NEWSPAPER ARTICLE ABOUT THE CEMETERY IN THE WOODS BEING COVERED UP BY I-295 EMBANKMENT

*The Journal Every Evening*, 9-11-1958:25

**Headline: “Embankment to Cover Old Potter’s Field Area”**

“A portion of the former Potter’s Field at Farnhurst, on a part of the State Hospital lands to be used to the FAI-1 approach road to the Farnhurst Interchange of the freeway system, is to be covered by an embankment.

Several hundred of the 2,400 graves in the cemetery, used from 1881, and possibly before that, until about 1923 [error – corrected year was 1933], will be covered by an earth embankment.

Any persons who may have identities for the persons buried on the grounds and who wish to claim them and have them removed, should communicate with the State Highway Department, Dover.

The difficulty is that while apparently each of the graves is marked with a small white stone, five inches square on top, and each stone carries a number, the “code book” listing the numbers and names of the indigent persons buried in the graves cannot be found.

At present the State Hospital has its own burial ground for indigent patients near its farm. The State Welfare Home, Smyrna, also has its own burial cemetery for those whose bodies are unclaimed or whose burial is unprovided for.

The Potter’s Field of New Castle County is located near Moore’s Lane, in the vicinity of Swanwyck.

The old cemetery for the poor, which is to be partly covered by the FAI-1 embankment, was operated by the former New Castle County Alms House. In 1933 the property, including the cemetery, was transferred to the Delaware State Hospital.

Richard A. Haber, chief engineer of the Highway Department, who has consulted with State Hospital and county officials, and others, said the last known burial in the Potter’s Field was in 1923. [Wrong: 1933].

“A search of available state and county records fails to uncover any information relative to the names of the deceased,” Haber said.\*\*

“In the absence of identity of the deceased or any claims for the bodies by relatives, the department plans to cover the cemetery area with an earth embankment,” Haber said.

It was explained at the meeting of the State Highway Commission in Dover that while the bodies and graves will not be disturbed, unless claims are made for some of them, a part of the cemetery and the bodies in it will be “buried deeper” by the embankment.

William J. Miller, Jr., deputy chief engineer of the Highway Department, explained the problem at the meeting of the commission yesterday. Haber is attending a meeting in Omaha, Neb.”

Article is accompanied by a hand-drawn map showing the DSH buildings, the Potter’s Field, and how the I-295 ramp will cut across the cemetery.

“State Highway Department Map. FREEWAY TO CROSS CEMETERY – A section of a former Potter’s Field, in which 2,400 bodies are buried, is to be covered by an embankment for a freeway approach to the Farnhurst Interchange of the Interstate Defense Highway System. The Highway Department wants to know if there are any claimants of the bodies, at present unidentified.”

\*\* In reality, someone could have searched the Death Certificates to find out who was buried there, as well as tracked down the 1926-1933 Death Book from the NCCH which still exists today (at the Delaware Public Archives).