

LAWRENCE FAMILY GRAVEYARD, Southeast corner of 20th Road and 35th Street intersection, Steinway, Borough of Queens. 1703.

Landmark Site: Borough of Queens Tax Map Block 828, Lot 90.

On January 11, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Lawrence Family Graveyard and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site. (Item No. 38). At that time no speakers appeared to testify. The Commission continued the public hearing until February 8, 1966 (Item No. 37). At that time two speakers appeared to testify in favor of designation, including the owner of the property. Both hearings were duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. There were no speakers in opposition to designation at either meeting.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

A private cemetery holding the remains of this country's great patriots should be considered as much a Landmark as are certain buildings designated because of their distinguished owners and distinguished history.

The Lawrence Family Cemetery is important, primarily because of the history connected with those who are buried there. It is also notable due to the beauty of its handsome grounds. This half-acre plot has 89 graves, enclosed by a low stone wall topped by an iron fence at its entrance side. The other three sides are simply enclosed by a brick wall with iron fence above. The entrance originally abutted on the Old Bowery Bay Road of which no vestige remains. Today the plot lies in the center of a residential block.

Historically, the Lawrence Family cemetery dates from 1703, when Major Thomas Lawrence was the first to be buried there. Miss Ruth Lawrence, the last member of the Lawrence family to live in Astoria, was the last member of the family to be buried there in 1956. The roster of family notables who have been interred there includes 12 high ranking military officers, whose service to their country ranges from the time of Dutch rule in New York to the Civil War. It also includes seven members of the family who served in major government posts in New York. Outstanding among the many notable members of this family was Major Jonathan Lawrence, who lived from 1737 to 1812. He was a distinguished soldier, wise statesman and self-sacrificing patriot. He took part in several military expeditions and cooperated with General Washington in obtaining additional forces for the Revolutionary Army at Brooklyn.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATIONS

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Lawrence Family Graveyard 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 Family Cemetery stands as a memorable reminder of our past, that it serves as the last resting place of many notable citizens of a famous family which has always maintained a leading position in the annals of our history and that, as restored, it is an attractive little cemetery representing an important part of our heritage.

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 Family Graveyard, Southeast corner of 20th Road and 35th Street intersection, Borough of Queens and designates Tax Map Block 828, Lot 90, Borough of Queens, as its Landmark Site.