

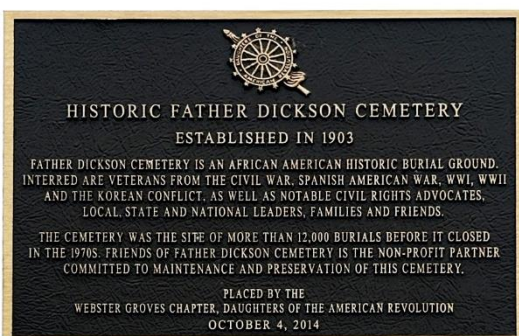
FATHER DICKSON CEMETERY

EST. 1903

THIS PROPERTY WAS PLACED ON THE

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FRIENDS OF FATHER DICKSON CEMETERY

Moses Dickson, a Black man, was born free in Ohio in 1824 at a time when hundreds of thousands of his people were shackled in slavery. Dickson traveled through out the pre-war South as an itinerant barber. Despite the horrible hardships of slavery, he recognized a wealth of talent, courage and strength among the Black population-slaves and freed men and women as well.

Dickson lobbied for schools for Black children with Black teachers and he played an active part in co-founding Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, a Historically Black College/University (HBCU). After the Civil War, he organized the first “Temple & Tabernacle of the Knights & Daughters of Tabor” and founded the “Order of Twelve”.



In his later years, Dickson decided to spread the Gospel and became a minister dedicating his life to social activism on behalf of freed slaves including their voting rights. In recognition of his many contributions and tireless efforts, including the relocation of 16,000 freed slaves following the Emancipation Proclamation, Reverend Dickson earned the more paternal title of “Father”.

Famous burials and memorials at Father Dickson Cemetery

Susan Paul Vashon, 1838-1912: She was a distinguished teacher, school principal and community organizer of numerous groups for women and young people, but she is perhaps best remembered for her efforts during the Civil War when she raised money and cared for wounded soldiers and black refugees. She married George B. Vashon and had 7 children. After George’s death, she moved to St. Louis in 1882 with her surviving 4 children. Her children went on to hold respected positions in St. Louis and Vashon High School was named in recognition of the family’s outstanding community achievement. Mrs. Vashon is buried in Father Dickson Cemetery along with her son, John B. Vashon and 8 other family members

James Milton Turner, 1840-1915: Born a slave, freed in 1843 with his mother. Mr. Turner was an educator, and co-founder of Lincoln University, an HBCU. He was the first Black Minister Resident/Consul General to Liberia in 1871 appointed by Ulysses S. Grant and the first Black person to serve in the U.S. diplomatic corps.

Henry Lewis, 1886-1965: Popularly known as “Steamboat”, he was an entrepreneur as well as personal barber to Augustus Busch, Sr.

Madam C. J. Walker: Widely regarded as the first Black female millionaire. She has a memorial monument located near the entrance of the cemetery dedicated in her honor.

Father Dickson Cemetery

This historic cemetery stands as a tribute to Father Moses Dickson’s belief that as individuals and as a people, each of us can make a difference.

Father Dickson Cemetery is a site of Black history and the resting place of veterans from the American Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean Conflict. Buried here are members of the Masonic Order, a family who perished in the 1915 flood of the River Des Peres, and the victims of a 1916 legal hanging.

Come... Walk... Learn

845 South Sappington Road
Crestwood, Missouri 63126
(314)822-8221

Visit Sunrise to Sunset

INTRIGUING FACTS ABOUT
BLACK CEMETERIES

Headstones in Father Dickson Cemetery follow an ancient tradition of facing the East. Therefore, superstition states beds in homes should face another direction.



Some plots in Father Dickson Cemetery have pipes buried next to the headstone to provide a conduit for the soul to rise.



Father Dickson Cemetery is one of many cemeteries in the St. Louis area endangered by urban sprawl and abandonment.



FRIENDS OF FATHER DICKSON CEMETERY

This historic cemetery was one of the first public cemeteries for Black citizens in the St. Louis Area. In fact, the cemetery was the site of more than 12,000 burials before it was closed in the 1970s. Without a perpetual care endowment, the cemetery fell victim to abuse, neglect and vicious acts of vandalism. Friends of Father Dickson Cemetery (FFDC) was organized in 1988 to repair, restore and preserve this site.

FFDC donated microfilm of the Father Dickson Cemetery burial records to the St. Louis County Library’s Julius K. Hunter and Friends African American Research collection. This extensive microfilm collection contains records dating from 1904 to 1983 of thousands of formerly enslaved Black citizens and their descendants. This donation and other private gifts make these records available for genealogy research at the St. Louis County Library Headquarters.

The cemetery is adjacent to land originally owned by Sappington family members, Granville Eads, and the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Today, the cemetery is bordered by Sappington Road and Grant’s Trail, used for biking and walking on the old railroad line. Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site and Grant’s Farm are down the trail from the cemetery. Crestwood’s historic Sappington House is just across the trail from the cemetery.

The vision for the cemetery includes restoration of the natural beauty of this local landmark, and prevention of the loss of its historic value. A self-guided walking tour is available on the website. In addition to raising funds for maintenance of the 13-acre tract, FFDC strives to increase community awareness and education by involving individuals, families, and organizations. As with any volunteer effort, the challenge is to do more with less. We believe we can make a difference. In fact, we know we have made a difference, and so can you!



Please help us protect and save Father Dickson Cemetery!

Contact information:
314-822-8221
friendsoffather@aol.com
<http://fatherdicksoncemetery.org>

Father Dickson Cemetery thrives today as a direct result of donations from our community of friends. Your financial support helps to pay for mowing, utilities and maintenance of tools and equipment. The Cemetery is a 501(c)(13) organization with contributions for maintenance being fully tax deductible.

Donations via check can be mailed to
Friends of Father Dickson Cemetery
P.O. Box 220612
St. Louis, MO 63122

Donations via Zelle can be made to
Phone number - 314-822-8221

Donations via PayPal can be made
on the website using the “Donate Now”
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Thank you for your support