

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Vol. 25, No. 4

"Heirs Who Care"

November 2001

□ WCHT OFFICERS □

President----- Burt Ballanfant Treasurer -----Jim Daily
Vice President ---- Gus Mistrot Historian--- Gov Clements
Secretary -----Bernice Mistrot

WCHT TRUSTEES □

Sam Belinoski Edgar Moy
Vic Gehring John Petzold
Julie Itz Carl Young
Herman Lauhoff Leona Zaboroski

Monument Restoration Proceeding

The Monument Company has nearly completed Phase 6B of our ongoing program, with restoration of the cradles and copings on the Koch-Heitman plot in Section B. The three large oak trees planted at the corners of this plot had done a lot of damage to the coping and cradles, even pushing the end of one cradle a foot up in the air. While not all of the damage could be reversed, the appearance is much improved and any hazards have been removed.

Sadly, our long-time contractor, **John Schlitzberger**, has had some very serious health problems this year that have prevented him from completing the rest of his contracts. We ask your prayers for his continuing recovery.

His brother, **Bobby Schlitzberger, C.M.**, has agreed to begin work on Phase 7 in January. Bobby is a Certified Memorialist, one of only 120 people worldwide who hold that designation. His father started on the monument business in 1922, and Bobby has been in the business for 40 years. We look forward to working with Bobby in our continuing monument restoration program.

History Book

More information continues to come in for the new history book. Since the last newsletter, we have learned that three more men buried here were Confederate veterans. None of them had ever been mentioned as possible veterans before. Compiling the biographies has been slowed by the amount of research required to untangle errors in the cemetery records. For example, by comparing cemetery records with civil and church death records and censuses, we learned that "**Mrs. Bollfrass**," shown in later cemetery records as **Miss Bollfrass**, was really **Elizabeth (Karstens) Karsch**, the mother of **Charles** and **Christian Bollfrass**. But keep sending your stories in - we're slowly working through them!

More Graves Located in Strangers Rest

Although the pace of discovery has slowed, we continue to uncover more hidden grave markers and cradles. We are still drafting and refining the maps of this area, and preparing an index so people can once again find the graves of their loved ones. Since there are few landmarks in this one-acre area, we plan to install a set of lot number markers to make it easier to correlate the maps and index with what you see in the cemetery. They should be installed by Spring 2002.

Volunteers Needed to Read Headstones as Burial Database Nears Phase Two

The computer database now includes 6478 burials from 1887 through 1952. **Eleanor Beebe** is steadily adding more, and hopes to complete this initial input phase sometime this winter.

Once that is completed, the entire database will be printed out, one page for each of the 767 family plots. Then will come the task of systematically reading the headstones on each plot, and adding that information to the database. We know that the burial records contain a lot of illegible handwriting and faded ink, and that errors were made when the books were copied by hand many years ago. Thus, reading the headstones will be an important part of the proofreading process, in addition to adding full names, dates of birth and death, and other information available only from the headstones.

We will need a crew of volunteers to read thousands of headstones. It can be done anytime you have a couple of spare hours - it's not limited to scheduled workdays or groups. The goal is to record as many as possible before the weather gets unbearable in the summer. Please call **Bernice Mistrot** if you can help with this. We hope that work can begin about February 1.

Clements' Corner

I have often given impromptu tours to relatives or interested parties that happened to come into the cemetery while I was there. In almost every instance, people who had not been to the cemetery in years (or since they were children attending the funerals of grandparents) were impressed with the upkeep and good looks of the old burial grounds.

In the past, the University of Houston, Rice, and the continuing Education Schools have made appointments to tour Washington for course studies in Sociology. During our Open House this year, two Leisure Learning groups, with about 40 people in each group, toured Washington, Glenwood, and other urban cemeteries.

Local public schools also make appointments for tours. Several years ago, I gave a tour to two busloads of elementary school kids, following the discovery that only a few children had ever been to a funeral or cemetery, and many of the teachers were similarly unfamiliar with death and what happens after a person dies. So the school set up a tour of Washington Cemetery. At first, some parents objected. They felt that such an activity was inappropriate, and would harm their child with scare tactics. Even these families were won over when it was explained that they knew the Tour Master (who wasn't into scary), that this wasn't a Halloween outing, and that parents were invited and encouraged to come along.

In addition to tours, your historian is asked to speak to various historical groups about the cemetery. I have spoken to both the Sam Houston and San Jacinto Chapters of the Sons of the Republic of Texas, especially regarding **William Gammel** and **Ellis Benson**, both of whom are veterans of the Battle of San Jacinto and are buried in Washington Cemetery.

I have told the story of the cemetery to the Exxon Retirees Association and the Houston Chapter of the Texas German Society. On Thursday, 25 October, I was the guest speaker for the Tri-County Chapter of the Texas German Society in Katy. Following an Oktoberfest meal (wonderful!), and a carefully worded introduction, the history and present status of the old historic German Cemetery was told. Afterwards, they were regaled with a bit of light humor, which is pretty typical of my programs.

In April, I participated in the Confederate Memorial Day service (sponsored by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, District 1, Texas Division) that was held in Washington Cemetery, and over the years, I have been part of several other military celebrations held on the grounds.

In November, Gus and Bernice Mistrot spoke to the Terry's Texas Rangers Chapter of the UDC in Richmond, and invited them to assist us in obtaining military headstones for about two dozen Confederate veterans whose graves are unmarked.

All in all it has been an interesting year - so far.

Gov

Veterans of World War I

There are at least 80 veterans of WWI buried in Washington Cemetery. Unfortunately, we have little or no unit information for most of them; only an obituary that says "he was a veteran of WWI." This is a partial list of those for whom we still need complete information (Company, Regiment, Division, etc.) If you can help with any of them, please call **Gus Mistrot**.

Continued from February 2001 newsletter.

<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Death Date</u>
Leonard MARTIN	D-061 W½	10 Dec 1941
James R. McGRENERA	B-048	26 Aug 1963
Henry W. MILLARD Jr.	A-145	12 Sep 1925
Clarence C. MITCHELL	A-148 E½	23 Mar 1949
Lewis Alexander MITCHELL	A-148 W½	15 May 1950
Carl PANGBURN	G-062 E½	23 Sep 1943
William B. PRELL	D-118	7 Mar 1966
Floyd R. QUINBY	F-017 SE¼	25 Dec 1942
Charles H. RAMSEY	F-043 NW¼	1 Apr 1975
Stanley J. RIBBECK	A-101 N½	3 Sep 1968
Albert J. SCOTT	C-135 N½	14 Mar 1968
Benjamin Frank SECOR	A-109 E½	12 Nov 1973
Frederick H. SILBER	H-006½D W	11 May 1937
Sylvester Lewis SMITH	H-058 W½	6 Dec 1965
John Eden SOCIA	F-028	8 Jan 1958
Frank Joe STELZIG	A-070	30 Apr 1967
Herman C. STOERMER	C-099	18 Dec 1953
William Keith TURNER	H-035 W½	24 Jan 1920
Levi Green TYLER	G-035 SE	5 Oct 1930
Roy URQUHART	A-123½	22 Apr 1946
Victor Hugo WALLACE	I-034 E½	8 Jan 1948
Alvin Albert WERNER	A-046	27 Mar 1968
William WIEDERKIND	B-081	19 Aug 1964
Kindred Elmore WILSON	I-014	1945
Oscar Oris WOOD	F-051	2 Apr 1949

Treasurer's Report

During the last fiscal year, we received 217 donations from individuals and matching gifts from corporations (ExxonMobil and Chase Manhattan Bank). In addition, Glenwood Cemetery contributed \$19,000 to WCHT to be applied towards restoration activities in Washington Cemetery. This represents 50% of lot sales in Washington Cemetery during this fiscal year, in accordance with Glenwood's 1999 merger agreement with CCWCC. The major expense this year was for restoration of 30 headstones and 11 cradles in Phase 6 of the Monument Restoration Program.

WCHT also continues to receive donations from Randalls *Good Neighbor Program* (WCHT #2810) and Kroger's *Share Card*. To obtain a Kroger *Share Card*, please contact Treasurer **Jim Daily**.

Bequest Received

Long-time members of CCWCC will remember **Lelia Patterson**, who served faithfully on the telephone committee for many years, back in the early days of the organization when we struggled to find enough money to cut the grass a few times a year. Lelia passed away May 18, 2000 at age 90. We recently learned that she left \$5000 to WCHT to continue the restoration work begun 25 years ago. We are most grateful for her generosity.

Fiscal Year 2002 Began October 1, 2001

If your mailing label reads "2001" or "2002", you are considered a current donor and will continue to receive this newsletter. If you haven't donated recently, we urge you to do so now so you can keep up with the news from Washington Cemetery.

INCOME and EXPENSES (Unaudited) – Fiscal Year 2001

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Net Assets – October 1, 2000	\$129,132		
INCOME: Operations/Administration	\$6,664	EXPENSES: Monument Restoration	\$7,151
Historical Projects	10,389	Newsletter & Postage	2,338
Gravesite Restoration	11,534	Historical Projects	257
Total Donations	\$28,587	Administration	702
Net Investment Income	9,013		
Total Income	\$37,600	Total Expenses	\$10,448
		Net Assets -- September 30, 2001	\$156,284
FUNDS: Checking Account	\$7,713	FUNDS: Operations/Administration	\$35,130
Money Market Account	34,861	Historical Projects	\$12,146
Securities	113,710	Gravesite Restoration	\$109,008
	\$156,284		\$156,284

Please return the form below with your check and mail to **Jim Daily**. All donations are deductible on Form 1040 (Schedule A). Since CCWCC no longer exists, please make all donations to WCHT.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST	
Donor Name _____	Phone Number _____
E-mail Address (if applicable) _____	
_____ 2002 ANNUAL Donation (\$20.00)	Surname(s) of Deceased _____
_____ GRAVESITE RESTORATION	_____
_____ HISTORY/RESEARCH	Plot Number(s), if known _____
_____ TOTAL	Matching Gift from _____

Glenwood General Manager's Report

The curb appeal of Washington Cemetery is improving significantly each year. We continue to receive compliments about how nice the cemetery looks, even from some of our harsher critics. One thing that is starting to evolve in the cemetery is the use of "Special Care" for a particular plot. Special Care is a program which has been in place in Glenwood Cemetery for a number of years. It involves an annual payment to the cemetery for special care services on a plot, usually consisting of cutting the grass weekly, watering as needed, fertilizing and replacing the grass as needed, annual flowers, maintenance of flower beds, sprinkler systems, and so on. The annual payment depends on the size of the plot and the number of extra services requested. Should you wish to consider these extra services either for your family plot in Washington Cemetery or for a plot without family sponsorship, please contact the office at (713) 864-7886.

Construction work continues next door with mixed blessings for us; we have been able to acquire dirt from our neighbors next door to help us with our erosion needs. We want to extend the drain outlet under the road as you cross into Washington just beyond the rear of the postal facility. As you may know, there is currently a big ditch next to the road (to the left) where water collects until it is able to drain away. This area has been a driving hazard and mosquito breeding ground, not to mention an eyesore, for a long time and it is something that must eventually be fixed. We are urging our neighbors next door to fund and fix this problem in conjunction with their construction activity, since

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

this new construction will impact our drainage requirements to a much greater extent than before.

Our tree-planting program in both cemeteries will continue this winter. Should you wish to donate a tree, please call our office.

Thank you for your continued support.

Richard A. Ambrus
Vice President and General Manager

History Book Compilers

Text	Photos
Submitter Names A-K Shirley Delpesce	Submitter Names A-K Sam Belinoski
Submitter Names L-Z Carol Connally	Submitter Names L-Z Ginger Daily

Regular Winter/Spring Visitor Days

We had nice Fall weather and a good turnout for the Open House on October 28. Volunteers uncovered two cradles and several more numbered markers in Strangers Rest.

As in the past, we have designated the following Saturdays as Visitor/Work Days: **December 8, 2001, and January 26, February 23, March 23, and April 27, 2002.** Hours are about 10-4 and we'll have the record books available. Please mark these dates on your calendar now and come and visit with us. For more information, please call **Leona Zaboroski.**