

LAWRENCE GRAVEYARD, 216th Street and 42nd Avenue, Bayside, Borough of Queens.
Built about 1840.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 6290, Lot 100.

On December 27, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Lawrence Graveyard in Bayside, Queens and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 120). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. At the public hearing two letters were read in favor of designation. There were no speakers in opposition to designation.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

In a wooded area once used by the Lawrence family as a favorite picnic ground and known as "Pine Grove" is a secluded family Cemetery, dotted with a variety of headstones, some of them impressively handsome in form and style. Interred in this tree-shaded burial ground are the last remains of an important family whose name is surrounded with story and legend of local and national historic significance. Occupying a corner lot and located in a semi-industrial neighborhood, the rear of the property line of this small Cemetery is contained by a factory wall, and a railroad culvert adjoins one side of the grounds. Vandalized a few years ago, the forty-eight graves in the cemetery have been restored at a considerable expense, shared by heirs of the Lawrence family and civic-minded citizens of the Bayside Historical Society.

This plot of ground is part of the original patent granted by the Dutch Governor Kieft of New Amsterdam to John and William Lawrence and certain other persons, in the year 1645. It has been in the possession of the Lawrence family all of this time. One of the original patentees, John Lawrence, was twice Mayor of the City of New York (1673 and 1691). A Lawrence married into the Washington family during the reign of Henry III of England. Hence, we find in American history the name of Lawrence Washington, half brother of George from whom he inherited Mt. Vernon.

The first burial took place in 1832 and the last in 1925. In 1840 Judge Effingham Lawrence of Bayside entered into an agreement with his cousin John B. Lawrence of New York City for the dedication of a piece of ground to serve as a burying place for the said parties and respective families and for their descendants and heirs.

Famous people buried in this old Cemetery include Cornelius W. Lawrence, Mayor of the City of New York (1834-37), over whose grave stands a shaft in the form of an obelisk. County Judge Effingham Lawrence's grave is marked by a large rectangular monolith of stone, set on a stepped base. Other members of the Lawrence family interred here include Frederick Newbold Lawrence, President of the New York Stock Exchange (1882-1883) and Mary Nicolls Lawrence, second wife of Mayor Andrew H. Mickle of the City of New York. Anne Willets, descendant of the City of New York's first Mayor, is also buried in this Cemetery.

Among the artistically distinguished gravestones is a twin marker, Gothic in style with a trefoil-pointed arch surrounded by a foliate carving and surmounted by the carved head of a child resting in the bosom of angels wings. It is a handsome and fitting marker to two children who died in their infancy, the son and daughter of Clarence and Caroline McKim.

In the determination of members of the Bayside Historical Society and the descendants of the Lawrence family to preserve the Cemetery, one is reminded of the famous quotation of the early naval hero, James Lawrence, who said, "Don't give up the ship." Money has been raised by the public-spirited citizens of Bayside to enclose the property with a new fence and to beautify and landscape these grounds so worthy of preservation as a national memorial.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this cemetery, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Lawrence Graveyard in Bayside, Queens has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, the Lawrence Graveyard in Bayside, Queens is an important and impressive small burial plot situated in a tree-shrouded landscaped enclosure and that it contains some handsome headstones marking the last remains of the descendants and heirs of a Seventeenth Century New York family associated with the historical, political and cultural growth of our City and our Country.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 8-A of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 8-A of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Lawrence Graveyard, 216th Street and 42nd Avenue, Bayside, Borough of Queens and designates Tax Map Block 6290, Lot 100, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.