

# Robert Ball, Sr. Family Burial Ground

## Burial Ground History

The nineteenth century Robert Ball, Sr. family burial ground held the graves of at least six members of the Ball family, interred between 1854 to 1881. The burial ground was originally within a 1/4-acre plot north of Robert Ball, Sr.'s house and within his 103-acre farmstead. Robert Ball, Sr. served in the War of 1812 and worked as a jailer in the District of Columbia prior to the Civil War. Robert Ball established the family burial ground when his 1-year-old granddaughter, Alice Ball, died in 1854. Additional members of the Ball family lived on properties throughout the area and operated a tavern at the intersection of Wilson Boulevard and Glebe Road, then known as Ball's Cross Roads, leading to the designation of the area as "Ballston" in newspaper articles as early as 1875. The Robert Ball, Sr. burial ground was one of three known Ball family burial grounds in Arlington County. Family burial grounds were a common feature on family farms in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and serve as a reminder of the Ball Family and Arlington's agricultural history.

## People known to have been Interred in the Burial Ground include:\*

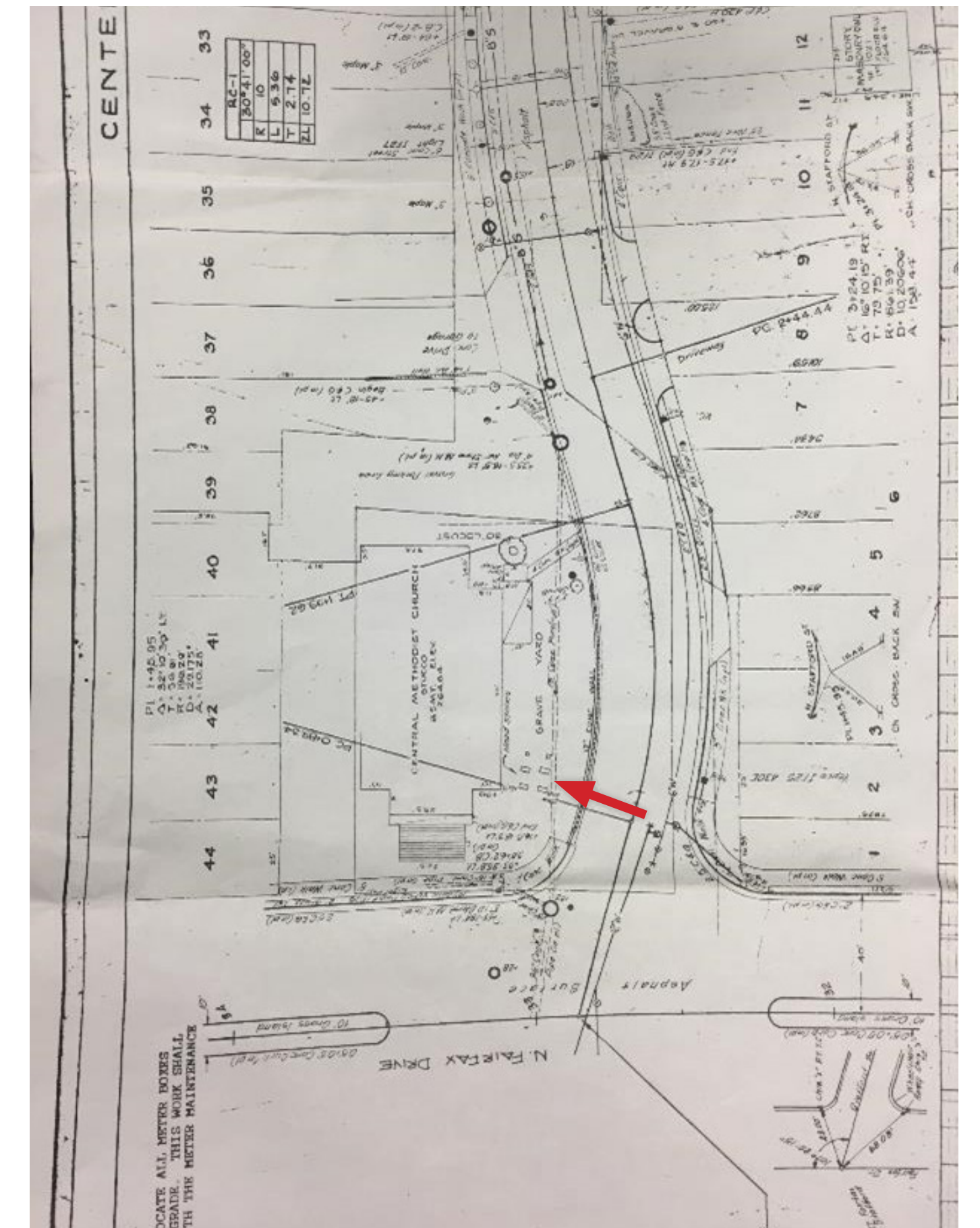
- Alice Ball (1853-1854), daughter of Robert Ball, Jr. and Elizabeth Ann (nee McElwee) Ball
- Robert Ball, Sr. (1776-1861)
- Ann (nee Thrift) Ball (1781-1864), Robert Ball, Sr.'s wife
- James Thrift Ball (1806-1867), son of Robert and Ann Ball
- Mary (nee Sewell) Ball (1800-1870), wife of James T. Ball
- Frances E. Dyer (1843-1881), grandson of Robert Sr. and Ann Ball, son of William B. Dyer and Ellen (nee Ball) Dyer

\* Note that during construction of a new church in 1923, and possibly before, markers may have moved and the actual location of the burials, if they remain, is unknown.

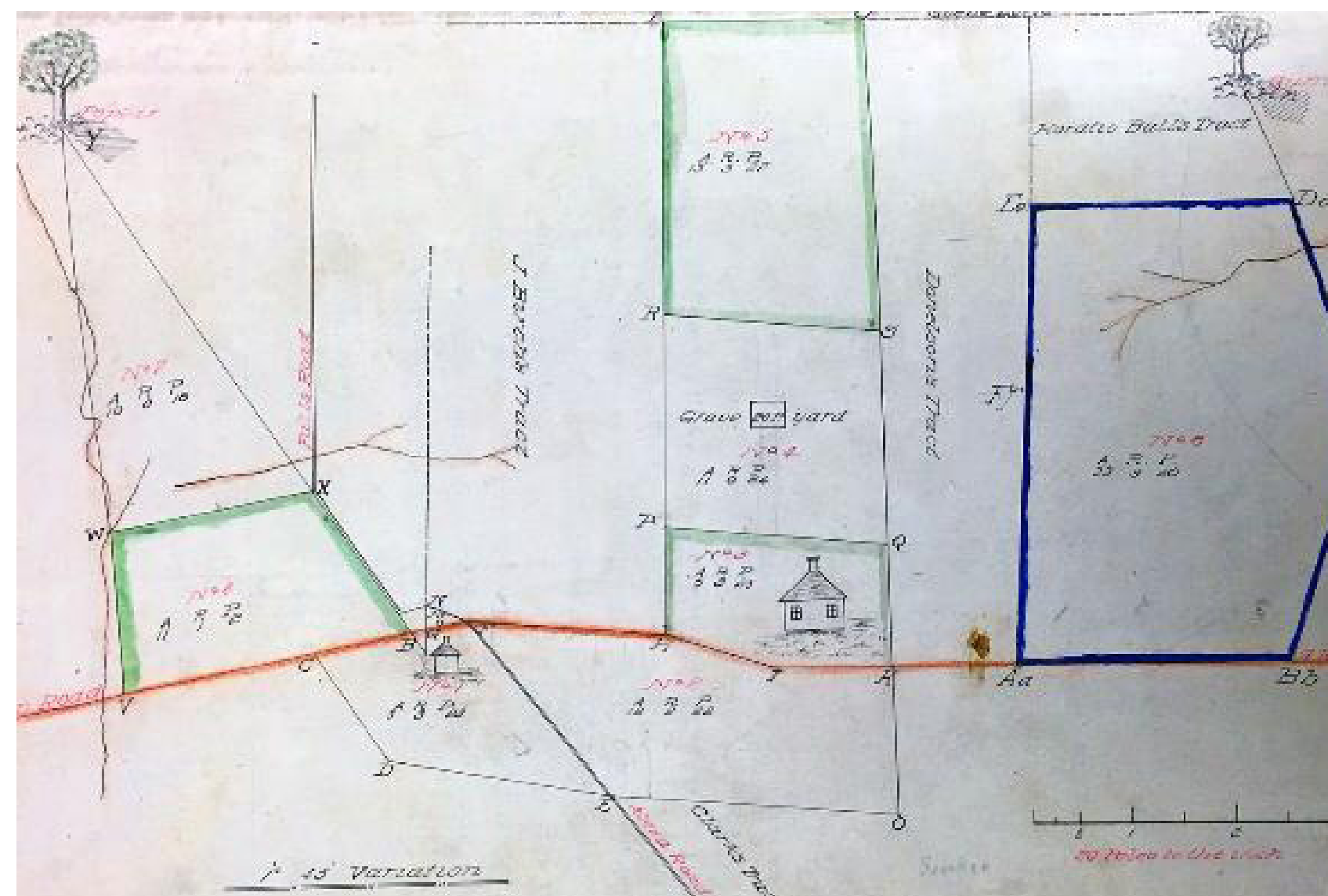
## Burial Ground During the Growth of Ballston

The Ball family divided the 103-acre farmstead into eight lots after Ann Ball's death, and the 1/4-acre burial plot became part of Lot No. 4. In 1897, James E. Clements created the Centre Ballston subdivision, which featured the 1/4-acre burial ground near its center. The Ball family retained ownership of the burial plot until 1906 when they conveyed it to the Methodist Episcopal Church South for establishment of a church. As the church expanded, the leaders had the portion of Clements Avenue that ran to the west of the burial ground removed. In 1922, Arlington County widened and straightened Clements Avenue on the east side of the burial ground, resulting in the current orientation of North Stafford Street. Graves had been centered within the quarter-acre plot. During construction of a new church in 1923, grave stones may have been moved or even lost. By the early-twentieth century, visible grave stones were situated within a fenced area. The area was designated an Arlington County local historic district in 2017.

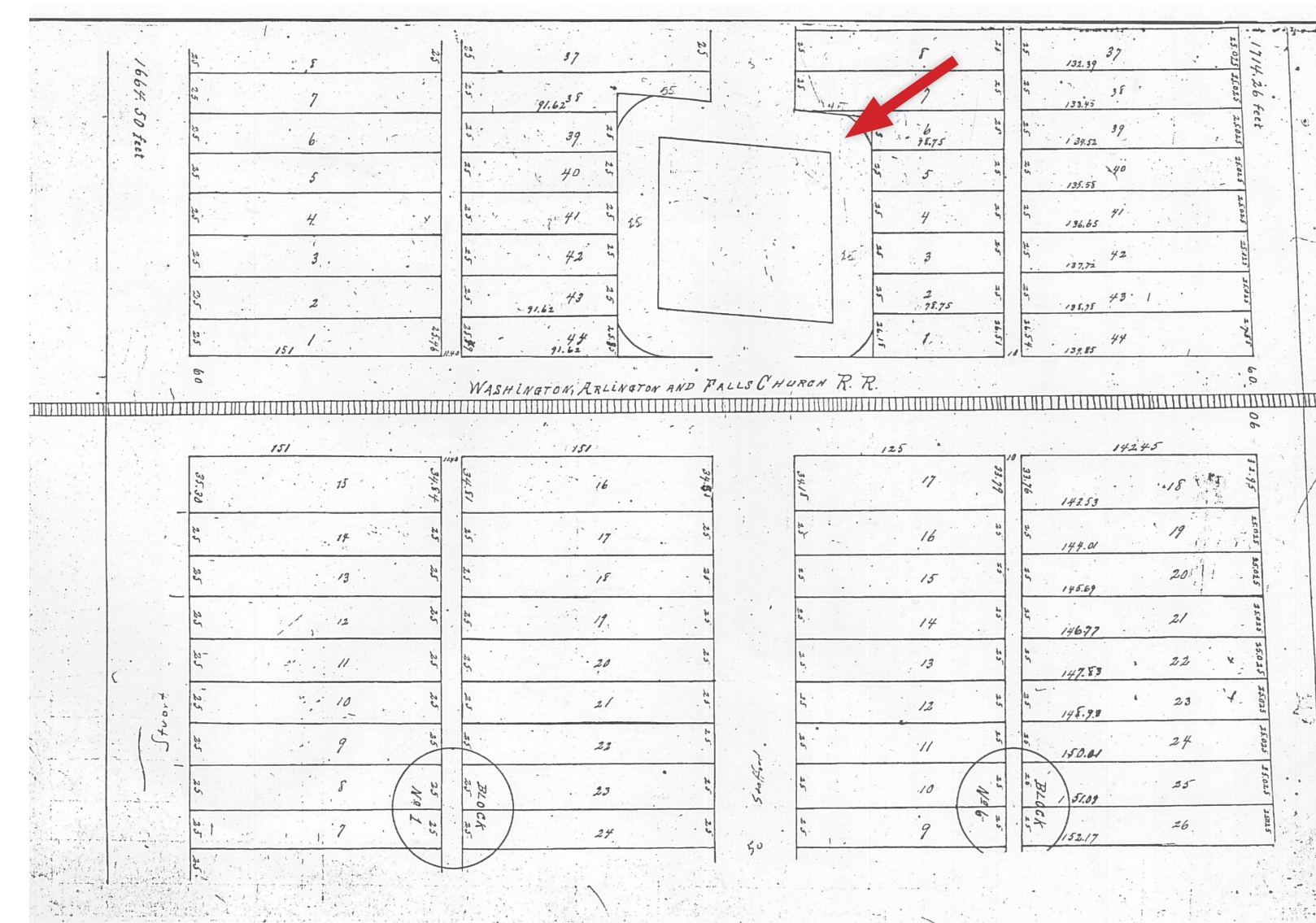
\* Based on research conducted by Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing, and Development (Liebertz and Ballo 2017).



1939 Realignment of Clement's Avenue to the east of the Burial Ground, which is shown as **Containing Six Markers** lower case

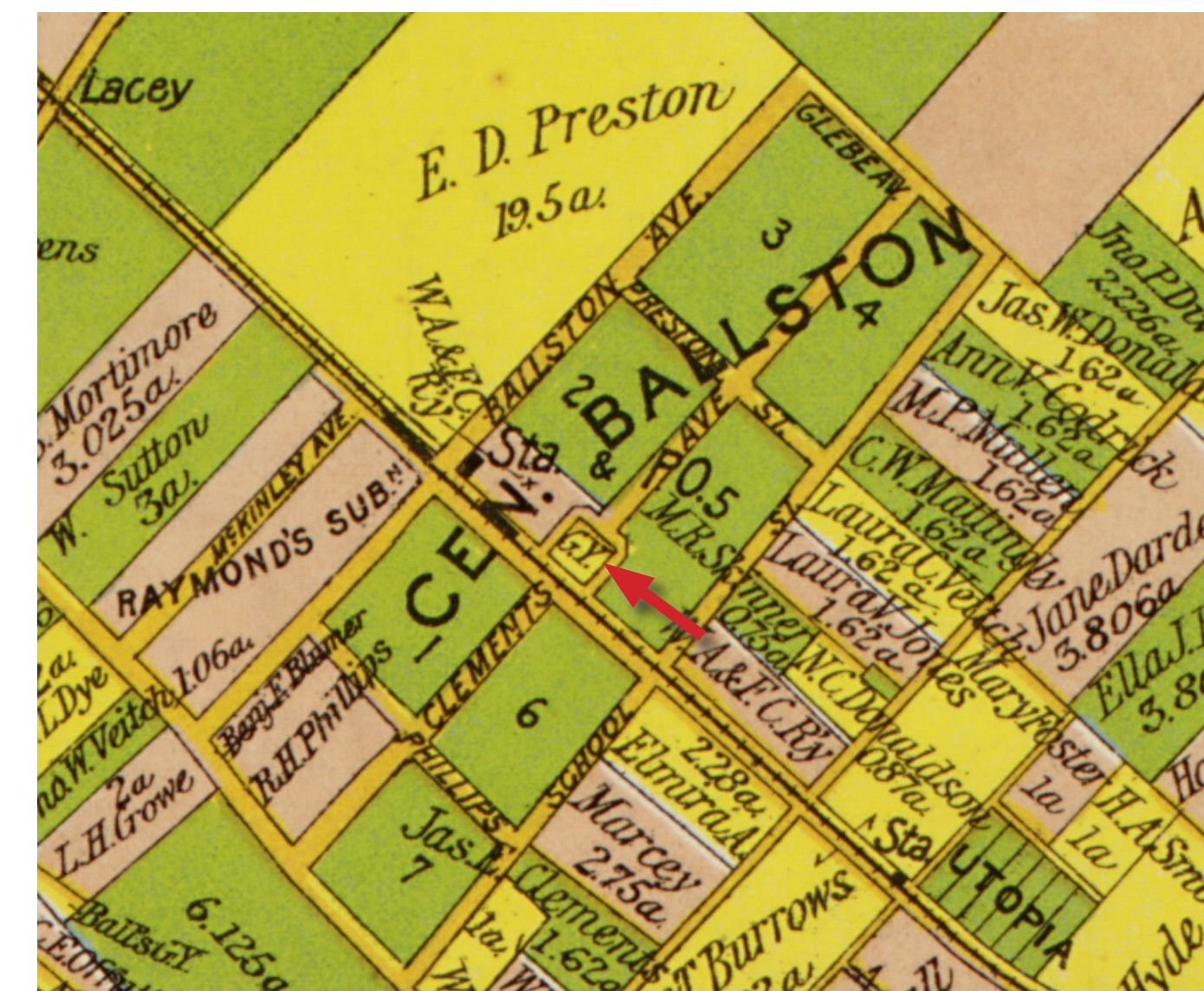


1865 Survey of Robert Ball Estate showing lots divided after Ann Ball's death, with the burial ground within Lot No. 4. (Arlington County Probate Records, Liber W3, Folio 439-443).



1897 Plat of the proposed Center Ballston Subdivision. The burial ground split Clements Avenue (N. Stafford Street) and faced the Washington, Arlington, and Falls Church Railway (Fairfax Drive). (Arlington County Land Records, Liber U4, Page 71-75).

**Note #5 regarding red arrow not updated.**



1900 Howell & Taylor's Map of Alexandria County, Virginia, for the Virginia Title Co. Map on file at the Library of Congress.



Sunday School class in front of the original Ballston Methodist Episcopal Church building, ca. 1911. Note headstones in the lower right corner. (photograph on file with the Center for Local History, Arlington County Public Library).