

History of the Land on which the Cemetery is Located

After the Civil War, many African American families acquired, settled on, and farmed the land along what is now Cornwall Road, on both the east and west sides of what is now Kildaire Farm Road. The sacred land where our brothers and sisters are laid to rest reveals part of the cemetery's history. Stories passed down tell that African Americans were buried on the land as early as 1866, possibly before the first worship service was held on the same land under a brush arbor in 1868.

The land appears in deeds as follows:

October 20, 1869

James E. Allen sold to Mariah L. Seagroves 74+ acres of land. Mariah's first husband, Alfred Seagroves, fought and died in the Civil War in 1864. She married William L. Horton in 1866. It is unclear why she received the land from James Allen in her former married name.

November 2, 1869

Shortly after receiving the land from James Allen, Mariah and her husband at the time, William Horton, sold 35+ acres of it to James Joseph (J. J.) Hines of Craven County, North Carolina. J.J. Hines bought the 35+ acres for his daughter, Evilina, who married Hardy H. Perry in 1874. Evilina and Hardy were also from Craven County. J. J. Hines was a white traveling minister who preached in Asbury from time to time and we speculate that's how he came to know the area in Wake County and why he bought land for his daughter here. Evilina died in 1875, just one year after her marriage to Hardy. Neither she nor Hardy ever lived on the land her father had bought for her in Cary.

May 26, 1877

Evilina's widowed husband Hardy, still in Craven County, sold a half interest in the land to Henry R. Bryan of Craven County.

September 4, 1877

Hardy conveyed 34.25 acres to George B. Guion, also of Craven County. In the deed is the statement: "being and excepting from the operation of instrument the one acre heretofore sold to a Religious Congregation by J. J. Hines. . . ." No deed has been found from J. J. Hines conveying land to the church. The deed could possibly not have been registered. But it appears sometime between 1869 and 1877, J. J. Hines sold or conveyed one acre of land to a religious congregation, most likely the early members of Cary First Christian Church.

November 25, 1879

Henry Bryan and others (his wife Mary N. Bryan and George Guion), all of Craven County, sold 34+ acres to Tranquilla A. Dowell of Wake County. In the deed is this statement:

“(excepting) nevertheless one acre of said tract at its north west corner on which a church has been built by certain colored (people) containing 34 1/2 acres more or less, after deducting said acre excepted.” The church to which this deed is referring might have been the brush arbor under which the early members of the Cary First Christian Church congregation worshipped.

June 22, 1909

Tranquilla and her husband George J. Dowell conveyed a piece of land to Trustees for Colored Cary Christian Church: John Beckwith, Handy Jones, and Dennis Jones. In the deed are these statements: “This deed is intended only to convey the land lying between T. A. Dowell's line adjoining the Grave Yard on the east, Eli Yates line on the west, for the purpose of increasing the size of the grave yard, belonging to certain colored people and to establish the location of such grave Yard it [the grave yard] having been laid off by the parties concerned some time during the summer of 1908. It is not intended to give any title to the grave yard, now owned by the colored people, but to quit any claim to said Grave Yard and to consent to the parties within named as Trustees having all the land covered by mentioning the within described land having and holding to them forever, the [grave] yard so far as our interest lies 285 feet long and 210 feet wide in the corner of the land of T. A. Dowell, now known as the south west corner of the land she purchased of R. H. Battle Commissioner of Bryan and Guion” This deed appears to have resulted in another third of an acre or so added to the acre the church already had.

1980

A small section of land was conveyed to the church through a quit claim deed by Joan Thomas as a result of changes to West Cornwall Road.