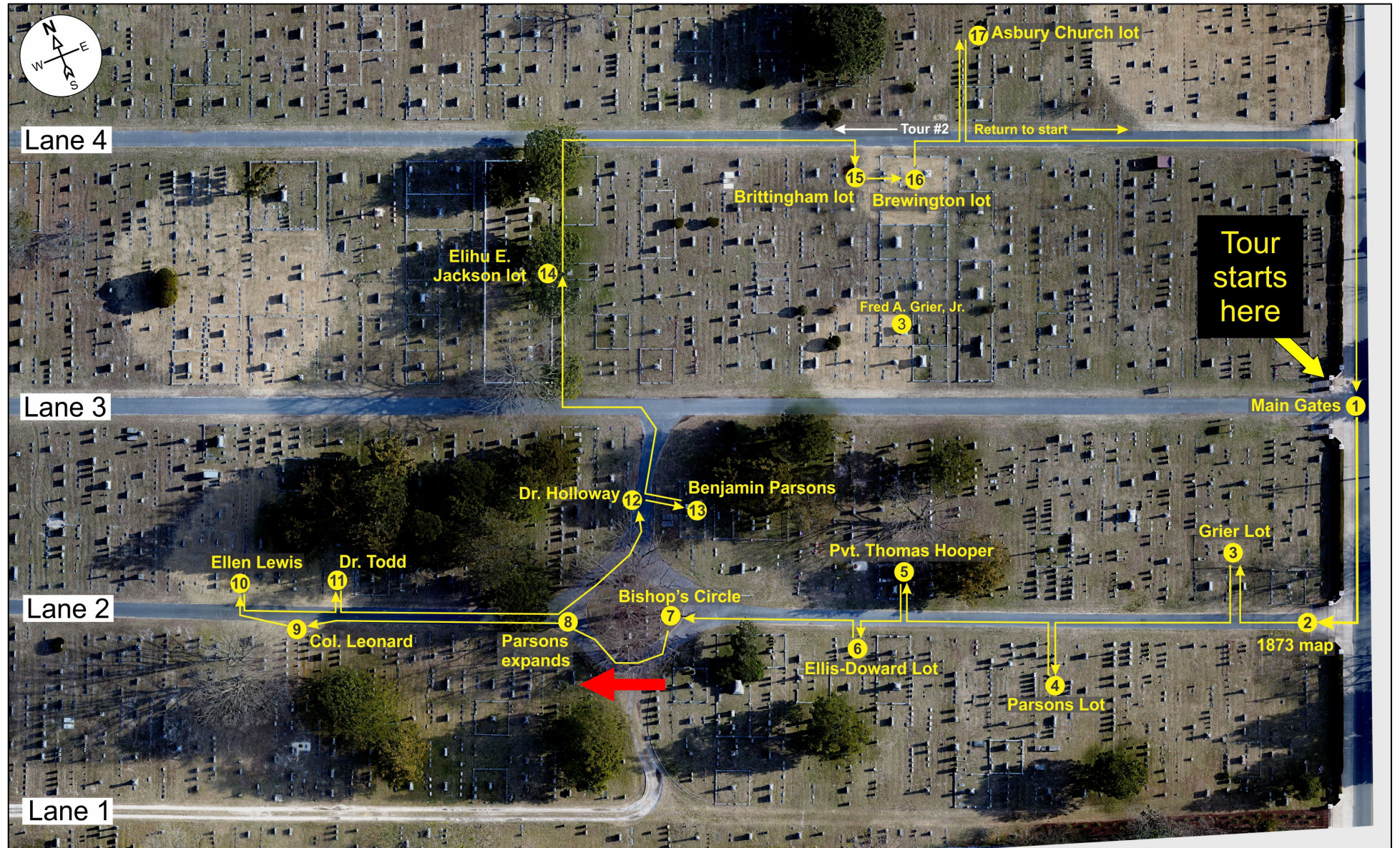
W. F.

Salisbury, Md., }  
Sept. 13th, 1876. }

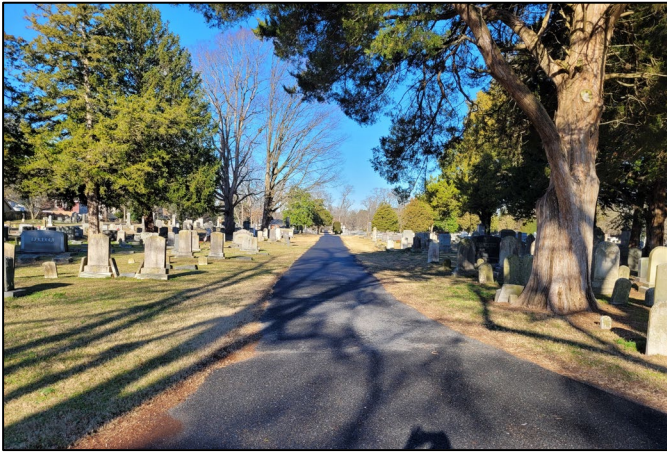
## Next Stop: 8

Continue around  
Bishops Circle and stop  
where the road comes  
together again.

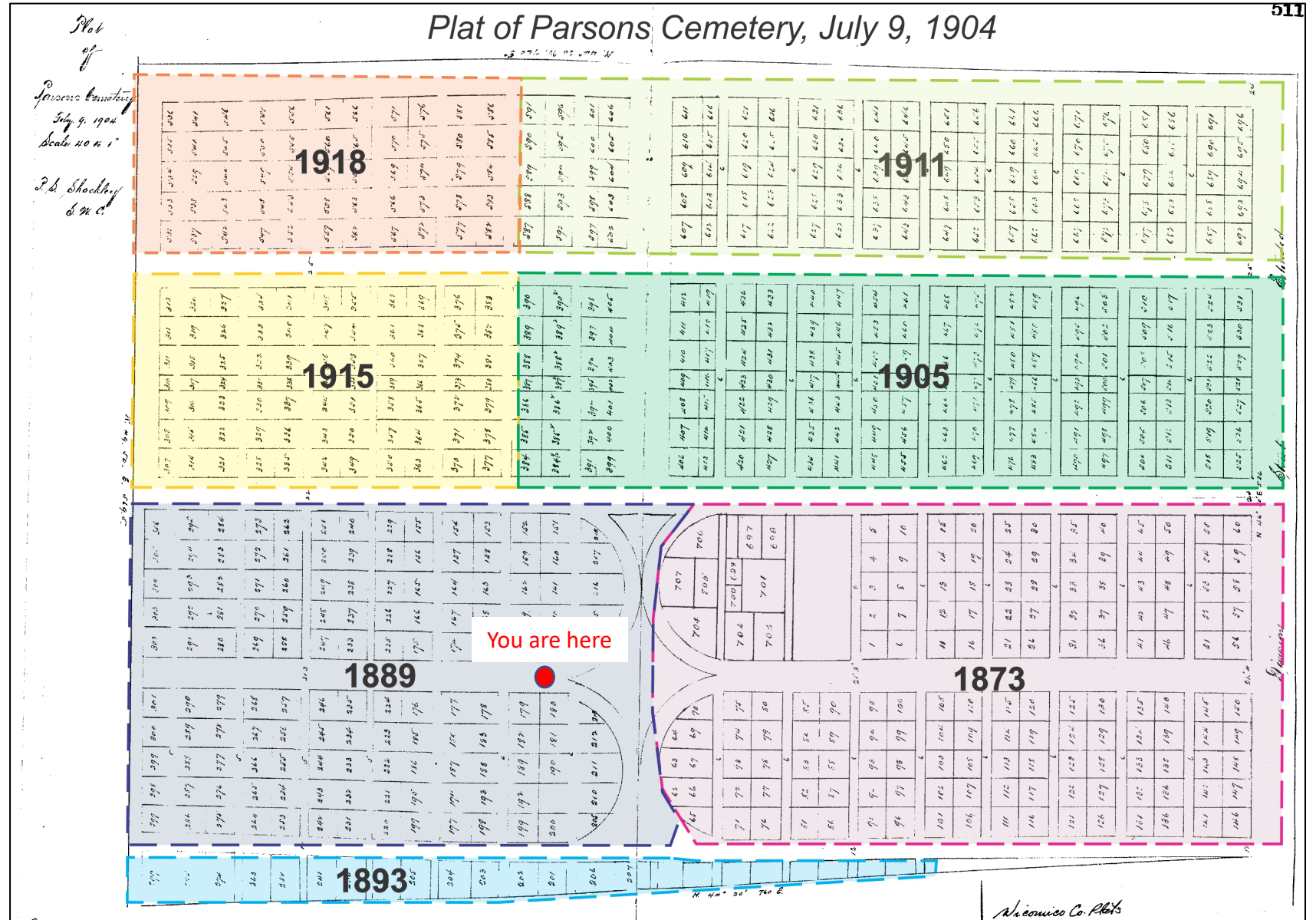
Proceed to the next  
slide.



# Stop 8 – Parsons Cemetery Grows



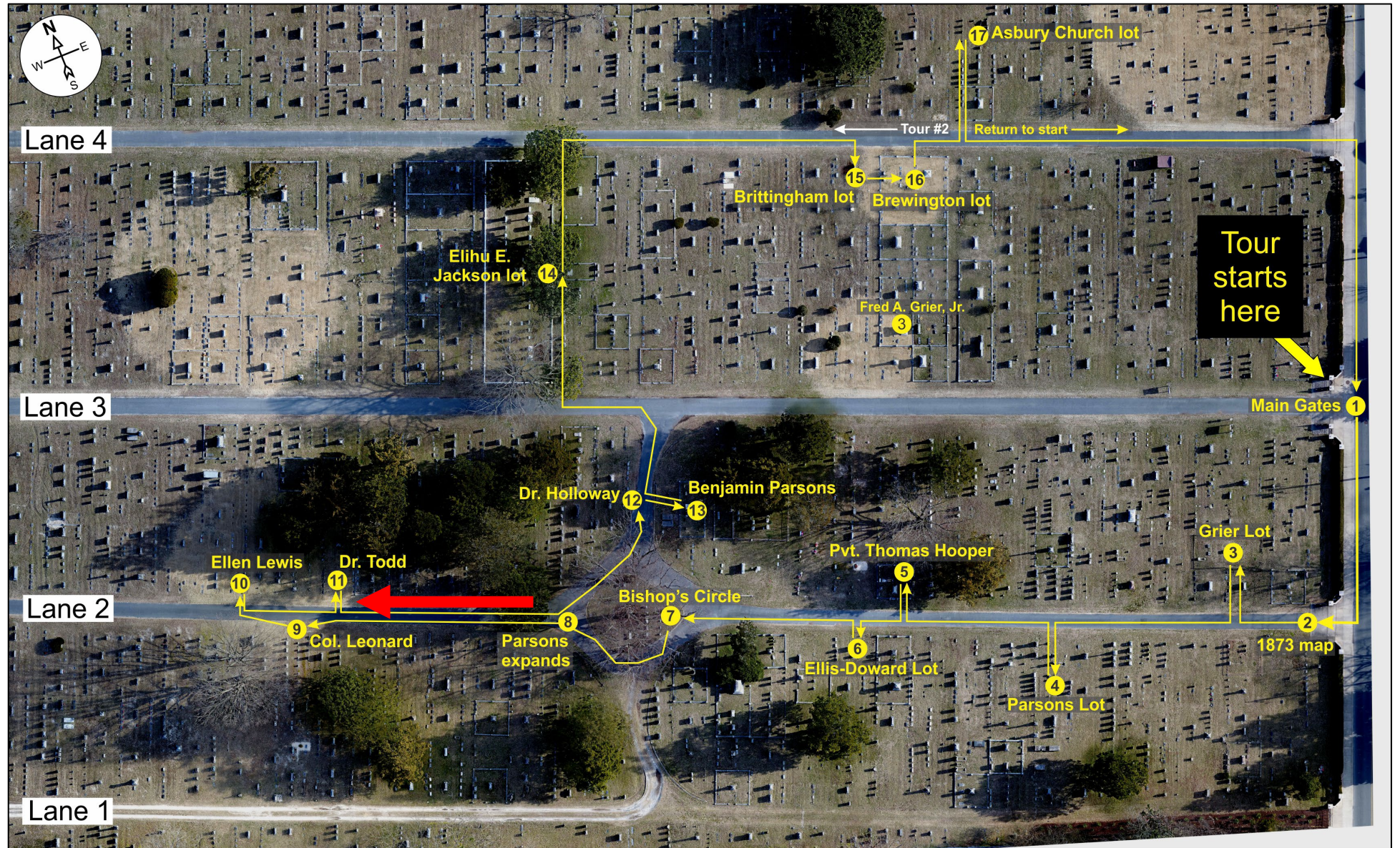
It didn't take long for all the lots in the original 1873 cemetery to sell, and before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the cemetery needed to expand. By 1904 Parsons Cemetery had quadrupled in area (right). This part of the cemetery is referred to today as **Section OP** (Old Part). The dates in each colored area show when burials first occurred in that area. The section you are entering now was opened in 1889.



## Next Stop: 9

Please continue west along Lane 2. Stop 9 is about 125 feet on the left, just off the road under the edge of a very large maple tree.

Proceed to the next slide.



## Stop 9 – Leonard Family Lot

### Colonel William James Leonard (1816-1901) - Union Army Officer

#### A lost chapter in the story of Salisbury's Participation in the Civil War



Salisbury was considered by the Union to be a strategic point between Delaware and Virginia, and between loyalist, those north of Salisbury loyal to the Union, and those from Salisbury and the south, many being Southern Sympathizers.

The new railroad was transporting troops from north of Salisbury to two Virginia counties to keep them from seceding. Concurrently with the railroad coming down the peninsula was the extension of telegraph lines. The Union moved to take advantage and extended the telegraph to Cape Charles and then across the bay to Fortress Monroe. This communication capability was considered critical to the Union war effort.



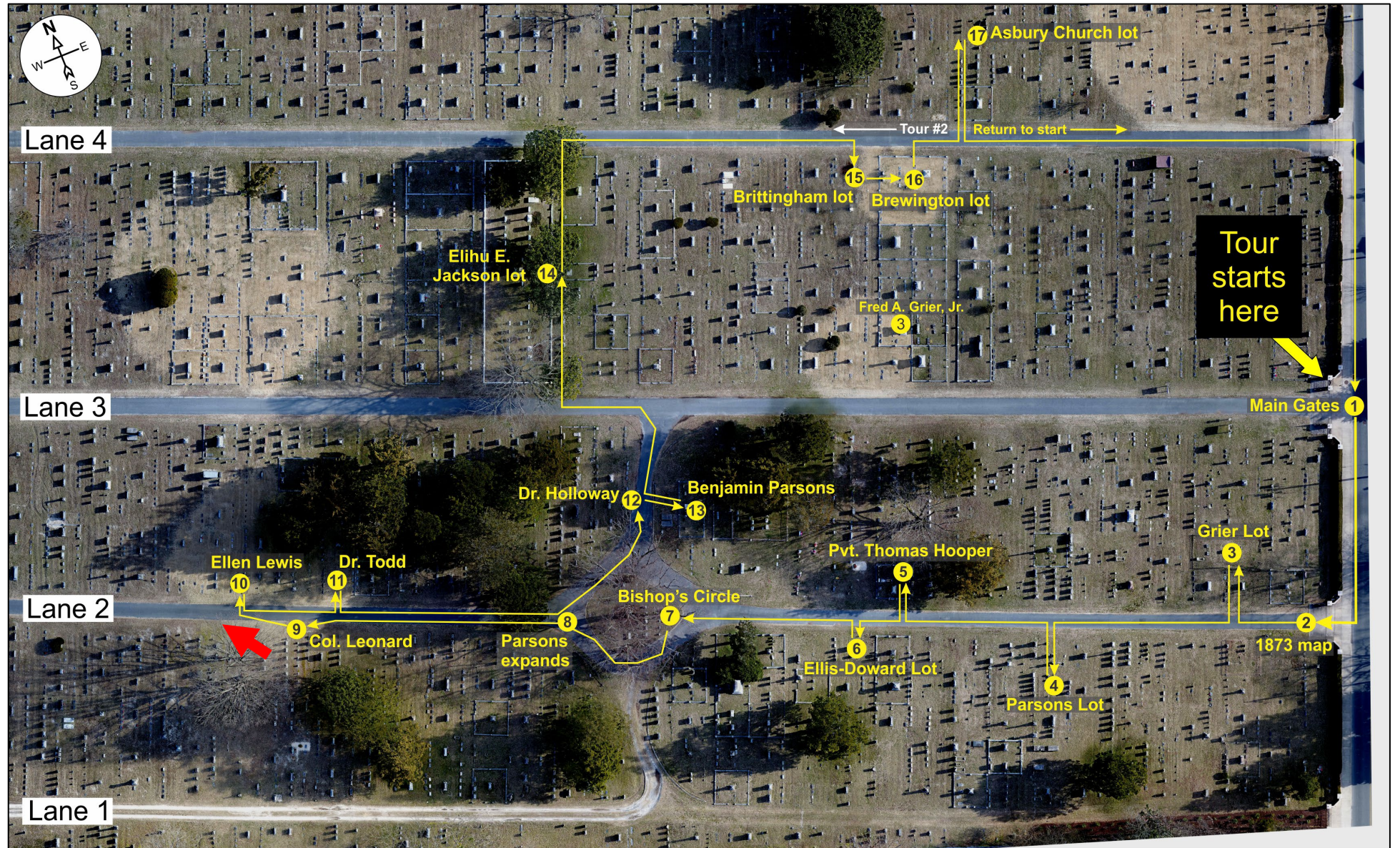
Col. William James Leonard's involvement begins when he took leadership of Purnell's Legion and the assignment of safeguarding the telegraph line to Cape Charles. Then Col. Leonard led the Legion out of Maryland and into the Battle of Bull Run, where he was captured and imprisoned. When he was finally released, the conditions and arrangements of his parole were made over these same telegraph lines he had earlier guarded. On his return to Salisbury, Col. Leonard was appointed Provost Marshall for the 1st District of MD.

Source: *Profile of a Colonial Community on Maryland's Eastern Shore* by Richard W. Cooper.

***Learn about all our Civil War veterans on our 19th Century Veterans Tour!***

## Next Stop: 10

Stop 10 is just across the road from Stop 9 and about twenty feet to the west. Look for a large concrete planter as shown in the next slide.



## ELDERLY WOMAN WHO OPENED HOME TO SCORES OF UNFORTUNATES GIVEN SALISBURY AWARD

An audience which filled the Arcade Theatre yesterday arose to its feet and roundly applauded as the annual Salisbury Award was given to the person chosen for the honor as the one who has rendered outstanding service to the community.

From the hundreds gathered for the public presentation, Dr. G. I. Humphreys, the speaker, called to the stage Mrs. Nancy Ellen Lewis. And another name was written upon the honor scroll to be perpetuated for posterity.

"Granny" Lewis she is called by neighbors in South Salisbury—a seventy-six year old motherly woman upon whom time and years of toil have unmistakably left an impress.

Years before the Salisbury Award was even conceived, "Granny" Lewis was doing in a very inauspicious way the things for which she was given delayed public recognition yesterday. But today the whole city knows and appreciates the services she and a faithful husband have rendered the community.

Long before the Wicomico Welfare Association had its inception, she was providing a home for aged men and women and other unfortunates at her extremely modest dwelling on Arch and Pond streets. To her it was not a matter of charity but what she considered a duty.

"Granny" Lewis, home was a home of refuge. Unfortunates without means of support or letters of recommendation found comfort and motherly care there. Scores of persons have been admitted to that home without a thought of financial compensation on the part of the elderly man and wife, whose meagre comforts were freely shared.

Five years ago the county sold its almshouse, leaving no institution that might provide home comforts to dependent aged men and women. Some of these the county referred to Granny Lewis, others came there voluntarily. All were given the care that two kindly, parental hearts could provide with the means within their command.

Mrs. Lewis was born near the Delaware Line, north of Pittsville, the daughter of Jeremiah and Mary Jones and the eldest of eleven children. She has three daughters and a son, all married and residing elsewhere.

No one had told Granny that it was she to whom the city was to pay tribute at the gathering yesterday. Ev-



en when the Welfare Association's nurses, Miss Helen Fisher and Miss Beatrice Pryor, had asked her to accompany them to the theatre, she did not suspect the motive.

Attentively she listened to the musical overture, the prayer, the vocal numbers and heard Dr. Humphreys implore those in the audience to measure a man's worth to the community by the extent of service rendered others. Not until some moments after her name was called did realization dawn upon her.

Filled with the emotion that grips one suddenly called from the plain walks of life to receive a whole-hearted public acclaim the aged woman slowly picked her way to the aisle and down along the rows of seats to the stage steps where she accepted the assistance of U. S. District Attorney Amos W. Woodcock. Tears welled into her eyes and even greater emotion choked back an effort to speak as Dr. Humphreys pinned upon the lapel of her coat an inscribed gold medal and laid into her thin, toilworn palms a neat linen bag containing \$225 in gold coin of various denominations.

Never once had she thought of reward in this manner. Nor could she express in words a reply to those who gathered about her to extend congratulations.

## Stop 10 – Nancy Ellen Jones Lewis

### Nancy Ellen Jones Lewis (1856-1941)

#### Founder of the House of Refuge, Recipient of the Salisbury Award

Mrs. Nancy Ellen Lewis made her residence into a House of Refuge for the aged, friendless, lame, and anyone else who called at her door with nothing in return for such hospitality.

In 1930 she received the Salisbury Award in recognition of her humanitarian efforts. [The Salisbury Award](#) was established in 1926 by Mr. [G. William Phillips](#). Mr. Phillips is also interred in Parsons.

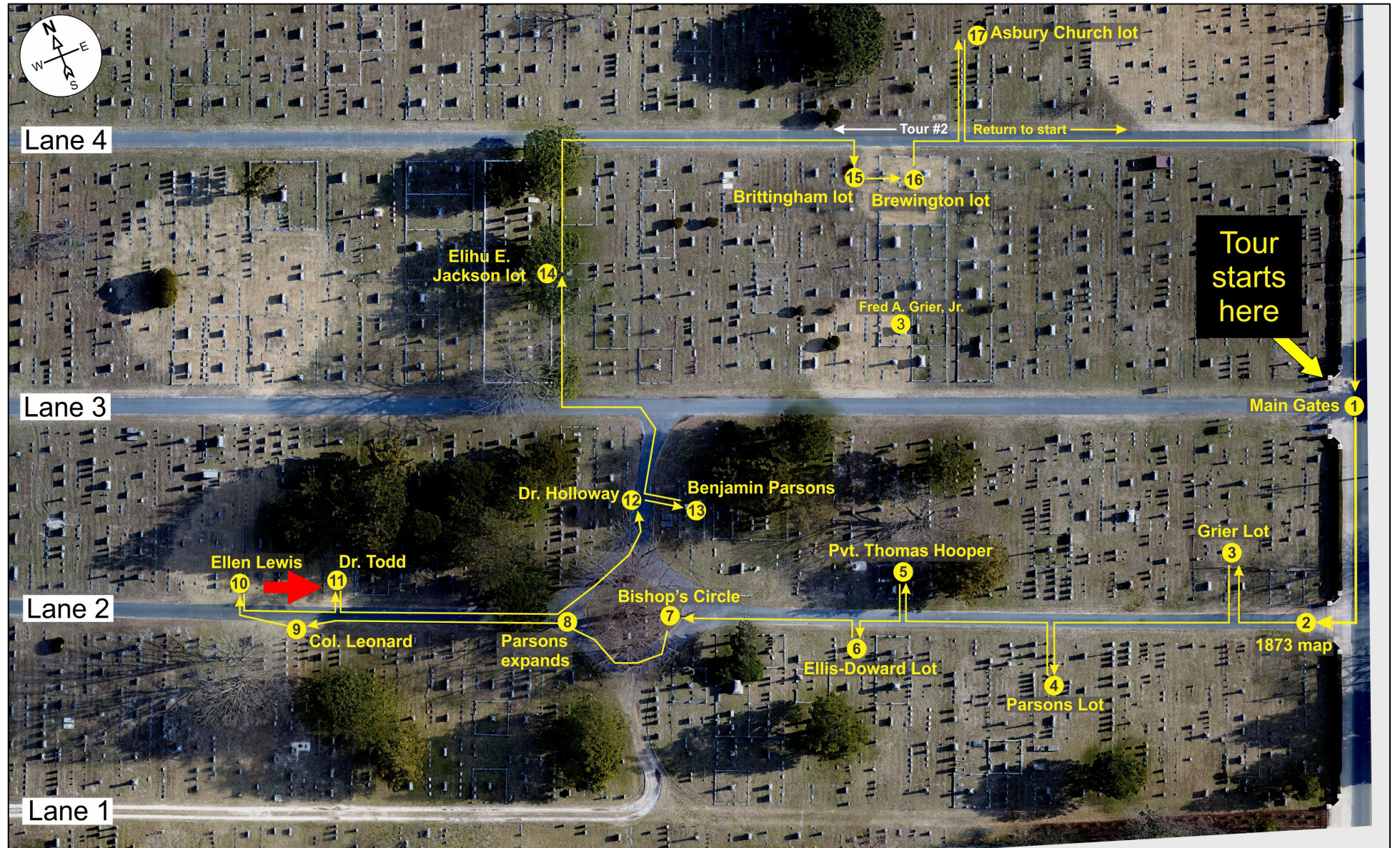
"Her kind words and actions gave encouragement to the down-hearted: with loving care the sick in soul and body were nurtured back to health and happiness. And all this with never a thought of a material award."

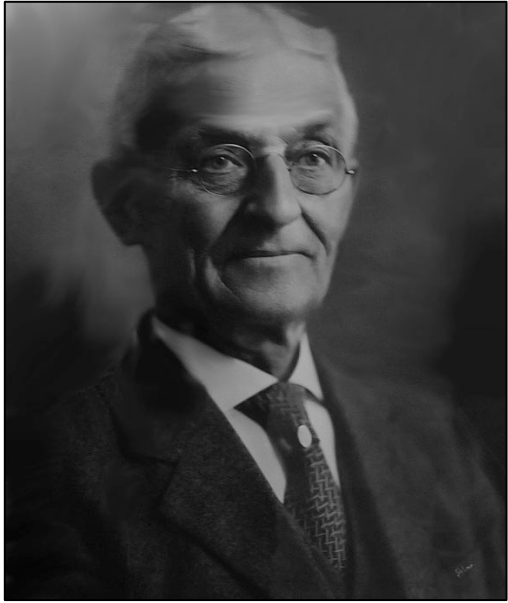




## Next Stop: 11

At this point you will begin to walk east along Lane 2. Stop 11 is about 60 feet on the left. Look for the tall “Todd” marker as shown on the next slide. There is also a kiosk nearby with more information.





## Stop 11 – Dr. George W. Todd

### Founder, Peninsula General Hospital (Now Tidal Health)

*“Dr. George W. Todd was born Dec. 9, 1860, on a farm in Delmar, Delaware. He became the third physician in his family, and just shy of his 37th birthday, he founded Peninsula General Hospital.”*

*“How many 37-year-olds do you know today who would take such a gigantic leap of faith and commit everything they are, everything they have and everything they know to serving the people of a community they love?”*

*“Dr. Todd's dream became a reality when Peninsula General Hospital opened the doors to its modest six-bed, frame house facility in Salisbury on Fitzwater Street near Main, on Oct. 1, 1897.”*

*“The demand for more space forced the purchase of a neighboring house, adding 14 more beds in 1899.”*

Source: Roger Follebout, Jr. [Delmarva Now](#) 9/13/2017



(Postcard image courtesy of the [Nabb Center](#) at Salisbury University)



**William H. Jackson**

photo downloaded from  
Find-a-Grave. [Submitted by](#)  
"Anthony S"

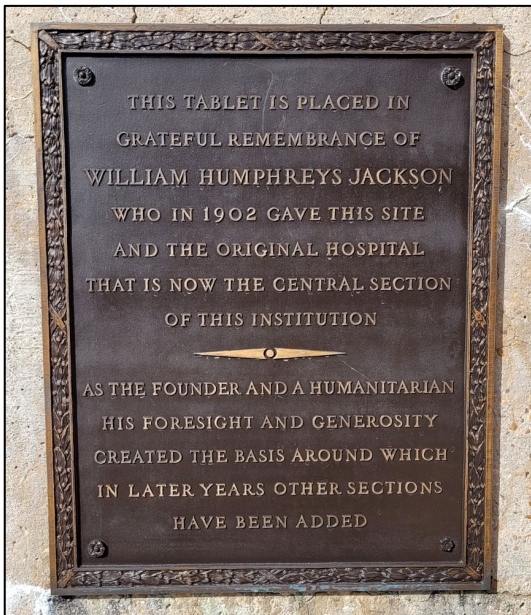
## Stop 11 – Dr. George W. Todd

*"But a growing community required more, so in 1902 the hospital bought land at South Division and Locust streets, where the cornerstone was laid for a new frame-and-brick building right where the Medical Center sits today."*

*"The land was purchased for \$2,700, and the hospital was built through the generous gift of \$50,000 from Congressman [William H. Jackson](#), also a lumber manufacturer and the father of the hospital's first president."*

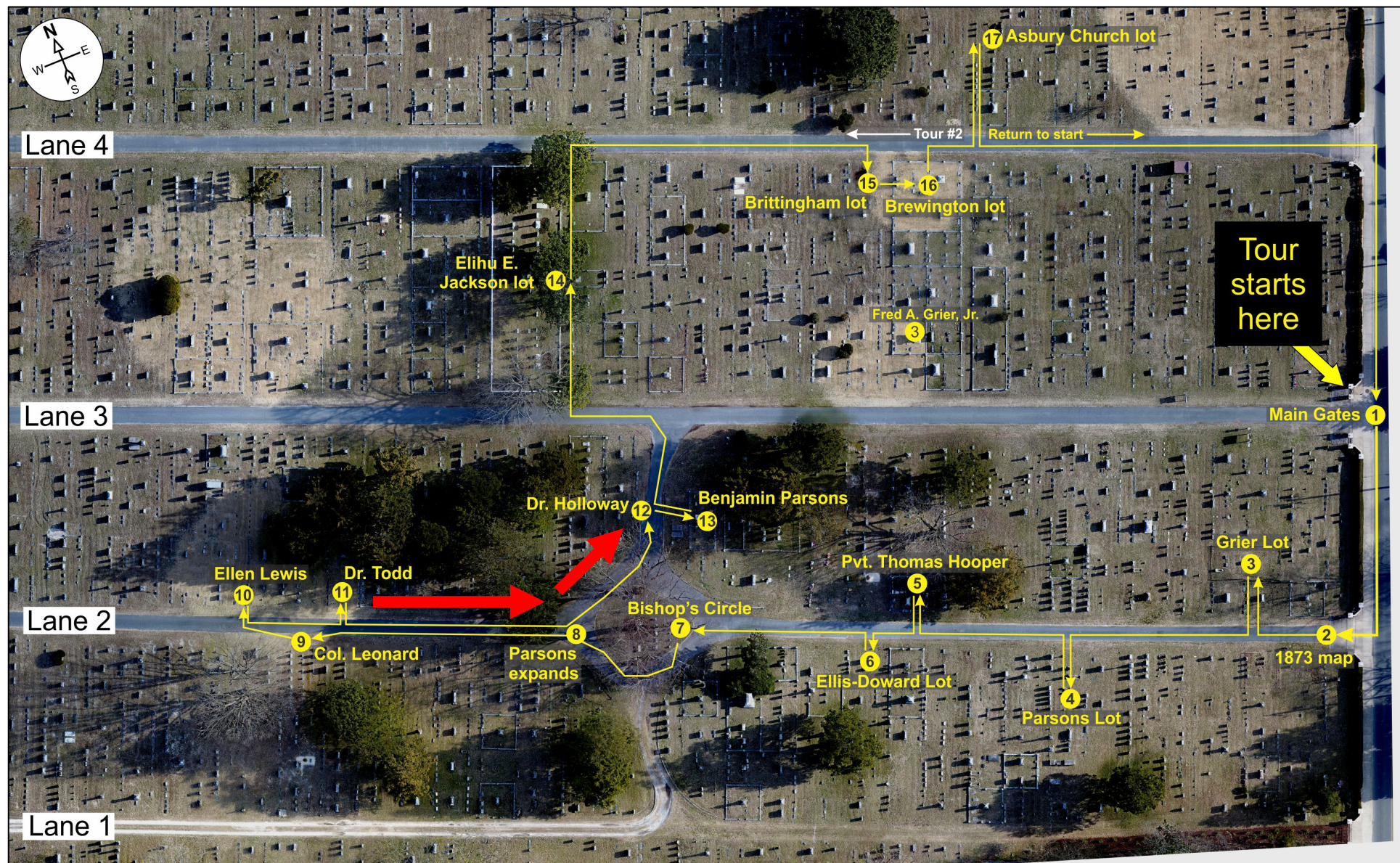
Source: Roger Follebout, Jr. [Delmarva Now](#) 9/13/2017

William H. Jackson is interred in Parsons Cemetery, across from Bishop's Circle (Stop 7).



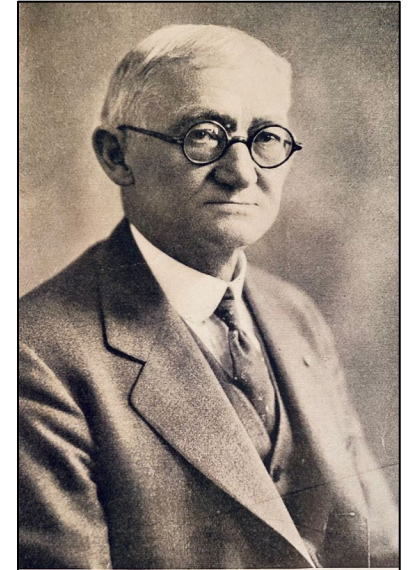
## Next Stop: 12

Continue east along Lane 2 and walk to the left of Bishop's Circle. When the road comes back together, look for a tall "Holloway" marker as shown on the next slide.



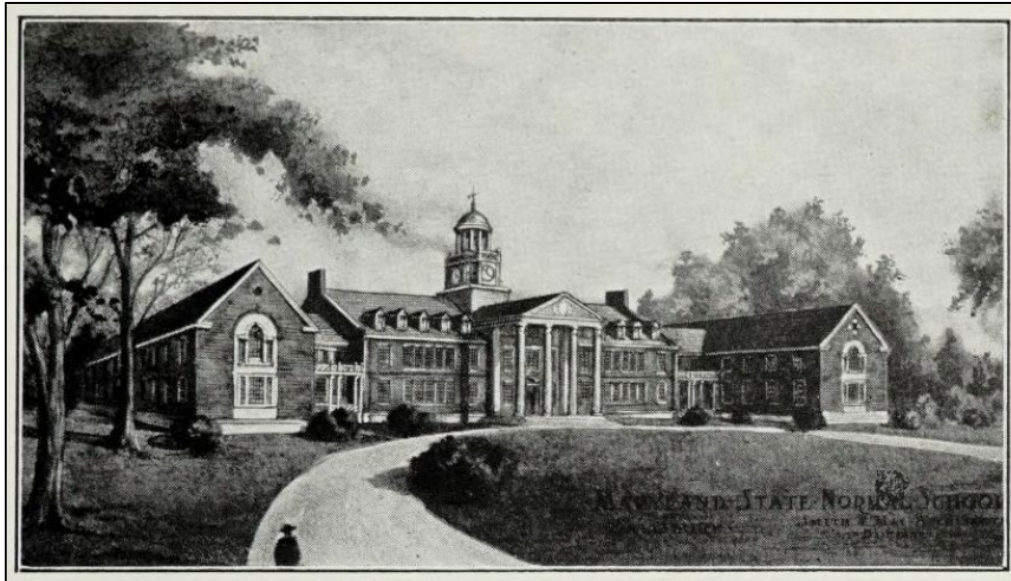
## Stop 12 – Dr. William James Holloway

William James Holloway was the founder and first president of Salisbury State Normal School, now [Salisbury University](#). The new State Normal School opened its doors on September 7, 1925, with 105 students. They learned, slept and dined in a single building (now Holloway Hall) and even taught young students there in an early “demonstration school.” During his tenure, the school developed from a 2-year normal school to a state teacher's college offering a 4-year curriculum. Dr. Holloway retired on October 5, 1934. Holloway Hall on the University campus was named in his honor.



WILLIAM J. HOLLOWAY, A.M., Ph.D.

[Image courtesy the Nabb Center](#)



[Image courtesy the Nabb Center](#)

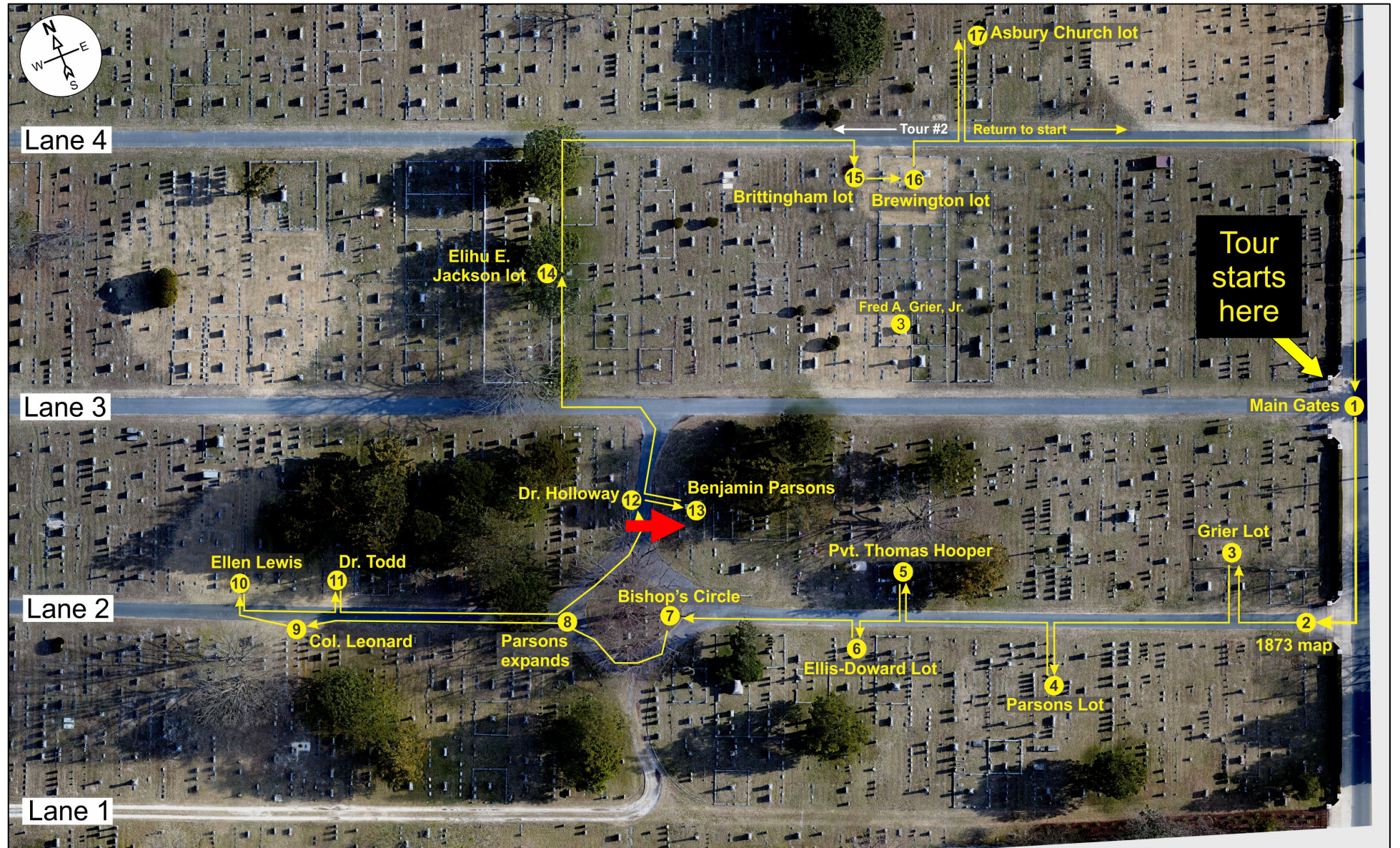


[Image courtesy the Nabb Center](#)



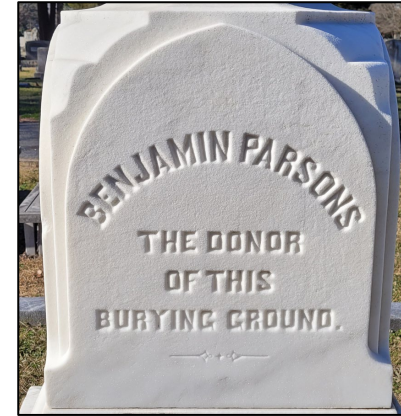
## Next Stop: 13

If you turn and face east, you will see a tall, white obelisk, as shown in the next slide. This is stop 13.



# Stop 13 – Benjamin Parsons Lot

This is the lot of Parson Cemetery's main benefactor, Benjamin Parsons. To read the markers, you will need to leave the road and walk around to other side, as shown below. To his left are his parents, on the right, in the vault, is his first wife. The coping you see around his lot was installed by St. Peter's Church in 1905 by John T. Ellis & Son.



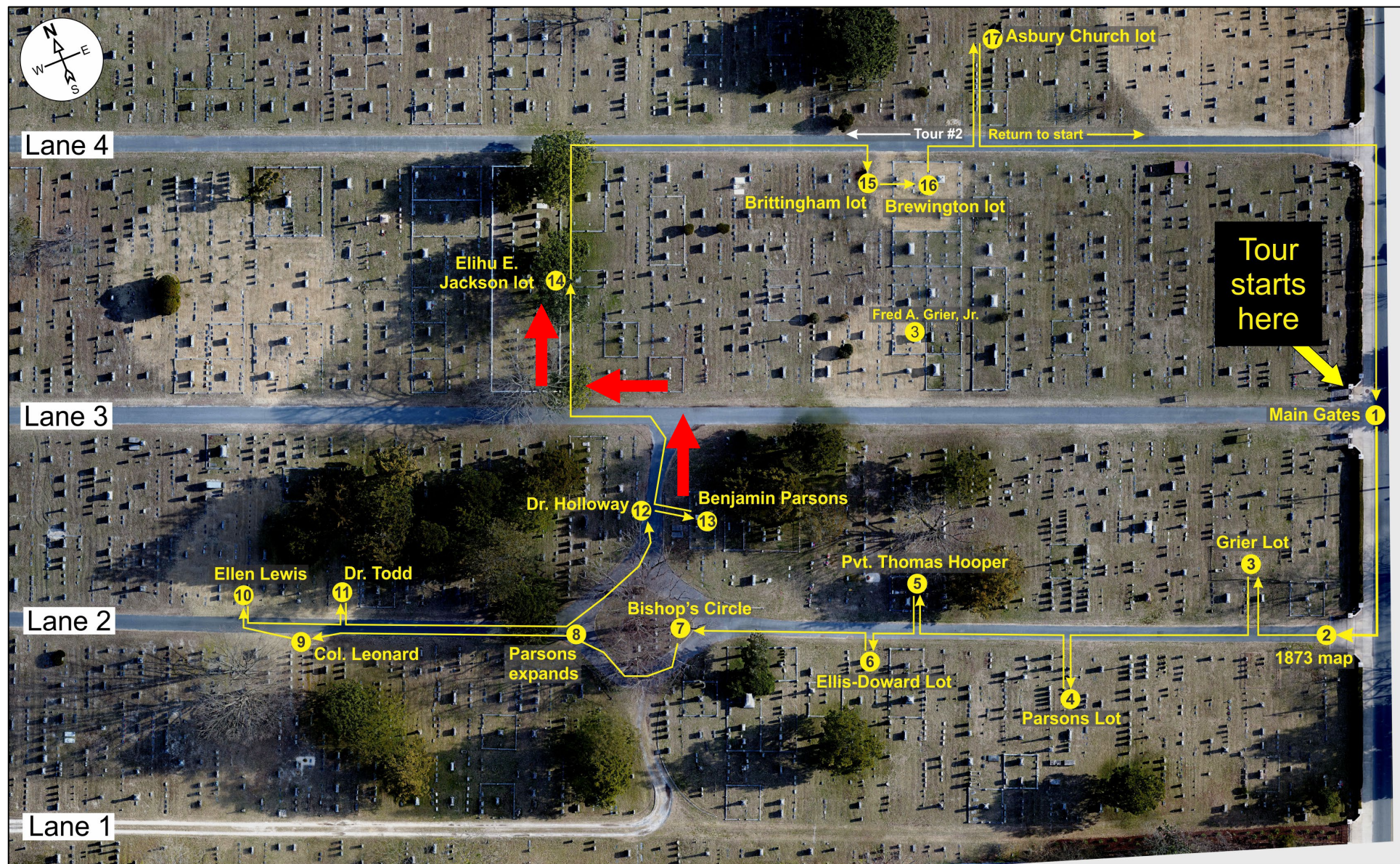
The Courier, Jul. 8, 1905  
—The vestry of St. Peter's Church have contracted with J. T. Ellis & Son to build a granite coping around the burial lot of the late Benjamin Parsons, the donor of Parsons Cemetery. It is to be 12 inches high, 8 inches broad and have 14 posts, 10x10 inches. There will be steps placed at the entrance. The cost will be \$300. The vault is also to be rebuilt and the monument repolished. Arrangements are being made to open the other half of the cemetery grounds to the public, the present half being almost sold off in burial lots.



It is believed that the two small graves adjacent to the lot are Benjamin's former slaves. Census records and his will suggest that he freed his former slaves before 1860. You will see these when you return to the road.

## Next Stop: 14

Return the road and head north until you reach Lane 3. Walk west about 50 feet. On your right you will see a very large family lot surrounded by white marble coping. This is the Jackson lot. There is a grassy "aisle" which will lead you to another kiosk and Stop 14.





## Stop 14 – Elihu E. Jackson Lot

**Elihu Emory Jackson (1837-1907)**

**Maryland Governor 1888-1892**

*"Elihu Emory Jackson, chosen governor for 'his commercial success and his business reputation,' was born near Delmar, MD [on] November 3, 1837, the son of Hugh and Sarah (McBride) Jackson. About 1859, he chose a business career [and] left the farm for the growing mercantile center at Delmar."*

*"In 1863, after the railroad had reached Salisbury, he moved his business there, opening a general merchandise, lumber and grain, and dry goods establishment. His father and eldest brother [[Wilbur F. Jackson](#)] soon joined him in Salisbury, forming a partnership known as the E. E. Jackson & Co."*

*"In 1881, he was nominated and elected to the House of Delegates from Wicomico County. From that date until the State Convention of 1887 his political rise was almost phenomenal. In 1883, he was elected to the State Senate, and on April 5, 1886, the final day of the Session, he was chosen as its President to succeed Edwin Warfield who had resigned....In the election of November 8, 1887, Jackson defeated his Republican opponent, Walter B. Brooks, by a large majority. He took his oath of office on January 11, 1888."*

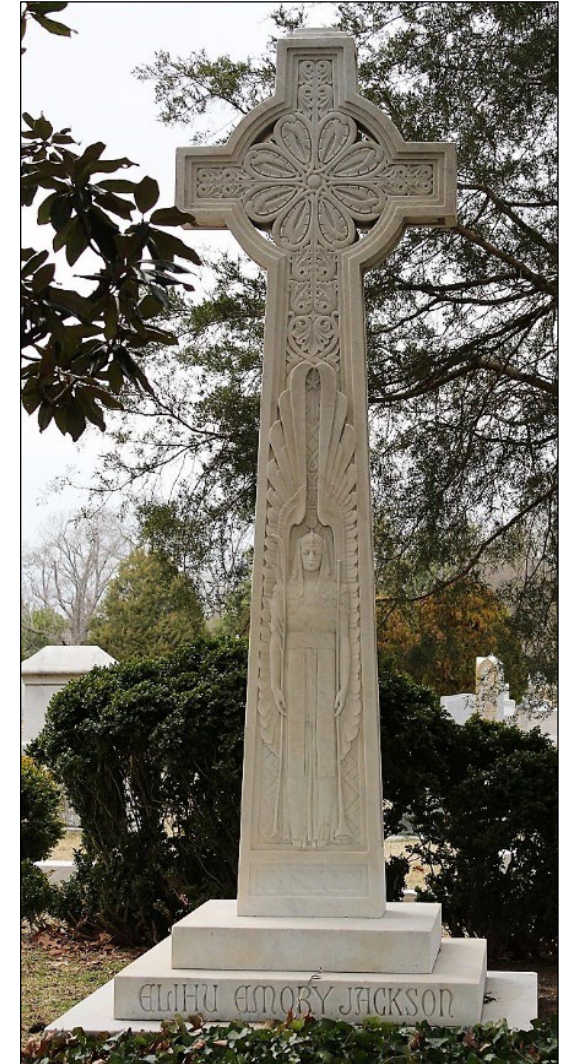
Excerpted from Frank F. White, Jr., *The Governors of Maryland 1777-1970* ([Annapolis: The Hall of Records Commission](#), 1970), 211-213.



Source: [Men of Mark in Maryland](#), Vol. 3, p. 311



Source: [The Maryland State House](#)



Louis Comport Tiffany, [Tiffany Studios' Ecclesiastical Division](#), is credited with this design. The figure is unknown, however, the ancient Greek goddess of victory, Nike, shares the large elaborate wings. Photo from Find-a-Grave, [submitted by "Chris"](#)

## Stop 14 – Elihu E. Jackson Lot

### **The Gov. E. E. Jackson Family Lot**

*“an exquisite outdoor gallery of art”*

The Jackson Family Lot is the largest lot in the Cemetery with 120 gravesites and 30 beautiful and artistic monuments. This lot is maintained by a family trust.

The monuments for Gov. E. E. Jackson, his wife, Annie Rider, and son Hugh William all share a common theme. Gov. Jackson’s monument is from Tiffany (see if you can find the mark!) - the others have no obvious marks.



Above photos by Carol Smith

## Next Stop: 15

Continue north along the grassy lane until you reach Lane 4. Head east towards N. Division St. about 175 feet. Stop 15 will be on your right just off the road.

Look for a row of three upright markers of the same shape and size as shown in the next slide.

They will be next to a large family lot surrounded by white marble coping.



# Stop 15 – Ravages of the 1918 Flu Epidemic

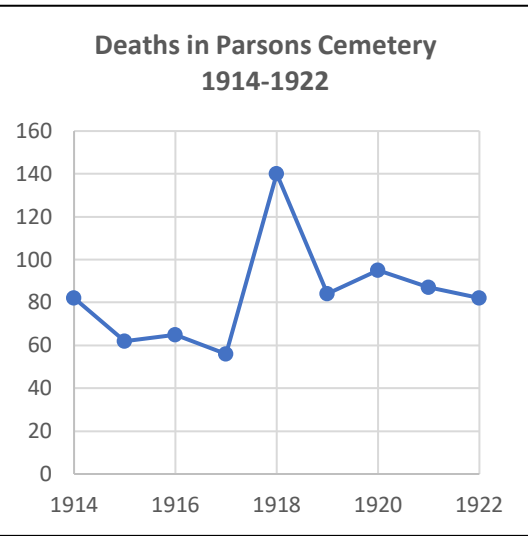
**“FLU” STILL RAVAGES  
CAMP, CITY AND STATE**

Health Department Announces 982  
Cases And 20 Deaths In  
24 Hours.

**WOMEN’S PARADE CALLED OFF**

Thirty-Seven Die At Meade And  
Nine At Fort McHenry — Edge-  
wood Arsenal Reports 33 Fatali-  
ties Since Thursday.

*Baltimore Sun, Oct. 6, 1918*



In the fall of 1918, a deadly strain of flu swept the country. It’s hard to know exactly how many people in Parsons died in the flu epidemic, but using obituaries and death records we estimate approximately 50 flu victims are interred in Parsons, including five WWI soldiers stationed in camp.

Just like we saw with the recent pandemic, our medical professionals sacrificed much to help the sick (right).



*Salisbury Advertiser, Oct. 19, 1918*

**Dr. Geo. W. Betson**

There is general regret in Quantico and vicinity at the death of Dr. Geo. W. Betson, Jr., which occurred Saturday. Dr. Betson literally sacrificed himself to duty. He attended a large number of cases of influenza, and being the only physician in the town, overworked himself and fell a victim to the disease. He was about 45 years of age, the son of George W. Betson, Sr., of Greensboro, Md., Dr. Betson went to Qnantico to practice from Queenstown a few months ago.

*Salisbury Advertiser, Oct. 4, 1918*

**Death of Mr. and  
Mrs. Reese Brittingham**

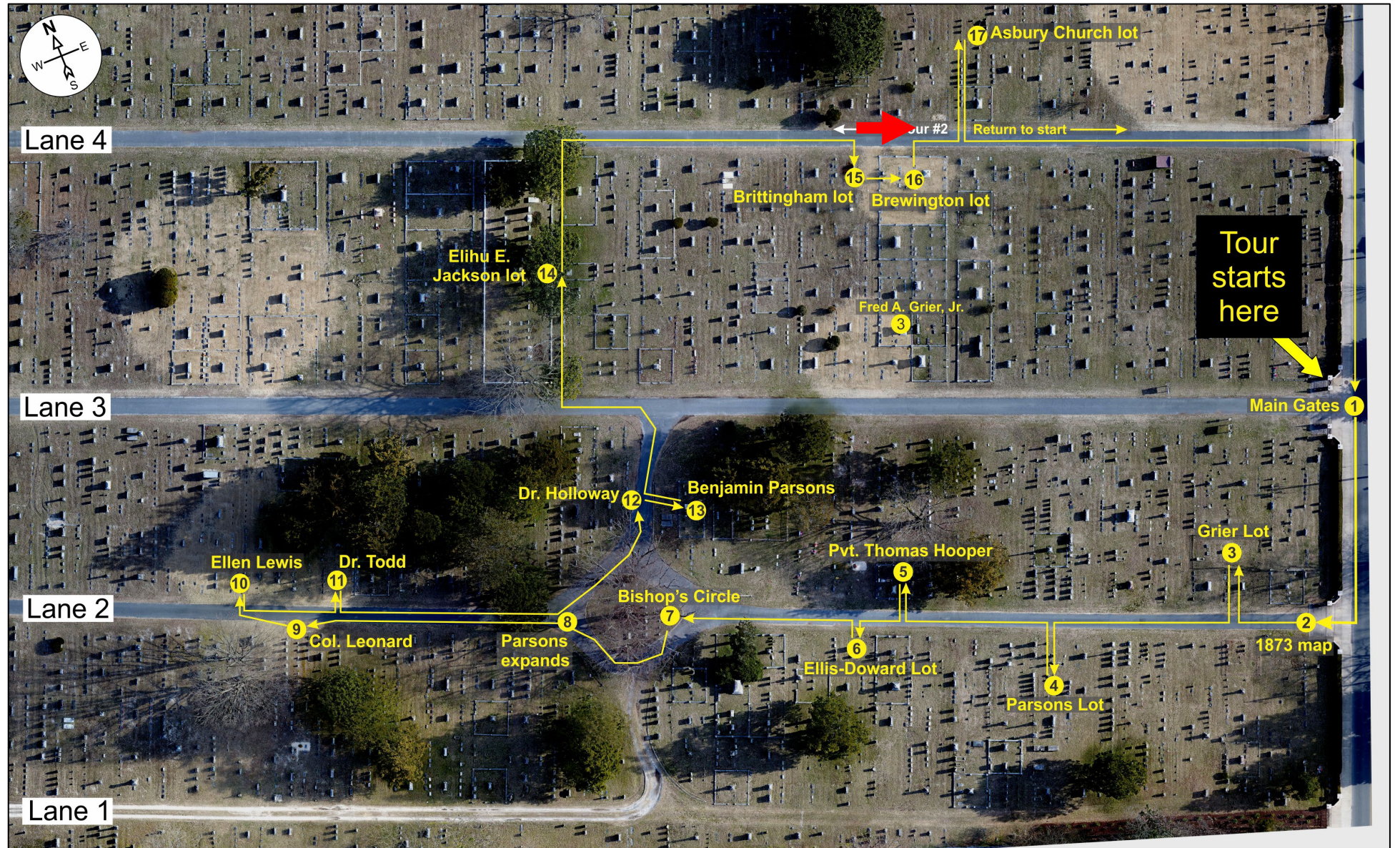
Both Mr. and Mrs. Reese Brittingham succumb to the influenza which is attacking so many homes here. Mr. Brittingham died Tuesday night and his wife follows the day after her husband’s funeral.

The community is much shocked and grieved at their sudden demise no children survive them.

## Next Stop: 16

If you turn around, the large family lot in front of you is Stop 16.

The tall marker in front of you is Marion V. Brewington, Sr., as shown on the next slide.



## Stop 16 – Brewington Family Lot

**Marion Vernon Brewington, Sr. (1866-1920)**

Journalist, Editor, State Senator

**Harry Long Brewington (1858-1921)**

Journalist, Editor



When apprentice newsman Marion V. Brewington, Sr. was denied a raise in pay, he and his brother Harry L. Brewington bought the *Wicomico News* from Mr. Lee Lankford, its founder, in 1888. They spent the next 31 years devoting their lives to the *Wicomico News*, making it a very successful newspaper. They did this by advocating for numerous improvements in County and City governments and sponsoring civic and educational programs (like the hospital, Stop 11).

Marion V. Brewington, Sr. was a Maryland State Senator from 1899-1907.



**Marion V. Brewington, Sr.**

Source: *Newspapers and newspaper men of Maryland, past and present.* ed. by Paul Winchester and Frank D. Webb, 1905



Source: *The Wicomico News*, Thursday Jan. 5, 1922

# Stop 16 – Brewington Family Lot

## Marion Vernon Brewington, Jr. (1902-1974) Journalist, Scholar, Author, Veteran

Marion V. Brewington, Jr. was a maritime historian and a WWII Navy veteran. One must read Marion Jr.'s obituary to fully grasp the depth and size of his accomplishments (right).

**The Brewington Book Prize**, named in honor of Marion Brewington, Jr., has been awarded annually since 2016 by The Maritime Committee of the [Maryland Center for History and Culture](#). The award is given annually for the best book on maritime history related to the Chesapeake Bay or the nation.



## Brewington, 72, Historian

New London, Conn. (Special). Marion V. Brewington, a research associate for the Mystic Seaport, whose collection of Chesapeake Bay maritime material rests in the Maryland Historical Society, died at a hospital here Sunday after a short illness.

A specialist in maritime art, Mr. Brewington, who was 72, had been assistant director and curator of maritime history at the Peabody Museum, in Salem, Mass., and director of the Kendall Whaling Museum, in Sharon, Mass., before becoming associated with the Seaport last summer.

In the mid-1950's, when the Salisbury (Md.) native left Maryland to become associated with Peabody, his collection of models, carvings, tools and other items involved in the maritime history of the Chesapeake were purchased for the historical society by the *Sunpapers*.

### Author Of Books

Among his books are "The

Chesapeake Bay. A Pictorial Maritime History" and "Chesapeake Bay Log Canoes and Bugeyes," which was first published as two separate works.

He attended the Gilman School and Tome School before graduating from the University of Pennsylvania in 1925.

He was then in the banking business in Philadelphia until World War II, during which he served in the Navy.

He reached the rank of lieutenant commander while serving first with naval intelligence and later as curator of the Naval Historical Foundation, in Washington.

Leaving the Navy after the war, he moved to Cambridge, Md., where he built an addition to a home he bought to house his rapidly expanding marine collection which was begun in his youth.

### Trustee Of Foundation

He was a trustee of the Naval Historical Foundation, a governor of the Chesapeake Bay Marine Museum and a member

of the board of overseers of the Bath Marine Museum.

He was also a member of the Maryland and Massachusetts historical societies, Mystic Seaport, the Club of Odd Volumes, the American Antiquarian Society and the Society for Nautical Research.

He is survived by his wife, the former Dorothy Riddel.

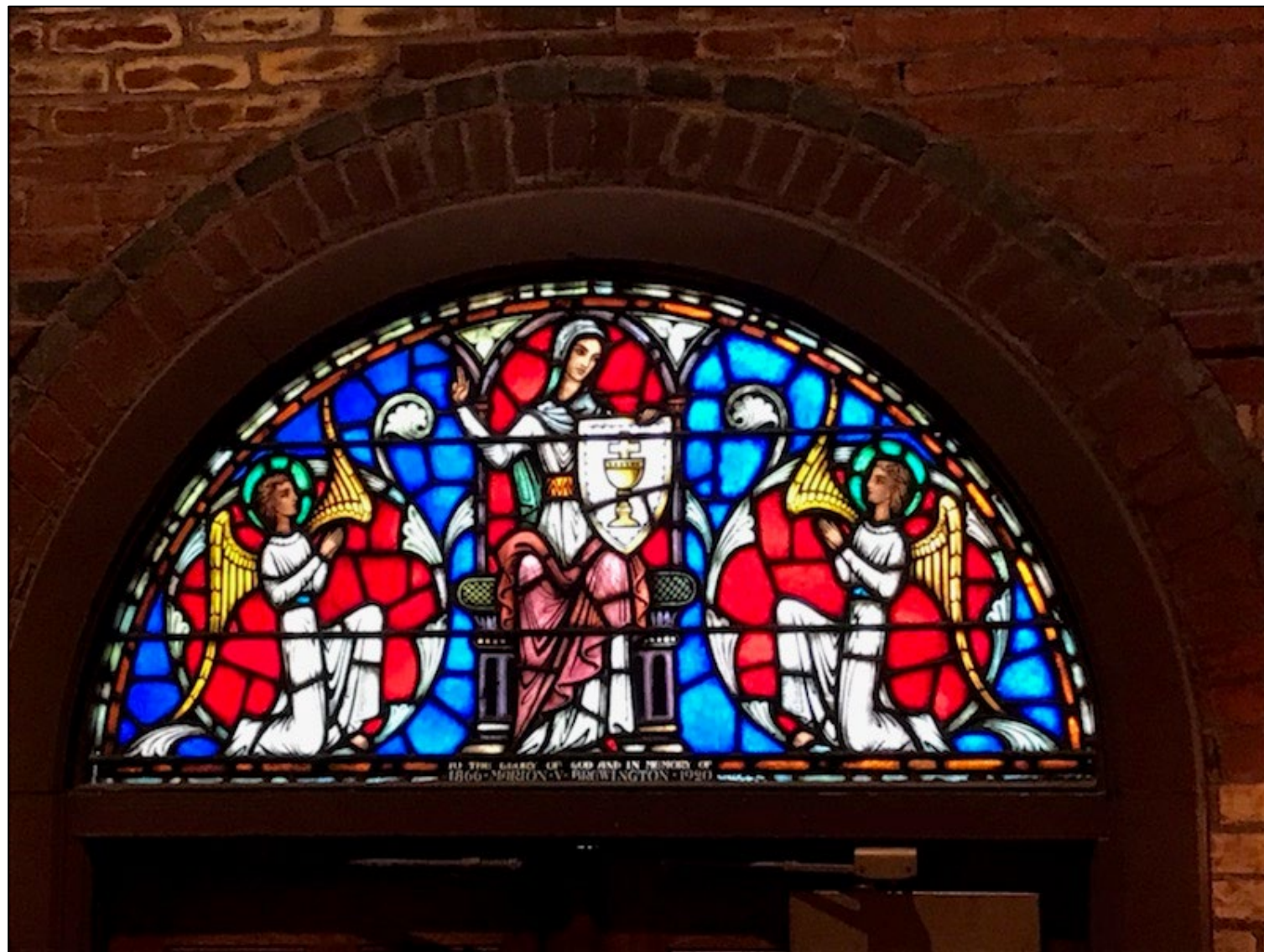
Arrangements for a memorial service were incomplete yesterday.

*The Evening Sun*  
(Baltimore, Maryland)  
10 Dec 1974, Tue - Page 34

## Stop 16 – Brewington Family Lot

The Brewington Family were also active members of St. Peter's Church. If you tour the church, you will see many stained-glass windows, like the one shown here. This window is in memory of Marion V. Brewington, Sr.

Many other windows in St. Peter's Church can be tied to persons interred in Parsons Cemetery.

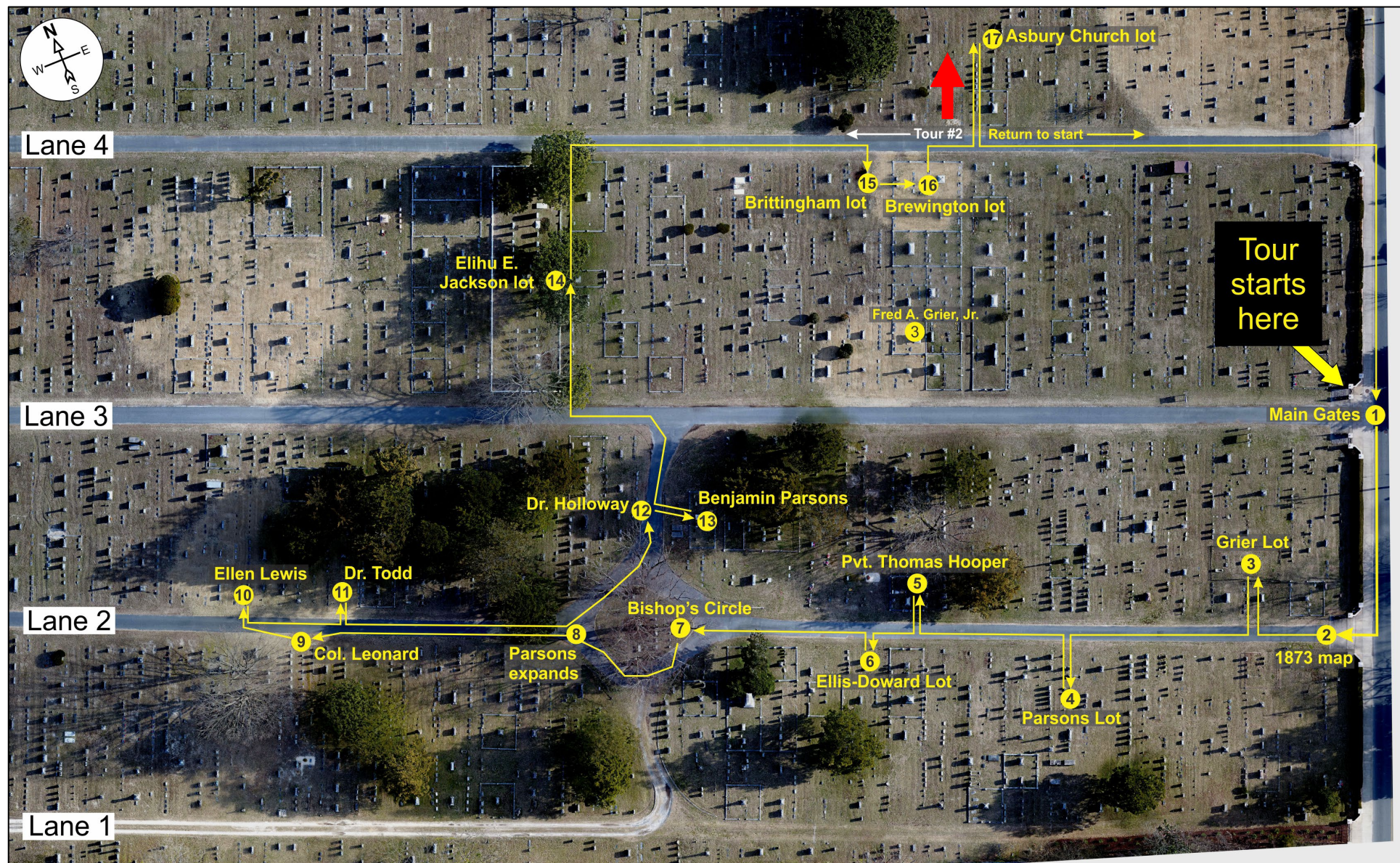




## Next Stop: 17

Return to Lane 4.  
Stop 17 is about 50 feet to the north of Lane 4 from where you are standing.

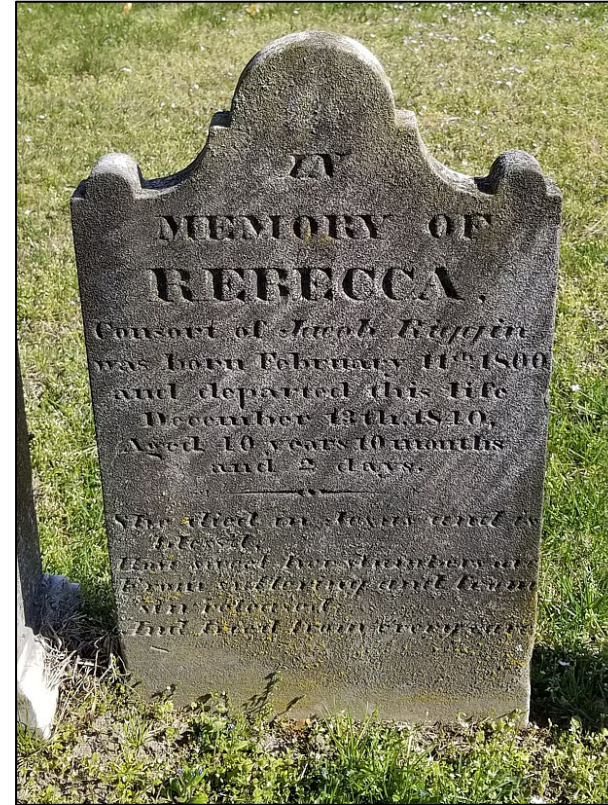
Look for a cluster of old, closely-spaced markers as shown in the next slide.



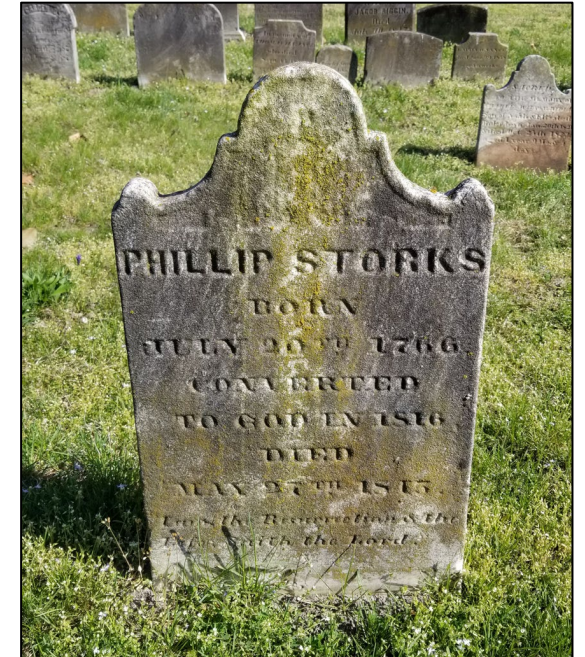
## Stop 17 – Graves moved from Asbury Methodist Church

Over the years, many people have been reinterred in Parsons Cemetery, and in some cases, whole church graveyards have been relocated to Parsons. Stop 15 exemplifies this. All the people buried on this lot were moved here from Asbury M.E. Church in 1912. These markers can be hard to read, but the oldest date back to the 1700s.

You can see the style of the various markers, and the inscriptions on them, are very different from the younger markers throughout the rest of the cemetery.



# Stop 17 – Graves moved from Asbury Methodist Church



## Where to go next

Thank you for taking this walking tour through the historic section of Parsons Cemetery. We hope you found the tour informative and interesting.

Once you have returned to the road, you can walk east towards Division St. and back to the main gates where the tour started.

Alternatively, and if you have the time, we invite you to complete one of our other tours. Historic Tour #2 starts just down Lane 4 from where Tour #1 ends.



**Back to Main Gates**



**This way to Tour #2**

## How to return to the main gates

Continue east along Lane 4 until our reach N. Division St. Head south towards the next gate. This is the main gate where you started the tour.

