

# QUARRY COULD ABUT WAR OF 1812 VETERAN'S GRAVESITE

By **Vicki Vass, Special to the Tribune**

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**F**or more than 100 years, the gravesites of Nancy Crilly's great-great-grandparents have been in a two-acre family cemetery near [Romeoville](#).

But what happens next is up to the Romeoville Village Board.

Holder Sisson, a veteran of the War of 1812, and his wife Clarissa are buried in a small family plot that sits in the center of 264 acres owned by Material Services Corp. The company wants to mine the land for a quarry.

Following a no-vote last week, the Romeoville Village Board on Wednesday is poised to vote again on whether to annex and rezone the land. In doing so, the board may decide the fate of the quarry in addition to that of the cemetery.

"This is the resting place of a local hero," Crilly said, referring to Holder, who settled in Will County and became one of the first county commissioners.

She said it is out of respect that she doesn't want to see the Sissons' final resting places touched. "They should be left in peace," she said.

Joe Mulrooney, vice president for real estate at Material Service, said that if the board approves its annexation and zoning requests, the company plans to mine around the cemetery, which is located near Illinois Highway 53 and Airport Road and consists of about two dozen plots. In the beginning of quarry operations, he said, access to the cemetery would be completely open.

But as mining procedures progress, the Chicago-based corporation would build a 100-foot wide, 1/2-mile-long walkway from Illinois 53 to the cemetery along with a surrounding fence, limiting access to the property. In this proposal, the cemetery would become an island, surrounded on three sides by the quarry. That scenario, Mulrooney said, would likely not happen for 10 years.

But limited access is not Crilly's chief concern.

Instead, she said, she worries the property will be used as a pawn because company officials have said they would consider asking to annex to neighboring Lockport if Romeoville rejects its requests.

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Romeoville Mayor Sandra Gulden said she understands Crilly's concerns, but "Material Service has assured the trustees (it) will preserve the cemetery."

Gulden said she believes Material Service will receive approval, if not from the Romeoville board of trustees, then from the Lockport board. "My concern is who's going to control it," Gulden said. "And I'd prefer it be us."

Besides, on Monday, Material Services sweetened its offer, increasing its guaranteed annual property taxes to \$100,000 from \$70,000 and upping the amount it had planned to pay for road improvements to \$200,000 from \$100,000.

Although addressed by citizens at public hearings, the cemetery has not been mentioned within the terms of the annexation agreement. At least a dozen residents have rallied around the cemetery.

One Collegeview resident and cemetery committee member Mary Kopecky said she plans to address the Village Board Wednesday but "I feel (the trustees) have deaf ears when it comes to our situation," Kopecky said.

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