

February 12, 1981

CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC., will meet Sunday afternoon Feb. 22 at 2:30 in the Fellowship Hall at First Evangelical Church (now known as Central Congregational Church), 1311 Holman. Please plan to attend.

The following letter was written by one of our members, Mr. Willis Hickman. Mr. Hickman is one of three co-founders of our organization along with Mrs. Autry Ballanfant and Mr. Ernest Salge.

"Dear Friends of Washington Cemetery:

"This letter is long of necessity but please read it through to the end. It is important that we all understand how much each member is treasured, needed and appreciated.

"Let me start by saying that your response to the plea for help in restoring Washington Cemetery from its near-oblivion has been overwhelming. What was a jungle of briars, brush and dense undergrowth is once again a quiet and peaceful old cemetery with a lush carpet of green grass inviting all who might enter to linger and behold its beauty.

"Now, as you must all know, this beautiful transformation did not just happen. It required the dedication of a lot of wonderful people like yourself, people who are determined to preserve in dignity the resting place of loved ones, ancestors and pioneers of our city and country. It required leaders - people with the desire and determination necessary to get things done - people who refused to give up. It required people, who for one reason or another, could not be leaders but yet had a burning desire to help in anyway possible. All of you, united together, made this transformation possible.

"In the beginning our organization was little more than a dream born out of frustration. The time was back in 1974 and early 1975. People like Mr. & Mrs. Ballanfant, Mr. Salge and a few others became acquainted while trying to keep their family plots clear of the creeping destruction that was rapidly overtaking the cemetery. They felt compelled to do something to save it.

"At this time I had become distressed by the sorry condition of the cemetery and made my frustrations known with an article in the Houston Chronicle. Mrs. Ballanfant and Mr. Salge invited me to meet with them and a small number of other concerned families and from that small beginning, a dream was transformed into actions that have after many trials, errors, heartbreaks and disappointments given us once again a lovely cemetery.

"From that meeting came the Hansens, Mrs. Paterson, Mrs. Bruder, Mrs. Eagle, the Heitmans and others of equal importance who helped in so many ways as we all struggled through very frustrating times. Just as despair would seem to overtake us, something always happened to generate a new wave of enthusiasm and hope.

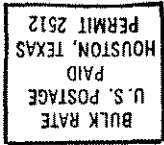
"Although some of you wonderful people, for various reasons, may not be as active now, had it not been for you and the support you gave, our success today might never have happened. You are the force that made things happen. Without everyone of you, we could not have come so far. We would not enjoy a beautiful cemetery that has been honored with a recorded place in Texas history. Now without everyone of you we cannot for sure reach our ultimate goal.

"No, the job is not finished. There is no time for complacency. If we relax now and fail to reach our goal, in a short time the old cemetery will suffer once again. We have worked too hard and progressed too far to allow that to happen.

"The ultimate goal is continued care of the cemetery while creating a surplus large enough that a Trust Fund can be established with its proper safeguards so the interest from it will pay for the cemetery's permanent care. Sometimes businesses and institutions will contribute to such funds to help ease the burden but only after a group such as ours demonstrates its sincerity and determination.

"All of this may seem as impossible to you now as what we have achieved to date seemed impossible to the first 29 people who met in the Ballanfant's home in Jan., 1975, but it is not impossible. With renewed dedication and enthusiasm among all of us and the setting aside of any personal dislikes some of us may have experienced, it can be done. There is so much talent among you and such a need for that talent.

"So come on all of you and especially those of you who are younger with your vim and vigor. Renew your faith and let's take this thing all the way. Your talents and your financial contributions are needed, no matter how small the amount. Make a new pledge to see this old cemetery preserved.



HOUSTON, TEXAS 77092
5030 HALEAH
WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.
FOR
CONCERNED CITIZENS

"Although collectings funds to preserve and maintain Washington Cemetery is what our organization is all about, we do not want to appear to be continually harping for more money from members who contribute each year BUT to those who have not given us any support, we urge you to do your part. Remember, you will be doing this in memory of your family members or friends buried in the old cemetery.

"Our organization's slogan is "Heirs Who Care." It is true most of us might not have inherited anything of monetary value but we are all heirs of something much more important - a heritage of which we can be proud. Let's all care!

"If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact one of our officers or Mrs. King (682-3375). Make known your feelings. Be a donation-paid member. Plan to attend our Feb. 22 meeting and get involved."

Sincerely,

(s) Willis Hickman

1981 MAINTENANCE DONATIONS NOW BEING RECEIVED.

Make check payable to: CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.
Mail to: J. C. PETTY, 1816 Milford, Houston, Tx. 77098

Name _____ Membership donation (\$24) _____
Address _____ Special donation _____