

## Crowley Cemetery – Dekalb County, Georgia

This cemetery holds the family of James M Crowley

James M Crowley moved to Decatur, Dekalb Co., Georgia in about 1822 – 1823, which is now a southeastern suburb of Atlanta. He owned about 500 acres. The Atlanta area was Creek Indian Territory until the Indians ceded the land to our government in 1822.

They put their cemetery on a hill overlooking their land about 100 yards north of their house and put a barbed wire fence around it. When James died in 1828, he was one of the first ones buried there,

Allen Crowley owned the land from 1829 to Nov 1846, when he moved his family by wagon train to Northern Mississippi. It is believed that Seaborn Crowley family owned the land from 1846 to 1896 when it was purchased by the Hill Family (also Crowley relatives). In about 1960 the Hills sold part of the land and leased the other part so that the Avondale Mall could be built. The mall is near the intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Road. The Mall was completed in 1963. The builder agreed to build a mausoleum around the cemetery, which is now in the parking lot.

The mausoleum is built of granite stones and is about 60ft long and wide and is about 25 ft high. A huge amount of dirt and trees had to be removed from the hill where the cemetery was in order to make the parking lot and to build the mausoleum. The graves are on top of the mausoleum.

There are seven adults and four children that lay in unmarked box tombs

These first two are the only ones that have inscriptions

Delaney Crowley Cross...wife of Zachariah D. Cross...born 1808...died April 17, 1892. Age 82 years.

Zachariah D. Cross...Aug 15, 1815-Nov. 18, 1891.

Benjamin C Crowley...Aug. 03, 1812 - Jan. 03, 1869

James M Crowley...born 1777..died Feb 9, 1828. Came to Dekalb County from Oglethorpe County, Georgia.

Dorcas Smith Crowley, no inscribed marker. Died about 1851 or 1852. Wife of James Crowley, Sr..

James Crowley, Jr... Died when a young man.

Mary J. Tuggle Crowley... July 12, 1823- Sept.14,1863...wife of Benjamin C Crowley.

John Hawkins...no inscribed marker. Father of John M. Hawkins. This was recorded Dec. 11, 1931. (note; he was friend of the family)

There were 40 or 50 slave graves buried surrounding the cemetery, but when the mall was built they made no effort to save these graves.

The pictures that follow were taken in January 2007.

As you can see from the pictures the cemetery is need of a clean which I intend to get the project going as soon as I can gain access on a permanent basis

Anita White  
Riverdale, GA

James M Crowley is my 6<sup>th</sup> great grandfather

MAY 2019

Here is a quick story @ our 175 year early Dekalb area Pioneers, and our still standing Mausoleum!

~~~~~  
Visited my Great Great Great Great Grandfather: Benjamin Crowley's gravesite today:: Decatur, Georgia, a suburb now of Atlanta!! This is the Mausoleum with 11 relatives buried up on top! The actual farm was bulldozed to the lower level, leaving the graves on top! My family lived on this land for 175 years!!! Wow!! That's a very long time!!

History: James Crowley was born in 1772 in Pittsylvania County, Va. His parents, Benjamin and Sarah, brought the family to Oglethorpe County, Ga. in 1785. Benjamin died in 1817. In 1822, James received about 500 acres in Decatur from a land lottery and farmed it until his death in 1828. He later owned additional farms and did well financially, owning a number of slaves (our dark history) .

The family put their cemetery on a hill overlooking their land. When James died, he was buried there as was his wife, Dorcas, in 1852. (My 3x GrandFather and GrandMother)

Their son Allen Crowley (my Great Great Grandfather) owned the land from 1829 to 1846, when he moved his family by wagon train to Northern Mississippi. Younger brother Seaborn Crowley and his family took it over from 1846 to 1896 when it was purchased by the Hill Family (also Crowley relatives).

In 1960, the Hills sold part of the land and leased the other part so that the Columbia Mall could be built. Completed in 1963, the mall was near the intersection of Memorial Drive and Columbia Road. The builder agreed to build a mausoleum around the cemetery, which was in the parking lot. The builder had to dig down about 20 to 25 feet on all sides of the cemetery and then build the building around the cemetery.

Unfortunately, there were 40 or 50 slave graves buried surrounding the cemetery. Sadly, no effort was made to save those graves and they were built over. Currently, the 11 graves (nine of them of the box variety) at the top of the mausoleum are members of the Crowley, Cross and Hawkins families. Seven are adults and four are children. A bronze plaque explained the history of the site. I'm not sure where the part about the land grant being from the king of England came from. It contradicts everything else I've read. The plaque was later pried off the mausoleum and has vanished.

Walmart did a terrific job- protecting the Mausoleum (protected for perpetuity), in their parking lot reconfiguration. The Crowley Mausoleum is now protected behind a little forest, and can be accessed through the Napa Auto Parts parking lot, not Walmart's lot. You can't see it from the Napa or Walmart parking lots, but if you know where to look, you can glimpse it as you're driving south on the right, just before the Napa on Memorial Drive, heading south towards the Walmart's entrance.

Sunny Crowley

## CROWLEY FAMILY CEMETERY.

Location: Near intersection of <sup>Memorial Drive</sup> Columbia Road<sup>Dr.</sup> and Midway Road. Land Lot #217, 15th. District, DeKalb County, Decatur District.

Recorded Dec. 11, 1931.

|          |               |                                                                                         |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Cross,   | Delaney.      | Died April 17, 1892. Aged 82 years.<br>Wife of Zachariah D. Cross.                      |
| Cross,   | Zachariah D.  | Aug. 15, 1815 - Nov. 18, 1891.                                                          |
| Crowley, | Benjamin.     | Aug. 3, 1812 - Jan. 3, 1869.                                                            |
| Crowley, | James, Sr.    | No inscribed marker.<br>Died 1828. Came to DeKalb County<br>from Oglethorpe County, Ga. |
| Crowley, | Dorcas Smith. | No inscribed marker.<br>Died about 1851 or 1852.<br>Wife of James Crowley, Sr.          |
| Crowley, | James, Jr.    | No inscribed marker.<br>Died when a young man.                                          |
| Crowley, | Mary J.       | July 12, 1823 - Sept. 14, 1863.<br>Wife of Benjamin Crowley.                            |
| Hawkins, | John.         | No inscribed marker.<br>Father of John M. Hawkins.                                      |

There are 11 graves in this cemetery, 7 adult and 4 children, marked by box tombs, uninscribed. These include the graves of James Crowley, Sr., Dorcas Smith Crowley and James Crowley, Jr.

Information about uninscribed graves furnished by a daughter of Benjamin Crowley and granddaughter of James Crowley, Sr.

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**Husband: James M Crowley**

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Born: 1777 in: Pittsylvania County, Virginia  
Married: 23 Feb 1799 in: Oglethorpe County, Georgia  
Died: 09 Feb 1828 in: Decatur, DeKalb Co., Georgia  
Burial: in: Crowley Cemetery - Decatur, Georgia  
Father: Benjamin Crowley  
Mother: Sarah "Sary" Strong  
Other Spouses:

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**Wife: Dorcas Smith**

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Born: Abt. 1778 in: North Carolina  
Died: Abt. 1851 in: Dekalb County, Georgia  
Burial: in: Crowley Cemetery - Decatur, Georgia  
Father:  
Mother:  
Other Spouses:

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**CHILDREN**

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|        |                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1<br>F | Name: Infant Crowley<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                           | in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2<br>M | Name: Joseph Josiah Crowley<br>Born: 1802<br>Died: 1847<br>Burial:<br>Married: Abt. 1824<br>Spouse: Sarah "Sally" Jennings                         | in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in: South Carolina<br>in: Edgefield District, South Carolina                                                                                       |
| 3<br>F | Name: Nancy Crowley<br>Born: 03 Oct 1804<br>Died: 18 Nov 1871<br>Burial:<br>Married: 27 Dec 1823<br>Spouse: Boswell Smith "Baws" Jennings          | in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in: Webster County, Mississippi<br>in: Family Plot - Webster Co., Mississippi<br>in: Oglethorpe County, Georgia                                    |
| 4<br>M | Name: Allen Crowley<br>Born: 15 Jan 1806<br>Died: 29 Aug 1864<br>Burial:<br>Married: 28 Dec 1836<br>Spouse: Eliza Towers                           | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: Hohenlinden, Calhoun Co., Mississippi<br>in: Ball Cemetery - Hohenlinden, Calhoun Co., Mississippi<br>in: Decatur, DeKalb Co., Georgia |
| 5<br>F | Name: Delaney "Dealy" Crowley<br>Born 1: 1808<br>Born 2: 1808<br>Died: 17 Apr 1892<br>Burial:<br>Married: 18 Sep 1844<br>Spouse: Zachariah D Cross | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in: Crowley Family Cemetery - DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia               |
| 6<br>M | Name: James M Crowley, Jr<br>Born: 1810<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Married: 11 Mar 1875<br>Spouse: Mary A Smith                                        | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in:<br>in: Dekalb County, Georgia                                                                            |
| 7<br>M | Name: Benjamin C Crowley<br>Born: 03 Aug 1812<br>Died: 03 Jan 1869<br>Burial:                                                                      | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in: Crowley Cemetery - DeKalb Co., Georgia                                                                   |



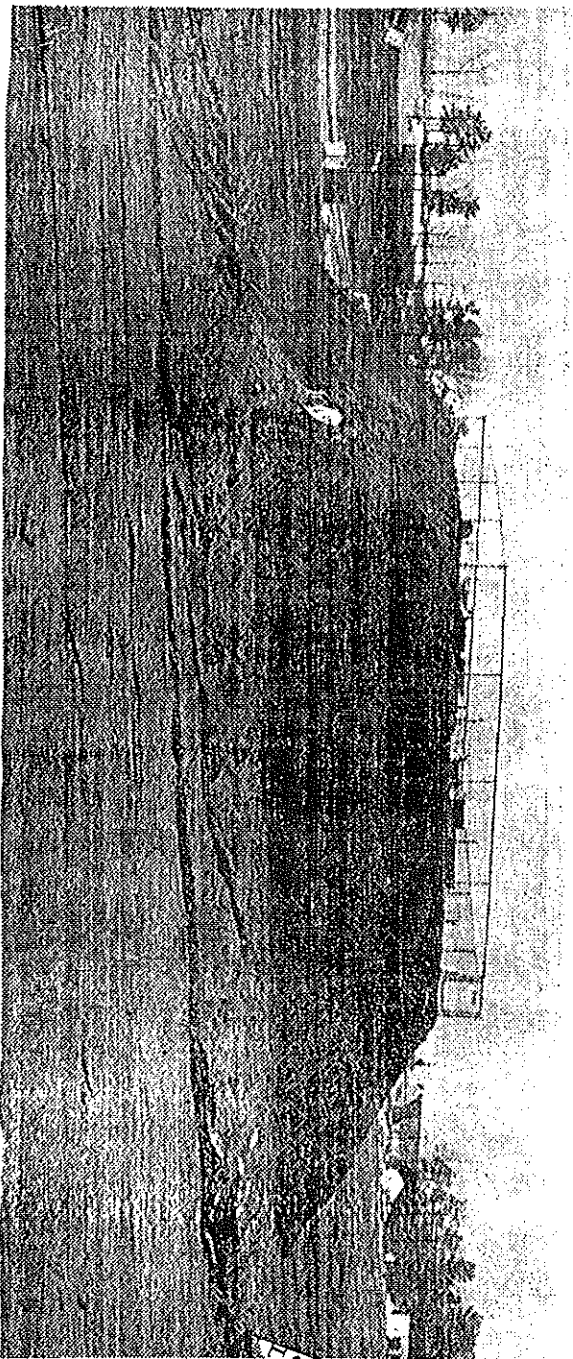
|    |                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                               |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7  | Married: 11 Nov 1844<br>Spouse: Mary Jane Tuggle                                                                                          | in: DeKalb County, Georgia                                                                                                                                    |
| M  | Married: 06 Dec 1866<br>Spouse: Nancy A M White                                                                                           | in: Dekalb County, Georgia                                                                                                                                    |
| 8  | Name: Seaborn Crowley<br>Born: 12 Nov 1813<br>Died: 12 May 1890<br>Burial:<br>Married: 30 Nov 1854<br>Spouse: Frances E "Fannie" Ragsdale | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia<br>in: Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery - DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb County, Georgia |
| 9  | Name: Susan Crowley<br>Born: Abt. 1816<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                         | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                              |
| 10 | Name: Harrison "Harris" Crowley<br>Born: 15 Jul 1820<br>Died: 18 May 1882<br>Burial:<br>Married: 09 May 1844<br>Spouse: Mary Jane Sturgis | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: Clifton Methodist Churchyard - DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: DeKalb Co., Georgia            |
| 11 | Name: George Washington Crowley<br>Born: 1820<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Married: 14 May 1846<br>Spouse: Sarah J Jones                        | in: Lexington, DeKalb Co., Georgia<br>in: Morgan County, Alabama<br>in: Thrasher Cemetery - Trinity, Alabama<br>in: Dekalb County, Georgia                    |
| 12 | Name:<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                                 | in:<br>in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                      |
| 13 | Name:<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                                 | in:<br>in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                      |
| 14 | Name:<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                                 | in:<br>in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                      |
| 15 | Name:<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                                 | in:<br>in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                      |
| 16 | Name:<br>Born:<br>Married:<br>Died:<br>Burial:<br>Spouse:                                                                                 | in:<br>in:<br>in:<br>in:                                                                                                                                      |

Oct 26 1914

Following a brief illness Mrs  
R. E. Carroll (the Chubb Carroll)  
of Lithonia passed away at a private  
sanitarium in Atlanta Sat after.

She was 36 yrs old. The deceased  
was the wife of R. E. Carroll  
County Commissioner of DeKalb,  
& the daughter of Mrs O. B. Chubb.

Crowley



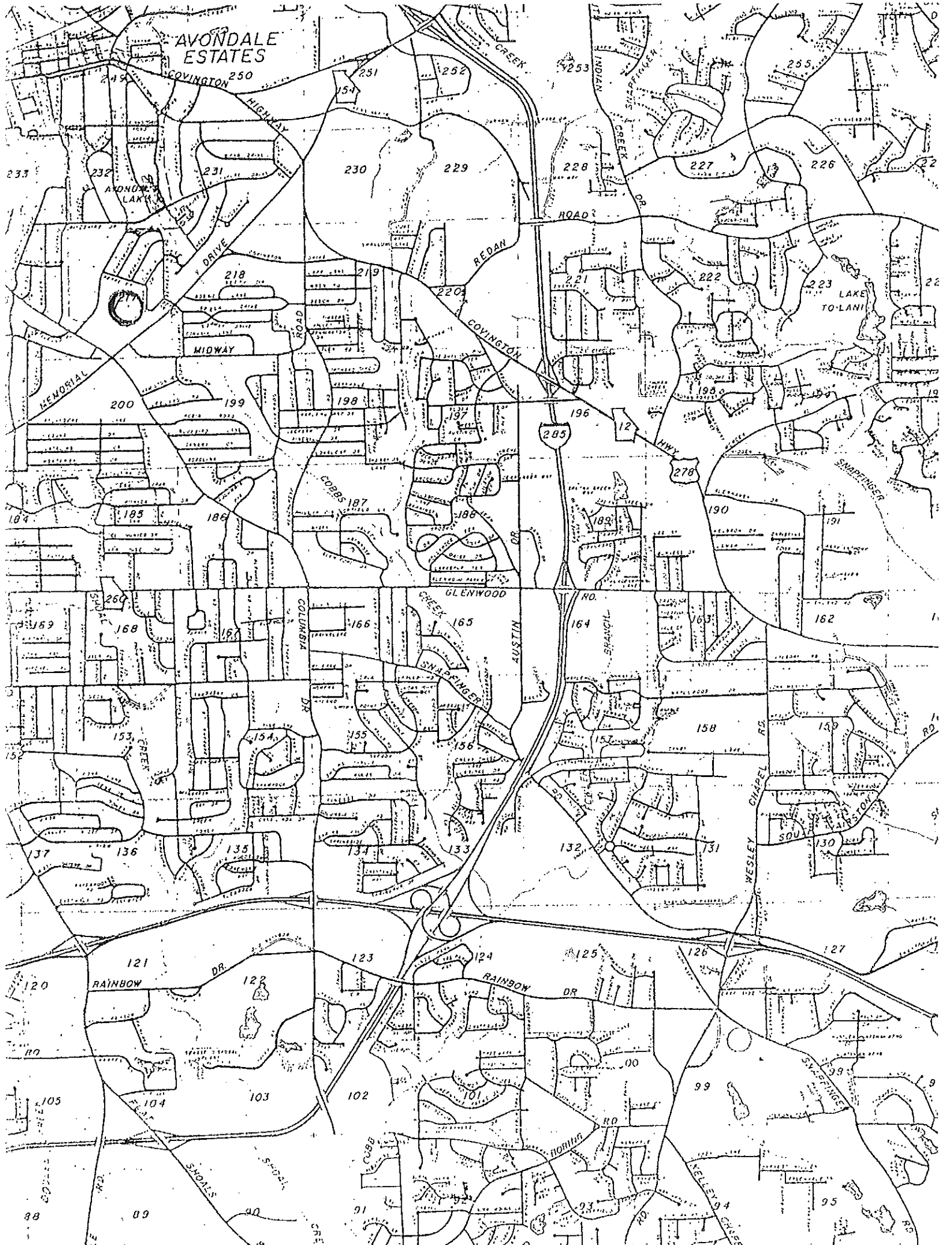
Staff Photo—Hugh Stovall

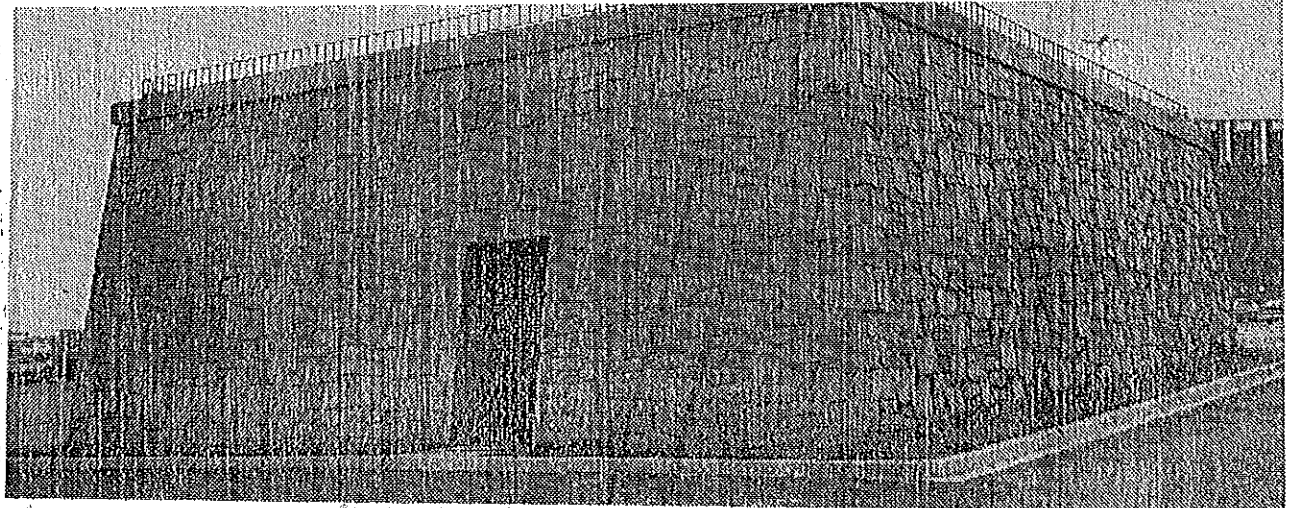
## PROGRESS EVERYWHERE . . . ALMOST

Near Columbia and Memorial drives land is being cleared where business structures will soon be raised. But despite construction in the name of progress one plot of ground remains as it is. It is a

small grave plot. The height of the plot gives an indication of how much the construction site has been graded to make way for new buildings.

AVONDALE ESTATES





Staff Photo—Dwight

MYSTERY STRUCTURE IN MIDDLE OF COLUMBIA MALL IS PUZZLEMENT TO MANY OF CENTER'S SHOPPERS. The Gray, Orchard Stone Structure Is Family Grave Which Was Left Standing by Builders of Center.

## CROWLEY FAMILY GRAVES 1965

# Columbia Mall Mystery Structure

By SHIRLEY HEWITT

In the middle of the busy Columbia Mall shopping area parking lot stands a small, gray, orchard stone structure—a mystery to many of the area's shoppers.

The structure has no windows and only one small, iron gate. Inside the gate, narrow stairway, leads to the roof of the building.

And although many wonder

about the almost square structure, few stop to investigate. Those who do are amazed to learn it's a cemetery.

LOCATED just off Memorial Drive in DeKalb County, it contains 13 graves that date back a century. They were preserved when the Davison's Department Store and the Sears, Roebuck and Co. store were erected on the site, turn-

ing the area into a parking lot for their patrons.

Dr. J. B. Crowley, whose ancestors are buried in the cemetery, said plans for the preservation of the graves were made when the property was originally sold.

"One acre of the land was not sold," he said.

According to Dr. Crowley, there were originally 23 graves. "But 10 were unmarked," he said.

were marked were served."

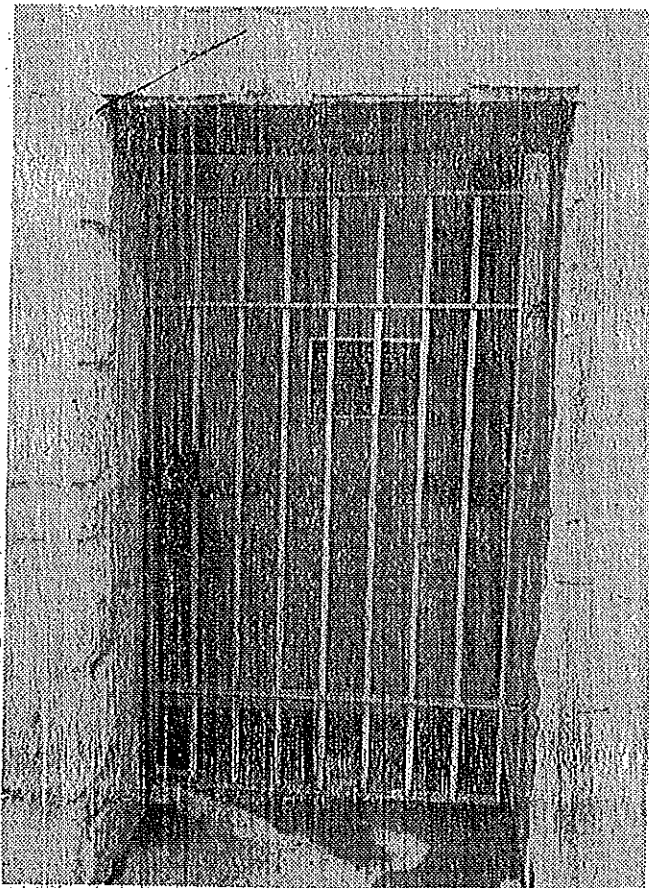
THE PROPERTY dates back to 1802. It was part of a land grant given to Dr. Crowley's family by the British Crown.

According to Dr. Crowley, his great-great grandfather—James Crowley—was the first person buried there. Other graves include his wife, brother-in-law, and other relatives.

"They were all buried side-by-side," Dr. Crowley said. "And they were all related."

"All the graves are very old," he said. "One I know is dated shortly after the Civil War about 1866."

He said the graves "have a rock slab on each side and on the top. All the graves th a t



IRON GATE IS ONLY ENTRANCE TO STRUCTURE Steps Lead to Roof of the Building

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## UNIQUE CEMETERY PRESERVATION TECHNIQUES

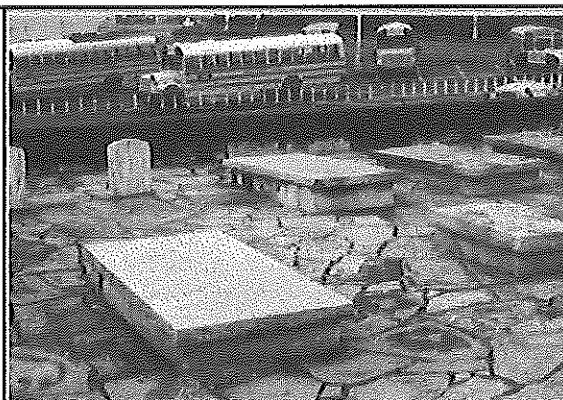
### CROWLEY CEMETERY in DeKalb County, Georgia

When the former Crowley homestead in Decatur, Georgia, was being developed in the late 1960s as a shopping center, the family cemetery was excepted from the deed of conveyance and the developer went to great lengths and expense to build this "mausoleum", preserving the family burial place.

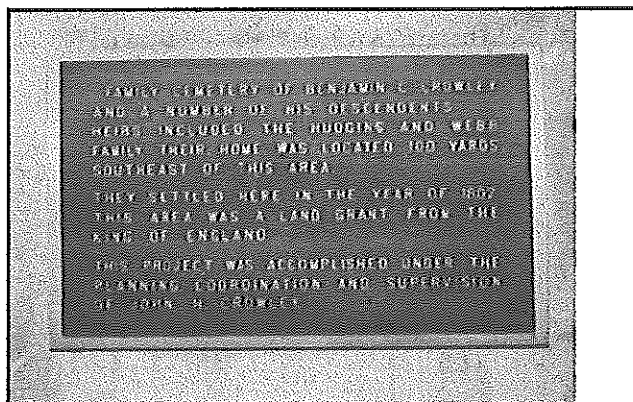
The shopping center is today known as "Avondale Mall" and is at the intersection of Columbia Drive and Memorial Drive in Decatur. These photos were taken by Lois Mauk on 12/08/97.



Crowley Family Cemetery, which is actually about 15 feet ABOVE the pavement in this DeKalb County, Georgia shopping center.



Some of the 13 marked graves atop the structure which is the Crowley Family Cemetery. Notice the "ground" is paved with stones. The buses are parked on the surrounding pavement, some 15 feet below the surface of the cemetery.



This is the plaque inside the iron gate on the pavement level of this cemetery. Just to the left of this plaque is a set of steps that lead to the "roof" of this structure, which is actually the

former ground level of this property, where the graves of the Crowley family can be found. The plaque above reads:

"Family Cemetery of Benjamin C. Crowley and a number of his descendents. Heirs included the Hudgins and Webb family. Their home was located 100 yards southeast of this area.

"They settled here in theyear of 1802. This area was a land grant from the King of England.

"This project was accomplished under the planning, cooperation and supervision of John H. Crowley."

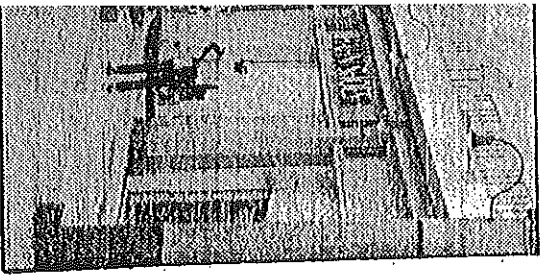
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**E-mail: [LoisMauk@usa.net](mailto:LoisMauk@usa.net)**

**[Click here to return to Lois' Clark County Cemeteries page](#)**

**[Click here to return to the Clark County USGENWEB site](#)**





Avondale Mall at the Columbia Drive. (Staff Photo)

From 1

re renovated ev-  
ing but the  
s. — regional  
iger Jim Carter

liscout center, Carter em-  
Instead, its focus will be  
en discount and the better-  
ranchise," he said.  
opening of Avondale Mall  
place Monday at 9:30 a.m.  
he dignitaries expected is  
ley, Miss Dekalb County.

# 'Tomb of the Unknown Shopper' Family cemetery is parked at mall

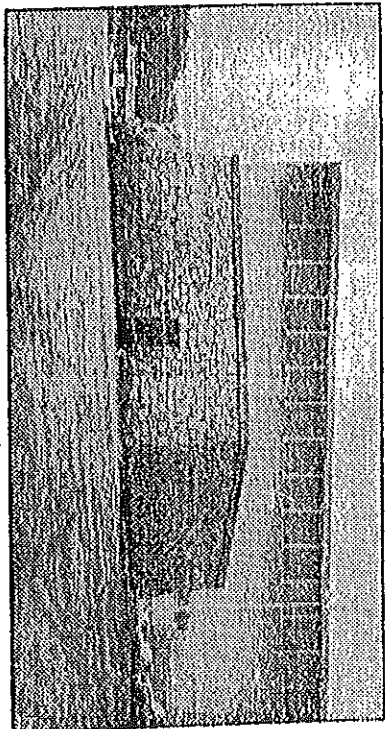
By Sarah Cash  
Staff Writer

If cemeteries make you feel  
creepy, then stay clear of the  
eastern side of the Avondale  
Mall parking lot.

Eleven graves are housed  
within a stone-walled mausoleum  
that stands on the fringe of the  
mall's parking area.

Nearby residents and shop-  
pers often have referred jokingly  
to the mausoleum as "the tomb  
of the unknown shopper."

Outside the state, people may  
not recollect the name of the old  
Columbia Mall — which has  
been revamped and renamed the  
Avondale Mall — but they re-  
member "the shopping center  
with a cemetery," according to  
Avondale Mall marketing direc-



A stone-walled mausoleum houses 11 gravesites in park-  
ing lot of Avondale Mall. (Staff Photo — Billy Downs)

tor Monica Warner.

The bodies of Dekalb pioneer  
Benjamin C. Crowley and his  
family are buried within the  
mausoleum, which stands on  
property originally settled in  
1802 under a land grant from the  
King of England, according to a  
memorial plaque at the mausole-

um gate.

When Columbia Mall was  
built in 1964, the family ceme-  
tery was left undisturbed. Ac-  
cording to a newspaper clipping  
provided by the Dekalb Histori-  
cal Society, the mausoleum was  
erected to protect the gravesites  
in 1965.

### Listing of shops at Avondale Mall

- Davison's Clearance Center
- Davison/Mary's
- Sears Surplus Store
- Easy TV & Appliance
- Oriental Toys/Gifts
- Lee's Children Shop
- Shalimar Jewelry
- Step Ahead, Inc.
- Rainbow Records
- Louise Falker—custom jewelry
- Hats & Handbags

- Sears Dry Cleaners
- H & R Block
- M. Larry Gifts
- Market Research
- Say-on-Pots-n-Plants
- Hahn Shoes
- Cherries (women's clothing)
- Great Expectations
- Real Jewelry
- ETC (gifts)
- Kay Jewelers
- Gussini Shoes
- Eckerd Drug Company
- Barrett Shoes
- Eat & Run Sandwich Shoppes

- Joe Field's
- Marcelle's Hot Dogs
- Piece of the Pie Pizza
- Six Star (variety store)
- Stuart's Women's Apparel
- Near's Cookies
- Fresh Fruits & Naturals
- Frontier Fruit & Nut
- International News Rack
- Sunshades
- Jewelries
- National Automobile Service Association (com-  
plete automobile service)
- (Shops not included in this list may still be us-  
ing pending lease negotiation).

*Continued on p. 2*



# KEEPING THE PEACE

*Developers showing respect for old cemeteries*

**By Actor Cordell**  
STAFF WRITER

Historical societies, preservation groups and even developers are coming to the rescue of the graves of Georgia's pioneers.

For some, it's too late. With metropolitan Atlanta's commercial and residential sprawl, many small, abandoned family plots are now covered in concrete, historians and archaeologists believe.

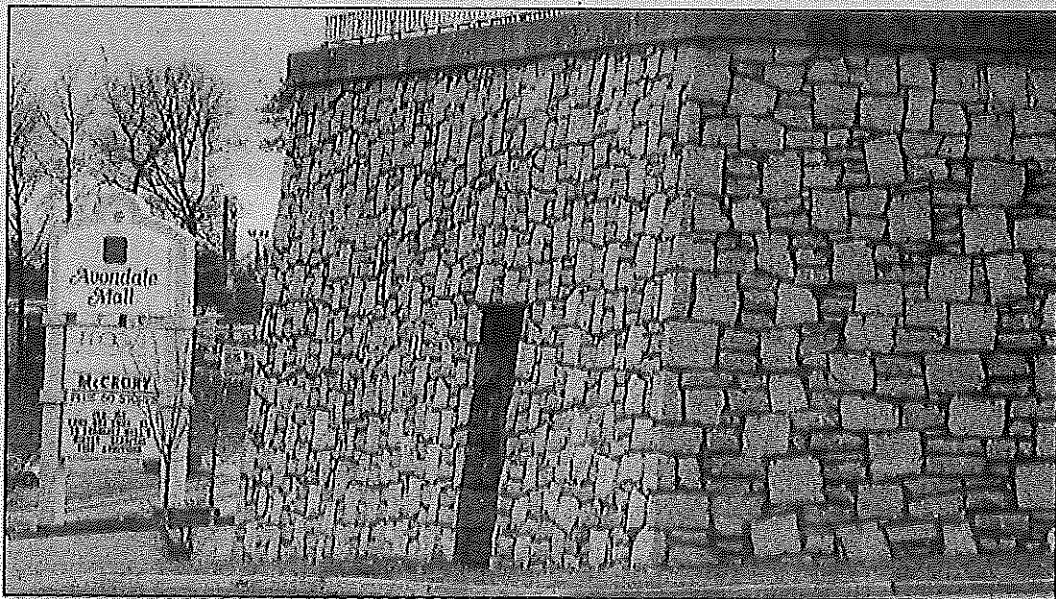
The grave of James Jett, a 19th-century

ferry operator and miller, lies beside the driveway of a dentist's home in a Sandy Springs subdivision.

Benjamin Crowley, who settled in DeKalb County in 1802, is in repose in a parking lot mausoleum built by the developer of Avondale Mall. He and some of his descendants were originally buried in a family cemetery on the site.

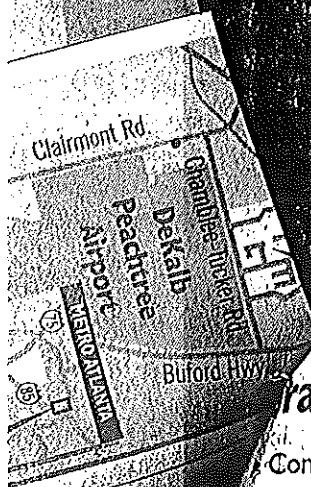
But the land squeeze is turning into a

Please see **GRAVES, F6** ▶



JOEY IVANSCO / Staff

**In the parking lot of Avondale Mall, a mausoleum contains the body of Benjamin Crowley, who settled in the DeKalb area in 1802.**



## Graves: Developers involved in cemetery preservation

Continued from F1

... blessing in disguise. Historians and archaeologists say developers are showing increased sensitivity to the plight of family cemeteries and the graveyards of defunct churches.

Some developers are hiring archaeologists to detect burial spots not noted in deeds; and they are getting involved in cemetery preservation.

Historical societies are keeping registries of cemeteries and are asking hunters and hikers to report obscure grave sites they discover. Some corporations and civic organizations are volunteering as permanent caretakers.

On Saturday, the Cobb County Cemetery Preservation Commission will see the first results of its new Adopt-a-Cemetery program.

Company A of the Sons of Confederate Veterans' 18th Georgia Volunteer Regiment adopted the Davenport family cemetery in Powder Springs and will unveil marble markers at the graves of Marcus and William Davenport, brothers killed in the 1862 Battle of Antietam.

The private, non-profit cemetery commission, which has identified 230 family plots, offers guidance to Cobb developers on preservation and restoration.

In Fulton County, the 3,400-acre Windward development off

*"There's no telling how many small cemeteries with poorly marked graves have disappeared."*

FRANKLIN GARRETT  
historian

Georgia 400 in Alpharetta has become caretaker of two burial grounds — the old Bethlehem Methodist Church's 75-grave cemetery in woods abutting the Golf Club of Georgia, and a small family plot where the only discernible name on a broken stone is "Matlock."

Scout troops and descendants of the Bethlehem congregation are assisting in the restorations.

The Avondale Mall mausoleum was a forerunner of the trend toward cemetery preservation.

"When I was taking an inventory of cemeteries in the 1930s, that whole area where the Crowley cemetery was and where Avondale Mall is today was pretty much woods," said historian Franklin Garrett, who found 792 family or church cemeteries

within a 30-mile radius of Five Points.

The Crowley family home stood near the cemetery, and when the 40-acre mall was developed in 1964, arrangements were made with descendants for a mausoleum to replace the cemetery, said Steve Davis, the mall's security chief.

Family cemeteries legally belong to the heirs of those buried there. But when surrounding land changes ownership and the plots aren't on public roads, descendants may have to ask landowners for access.

Retired WSB-Radio newsmen Aubrey Morris of Alpharetta has permission to cross residential property on Crest View Drive in Sandy Springs to maintain the cemetery of his great-grandfather, James Jett, and about 45 other ancestors.

To help families and new property owners know the locations of graves, the Gwinnett County Historical Society has compiled a registry of 407 burial grounds, about 300 of which are family cemeteries.

Delia Gilliland of the DeKalb Historical Society said most of the 133 cemeteries on file in her county were listed in the 1930s. The majority are family plots.

"There's no telling how many small cemeteries with poorly marked graves have disappeared," Mr. Garrett said.

# Old burial grounds often make developers detour

By Lucy Soto  
STAFF WRITER

agc 7/5/99

They might just be the ultimate hold-outs.

Tucked away from a busy road or disguised in plain view, they have become small reminders that even in one of the country's fastest growing metro areas, development sometimes must step aside for at least one thing — the dead.

Decades-old family burial plots, old cemeteries and historical graves dot the landscape in metro Atlanta. And while for decades developers moved or paved over many of them, some burial sites have stayed in place.

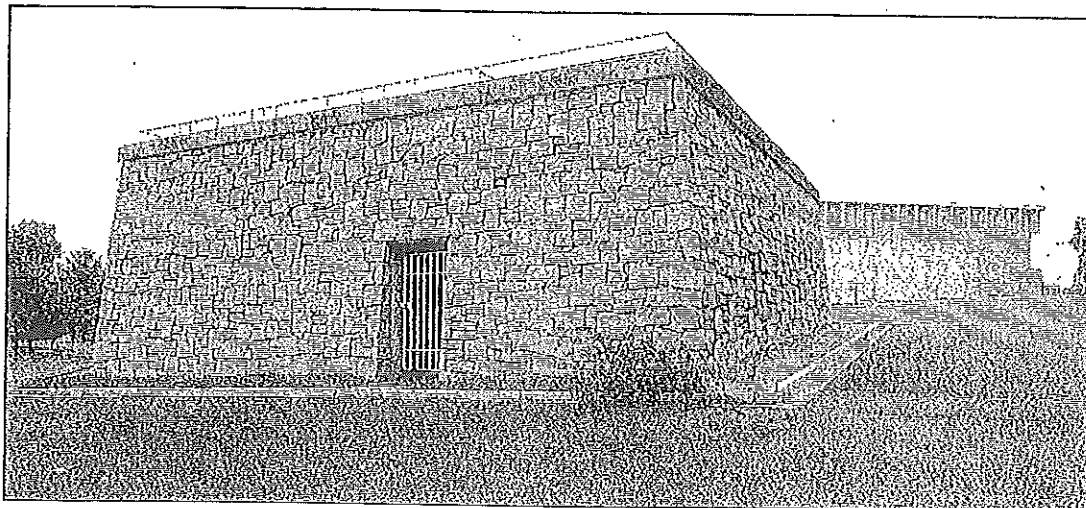
Consider, for example, the parking lot at Avondale Mall, and the unassuming granite structure on the mall's east side.

It's the home for the gravesites of Benjamin Crowley, who settled in DeKalb County in 1802, and some of his kin. The developers of the 1960s-built mall agreed to construct around the graves and to put up the hewn-granite walls to shield them.

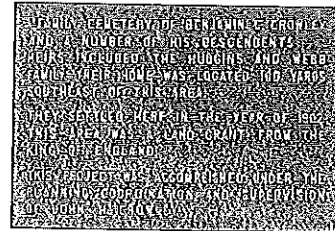
Nearby residents and shoppers often have referred jokingly to the mausoleum as "the tomb of the unknown shopper." But it was the beginning of many efforts to preserve historical cemeteries.

Along busy Roswell Road in north Fulton County, Burt Terrell's family has tended the tombstone of his great grandfather, John Ball, for years. The grave is in a fenced-in cemetery near the county government annex building.

In north DeKalb County near I-285, The Henderson family has had five small family graveyards surrounded by North-



RENEE HANNANS / Staff



**When Avondale Mall, originally named Columbia Mall, was built in the early 1960s, the developers built a granite structure around a DeKalb settler and his family buried there.**

lake Mall, acres of subdivision and shops. William G. Henderson was buried there in 1878.

The examples go on and on, say Alice McCabe, who has worked on cemetery restoration for 25 years and helps track sites for the Gwinnett County History Center.

Because of a 1991 law tightening the penalties in destroying a cemetery or even a single grave, developers are making more of an effort to protect areas by building fences and even small parks around gravesites.

Many sites that were lost have been discovered as development has crept

closer.

"A few of them are really taking the tack that this is history and this is worth preserving," McCabe said. "I'm just thrilled when I meet a developer like that. ...People are sick and tired of a county going down the tubes with no trees and no history left."

24

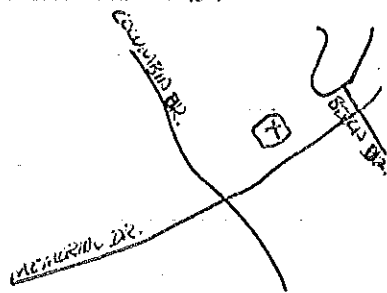
CROWLEY FAMILY CEMETERY

I LANDLOT 217  
DISTRICT 15

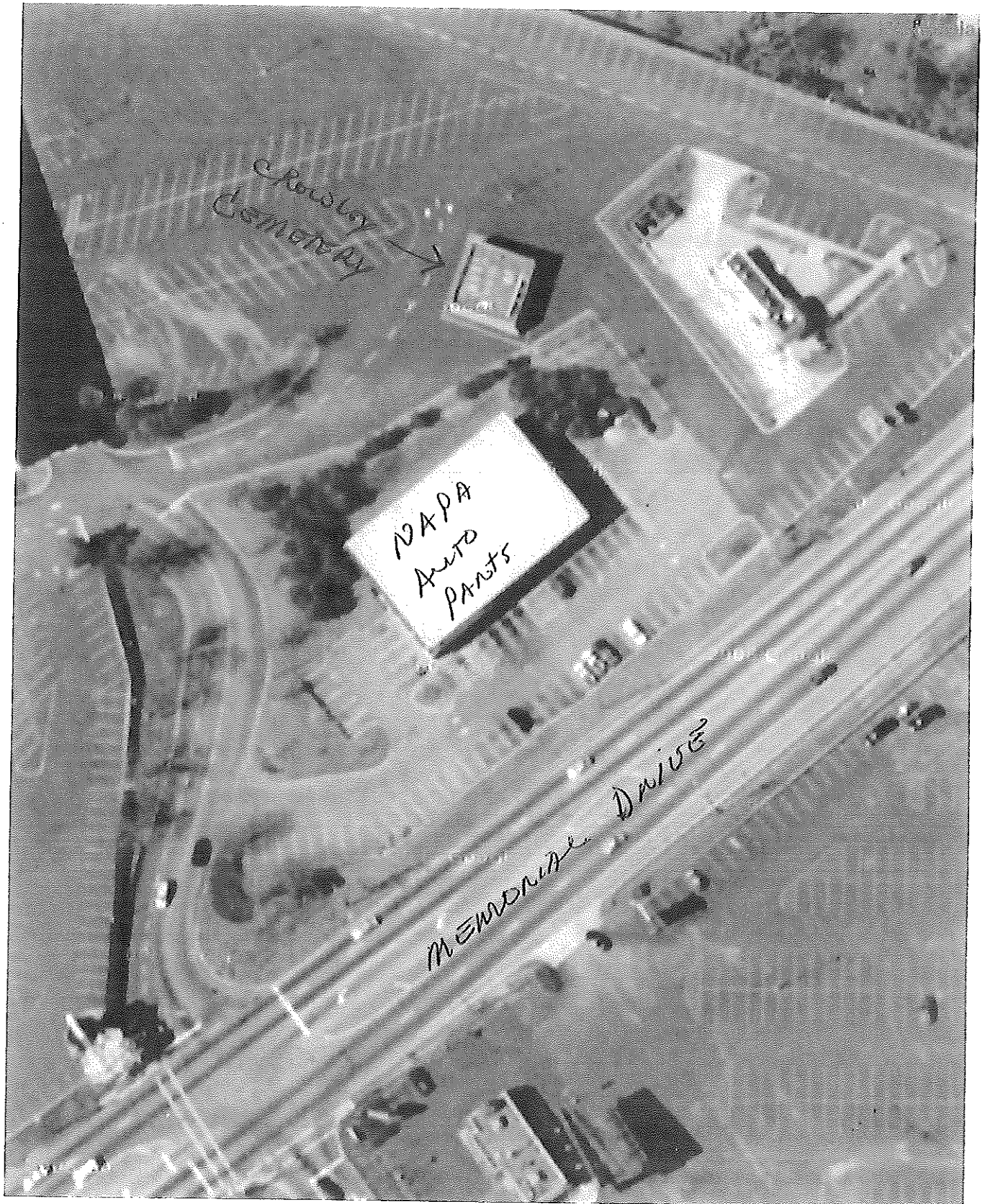
II CONDITION: THE CEMETERY IS LOCATED  
IN A SMALL STONE ENCLOSURE IN  
THE PARKING LOT OF A SHOPPING  
CENTER. I COULD NOT SEE THE  
CEMETERY ITSELF BUT I ASSUME IT IS  
IN GOOD CONDITION.  
IT IS MAINTAINED BY DECENDENTS  
ON THE CROWLEY FAMILY

III DATA IS ON FILE AT D.H.S.

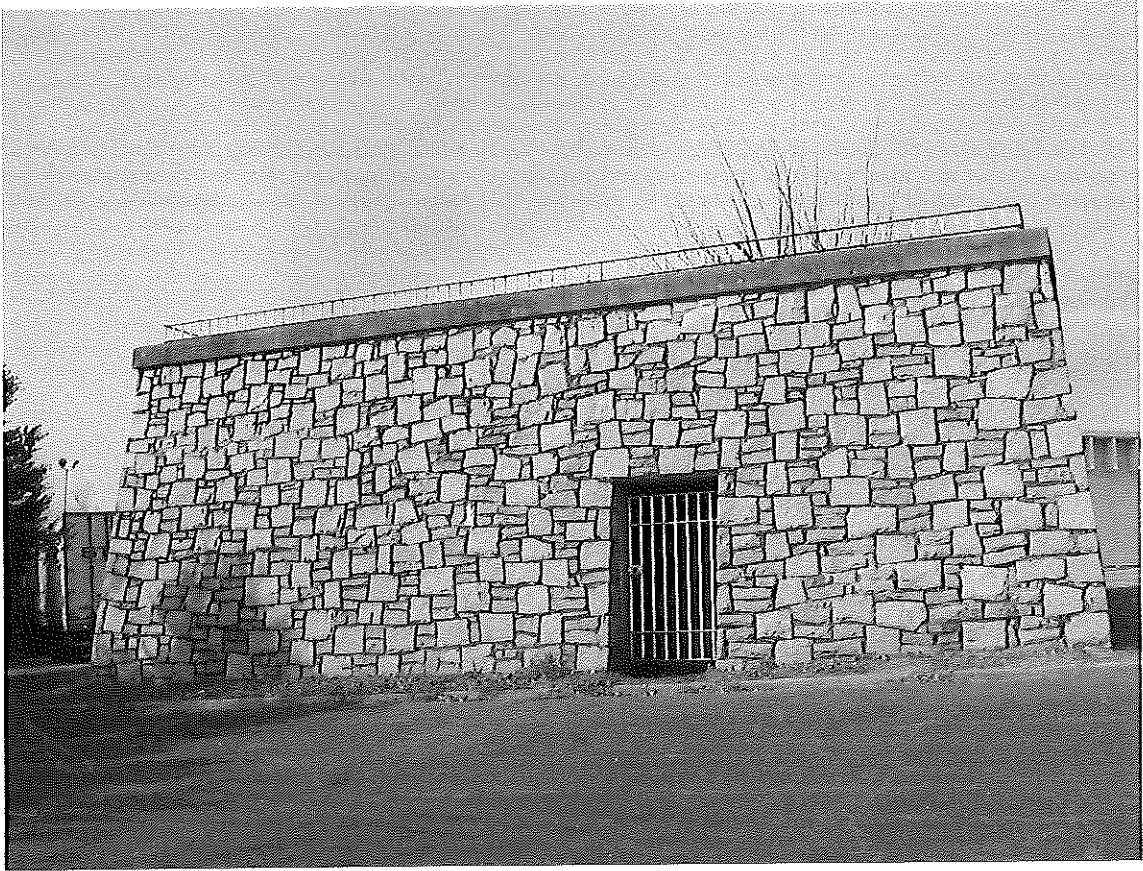
IV PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN 16







Crowley Cemetery at Avondale mall parking lot  
(2006)

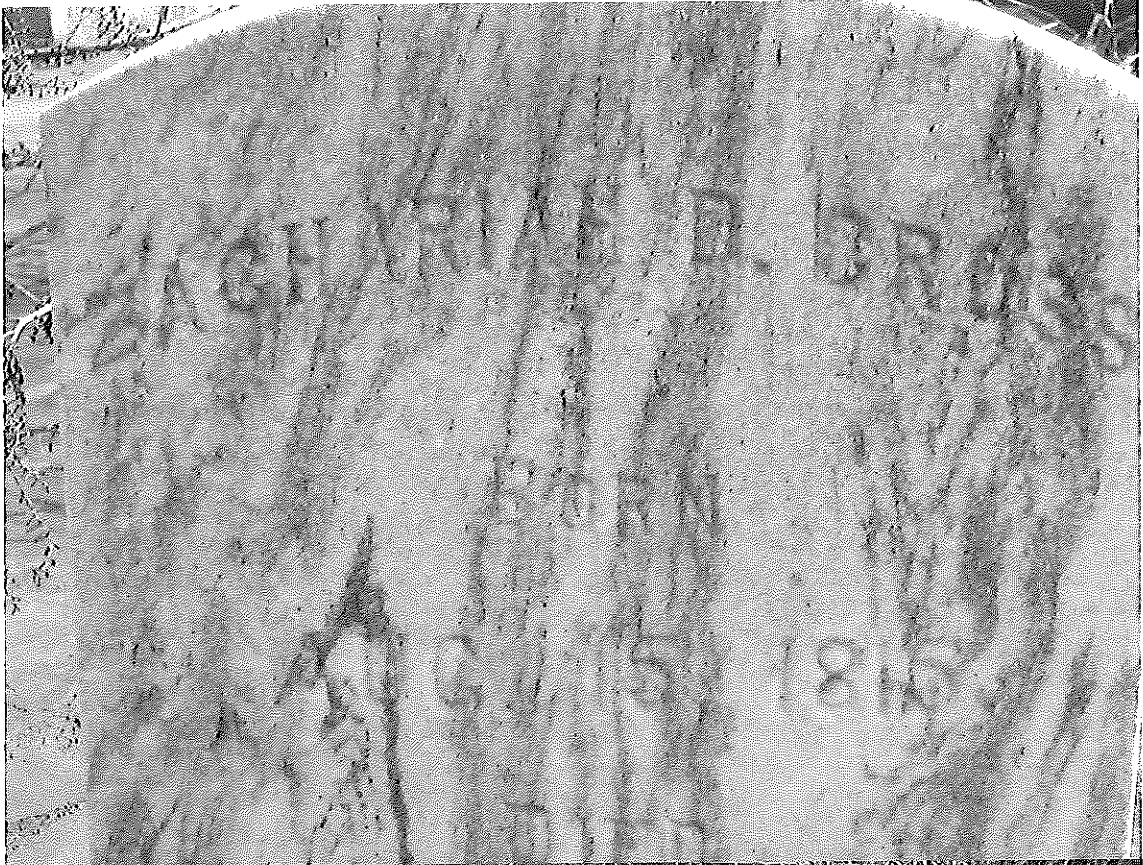






































As you can see from the pictures the cemetery is need of a clean which I intend to get the project going as soon as I can gain access on a permanent basis

Anita White  
Riverdale, GA

Note: Feb 2007, Wal-Mart has bought the Mall property, and will be putting a new store in place of the Mall. Construction has begun

ASC 3-9-07

## Tiny 1800s cemetery sits as SuperCenter moves in

By MARY MacDONALD  
mmacdonald@ajc.com

Behind a locked gate, and surrounded on all sides by a two-story granite wall, the graves of the Crowley family can be seen only from the sky.

No one has visited them in decades. But their descendants are keeping a watchful eye. They've made sure the family buried in the parking lot of the old Avondale Mall will stay put through the

mall's demolition.

The odd little 19th-century cemetery, positioned at an angle atop the two stories, will survive the wrecking ball and the new Wal-Mart SuperCenter.

That's how it should be, said James Crowley, 72, a retired school bus driver whose ancestors are buried in the plot.

"Let it stay there," he said. "That's where it was. You just

► Please see **CEMETERY D4**,

THE ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION



Buried in the plot are Benjamin Crowley and his family, several descendants, and possibly some slaves.

The cemetery was created in the early 1800s, and the last family member was buried in it about the time of the Civil War.

A hundred years later, in the mid-1960s, the Crowley family descendants made sure the graves weren't disturbed when the land was sold to developers for the Columbia Mall.

The surrounding pasture was graded to create the mall parking lot, leaving an elevated patch that contained the graves. The developer built a granite wall to protect them, and shut it in behind a wrought-iron gate that leads to stairs.

The result is a 20-foot tall, walled cemetery that resembles a bunker.

It bemused shoppers at Columbia Mall, then Avondale Mall, who sometimes called it "the tomb of the unknown shopper."

Crowley never had to wonder who was buried there. His great-great-great-grandfather is buried on the site. His ancestor came to DeKalb County from Oglethorpe County in 1828. He died in 1869.

Crowley is proud his family saved the little cemetery. After the new Wal-Mart is complete, the family plans to visit the site and spruce up the graves.

"I'm much in favor of people understanding our roots," he said, "It's history."

Don Wesley-Brown, a Cartersville resident who re-



RENEE HANNANS HENRY / Staff

The Crowley cemetery, as seen last week, has stood first through the Columbia Mall, then Avondale Mall. Wal-Mart officials say they may improve landscaping, but otherwise won't touch it.

## Cemetery: Man proud family's plot was saved

► Continued from D1

don't go out and dig up cemeteries."

Officials at Wal-Mart and Capital Partners, who will retool the site into a mix of housing and retail spaces, say they plan to spruce up landscaping around the cemetery, but otherwise won't touch it.

When Crowley was a child, the graves were on a hill in the middle of a cow pasture. The cemetery was the final resting place for a family that helped to settle southern DeKalb County. Their home was about 100 yards away.

searches military history, said the Crowley family cemetery is unusual, not only in its location, but also in its survival.

Across Georgia and the South, countless family cemeteries have been plowed under for development, some only in recent years.

"I think they did fine by their ancestors," he said, of the Crowley family. "If we knew more about our ancestors, I think more people would shape themselves up."



Fred Mobley <mobley@dekalbhistory.org>

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**Fw: Fw: Crowley Historic Cemetery - Midway Road and Columbia Drive beside Walmart and behind NAPA Airport's Store.**

1 message

Wed, May 18, 2016 at 6:41 PM

To: Fred Mobley <mobley@dekalbhistory.org>

FYI: Interesting response below to my email.

Sent from my LG Escape2, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message-----

**From:**

**Date:** Wed, May 18, 2016 6:19 PM

**To:**

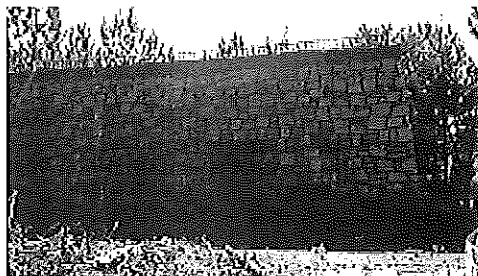
**Subject:** Fw: Crowley Historic Cemetery - Midway Road and Columbia Drive beside Walmart and behind NAPA Airport's Store.

Thank you Cathy, I enjoyed the Lunch and Learn. This is my Family's Cemetery in DeKalb County that me and my Family are working on. It is my 3 x Great Grand Parents and 4 x Great Grand Parents on my Mother's, Father's side. Established in 1802.

We are going to do the Deed Search because the current Family Member that had it has passed and it has fallen into Disrepair and Neglect.

Thanks for all the great information that has me excited on my Families next steps.

Brenton Head



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1158K