

# CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.

Vol. 16, No. 1

"Heirs Who Care"

April 1992

## OFFICERS

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Vice President-----Burt Ballanfart  
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Treasurer-----Gus Mistrot  
Corresponding Secretary-----Bernice Mistrot  
Historian-----Governor Clements

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-----1992-----	-----1993-----	-----1994-----
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## Spring Workdays Scheduled

Saturday and Sunday, April 25 and 26 will be our annual spring workdays at Washington Cemetery this year. Board members will be present to assist visitors from 10-5 Saturday and 1-5 Sunday.

The heavy rains this year have taken their toll on the roads, however, the combination of a very mild winter and ample water has been good for the trees and shrubs. We urge you to come out and visit the cemetery, meet some of your fellow Concerned Citizens, and perhaps give your plot a little tender loving care. We look forward to seeing you there!

## Maintenance Report

Our maintenance contractor is doing a fine job of keeping the grass cut, even with all the rain (18" between January 1 and March 4, for those of you who don't live in Houston). We did a special cutting of about one-third of the cemetery in February and exposed several copings, cradles, and small markers that had disappeared under the grass. As soon as we get a bit more dry weather, we will undertake the same detailed work on the rest of the cemetery.

If you are aware of any footstones, cradles, etc. that you know are there but haven't seen in years, please let one of the Board members know, and we will literally go dig for them. (But please tell us which lot to look at. We still cannot locate most Strangers Rest graves unless they are marked and we know more or less where to look.)

Those of you who have asked about the decrepit old house that had been condemned by the City of Houston will be glad to know that it has disappeared, due to the efforts of local scavengers who helped themselves to bits and pieces of it. The debris and partially destroyed building left by the scavengers

(and/or vandals) created a dangerous situation that needed to be addressed. A number of hardy volunteers spent several Saturdays last Fall eliminating the dangerous situation and getting the debris hauled off. The second best part of removing this eyesore and health threat is what it cost CCWCC: *NOTHING!* Three cheers to Browning-Ferris, Inc. and our volunteers!

With the house gone, there should be no more reason for any heavy trucks on our roads, so we can proceed with fixing them up. We are still trying to determine how much drainage work must be done to ensure that the new roads will be durable. Trying to pin down the engineers is like trying to nail Jello to a tree.

We are also pursuing some promising new avenues with regard to funding for this project. We hope that we will be able to bring you further news on that subject in our next newsletter. We ask those who may be considering major contributions to this fund to please let us know in advance, so that we may work out a plan that is advantageous to all.

Cemetery hours are still 8-6 every day. There have been no security "incidents" since we began locking the gate every night.

## Treasurer's Report

Congratulations! You, our supporters, have enabled us to build up a perpetual care fund of over \$345,000 in less than 15 years. Some of you have asked why we don't just draw it down by the amount necessary to repave the roads. Here's why.

CCWCC has two primary goals--to take care of Washington Cemetery "today" (current maintenance expenses) and to provide for its care "tomorrow" (through annual interest from our perpetual care fund). (continued on page 3)

## 1991 Burials in Washington Cemetery

The following persons were laid to rest in Washington Cemetery in 1991.

	<u>Burial Date</u>
Verna Evelyn Gregory	19 January 1991
Herman E. Michaels	19 February 1991
Felix R. Garcia	8 April 1991
Marguerite L. Rodriguez	22 April 1991
Dora Oline Gerlach	28 September 1991
Nina M. Michaels	7 October 1991
Hettie Augusta Meiselbach	23 December 1991
Katheryn Milzer	24 December 1991

## Clements' Corner

### Lot B-78: Harry W. Brown

*The following is extracted from a three-page paper prepared by Donald W. Read and Judith Kepfield Read, of Wichita, Kansas, and her cousin, Charlene Brown Viereck, of Lemon Grove, California.*

Harry William Brown, the sixth of nine children of Richard Brown and Ann Elizabeth (Bradley) Brown, was born in September 1866 at Royston, Yorkshire, England. His father was a gamekeeper on the estate of the Wentworth family and later ran a pub, the Admiral Hawke, at #54 Walmgate street in York. Harry was not quite eight when his mother died of tuberculosis on 4 June 1874.

Richard and his children sailed for America in May 1876, landing in Canada and settling temporarily in Iowa. The family, except for Harry and his brother George, were living in White Rock Township, Republic County, Kansas in 1880, according to the census. In 1885, Harry was working on a farm in nearby Big Bend Township.

Harry married Elizabeth Latchford in 1898, and was working as an Express agent in Marlin, Texas at the time of the 1900 census, but apparently moved to Houston shortly thereafter. When his sister-in-law Sadie Latchford died 26 September 1901 at age 26, Harry purchased the south half of Lot B-78 in the Deutsche Gesellschaft Cemetery (now Washington Cemetery) and buried her there.

Harry and Elizabeth had three children, all of whom died very young and are interred in the family plot here: Harry William Jr. (1907-1907), Bradley Green (1909-1911), and Frances Elizabeth (infant). In 1911 the family was living at 602 W. 19th Ave., Houston Heights, where Harry was a stockbroker and real estate developer. A few years later, he was Secretary, Treasurer, and General Manager of the Houston Association of Credit Men, which had its address at his home.

More tragedy followed. Harry's father, Richard, had been living with his sister, Frances Brown Kepfield, in Topeka, Kansas. After she became terminally ill with T.B., Richard Brown came to Houston by train to stay with Harry, but lived for only a few months. He was buried in Washington Cemetery 1 July 1913. Less than six months later, Frances died and was buried in Topeka. Elizabeth's mother, Mary C. E. Brownhill, was laid to rest here on 17 April 1917; Elizabeth followed her on 22 May 1923. In just 22 years, Harry had buried six family members here, and there was just one burial space left. He filled the void in his life with his work in stock and property, and became quite involved with the DePelchin Faith Home (an orphanage).

He entered a T.B. sanitarium at Kerrville, Texas, where he died 29 October 1937, leaving an extensive will written only six weeks earlier. He was buried three days later in the one remaining space in his plot in Washington Cemetery. His will includes a precise diagram of the cemetery plot, showing names and relationships of all buried therein, and contains explicit instructions for monuments and reinforced curbing to be placed on the lot. He further specified a sum to be held in trust, the annual interest from which was to be used for the care and maintenance of his cemetery plot.

The residue of his estate, a generous amount for those times, was left to DePelchin Faith Home, again with detailed instructions. The bequest was enough to construct a new building, which was dedicated 16 October 1938. A bronze plaque containing the dedication to Elizabeth Latchford Brown and their three children is still visible on the building.

\* \* \* \* \*

The above story is the result of a great deal of long-distance research by the authors. Initially, all they knew about Harry were some family rumors that he lived in Houston, that his children had all died as babies, and that he had left his money to an orphanage. Eventually, a niece in Chicago mentioned Richard Brown being sent to Houston; then they located the death certificates, which led them to the 17-page will, which led them to Washington Cemetery, and ultimately led to CCWCC receiving an additional donation every year from the Estate of Harry W. Brown. Our thanks to Donald Read and Charlene Viereck for their persistence!

\* \* \* \* \*

Your family history can appear here in October. Please send such histories to our Historian, **Governor Clements**.

## Treasurer's Report (continued)

In order to truly provide for the continuous care of the cemetery, the perpetual care fund must be built up to an amount such that the interest from it will cover all future operations and maintenance costs. This cannot be done if the fund is looked upon as a convenient source of money to fund improvement projects. It may be necessary to use some perpetual care money for the roads, but this must be considered as a *loan*, to be paid back by donations to the road improvement project.

When we do become a perpetual care cemetery, we will have to pay for management, legal, and accounting services that are now done by *volunteer* Board members, and our annual expenses will be several times what they are now. Unlike United Way officers, every CCWCC Board member *pays* (\$40 per year) for the privilege of serving on the Board.

Your donations and investment interest are our only sources of income. The drop in interest rates has hit us from both sides. Interest rates on our CD's have fallen from 10% to 4.5% in 2 1/2 years, and many of you who have been similarly squeezed are no longer able to be as generous as you once were.

Because the Board feels that safety of the principal

(*your* donations) is more important than taking a risk on high-interest investments, all CCWCC funds are invested in government-insured vehicles (CD's and Ginnie Maes). But at today's dismal interest rates, our interest income is well below our normal operating expenses of about \$20,000 per year.

Expenses are of two types--ongoing operations and maintenance (mowing, water bills, and security), and special projects (such as road improvement). Operating expenses are fairly predictable, though always increasing. For example, the guard who opens and closes the gate every day costs us \$2400 per year, which is a 12% increase in annual expenses over last year. Donations each year have just barely covered normal operating expenses, while special projects have always required special fund drives.

The bottom line is that we are making progress towards both our goals, but we haven't arrived yet. Your help is still needed. Please include the tear-off slip at the bottom of this page with your donation (if you haven't already made your 1992 donation), or write the 5-digit number from the mailing label on your check. The first \$40 donation in any fiscal year (October 1-September 30) will be used for current maintenance, but you may specify the fund of your choice for any amount over \$40 per year.

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### INCOME and EXPENSES October 1, 1991 through March 31, 1992

<b>Net Assets -- October 1, 1991</b>	<b>\$348,421.04</b>	EXPENSES:	Maintenance	\$5,813.00
			Security	1,200.00
INCOME: Maintenance	\$9,857.28		Water Bills	57.71
Perpetual Care	2,010.00		Postage & Printing	711.37
Improvement Projects	890.00		Bond Premium	264.00
Educational Projects	15.00		Safe Deposit Box	15.00
Book Sales	205.00			
Investment Interest	10,310.53	<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$8,061.08</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$23,287.81</b>	<b>Net Assets -- March 31, 1992</b>		<b>\$363,647.77</b>
FUNDS: Maintenance/Operations	\$9,782.03		Improvement Projects	\$6,270.33
Perpetual Care	\$345,618.74		Educational Projects	\$1,976.67

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Make check payable to: CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC. or CCWCC, Inc., and mail to : **Gus Mistrot, Treasurer.**

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_ Plot Name/Number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 1992 MAINTENANCE Donation (\$40.00)

\_\_\_\_\_ 1992 PERPETUAL CARE Donation

\_\_\_\_\_ 1992 SPECIAL PROJECTS Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Road Improvement \_\_\_\_\_ History/Research

All donations are deductible on Form 1040 (Schedule A). Tax Exempt Number: AUS: EO78-3110

## Help Save a Tree! (no money needed)

*Do you hate junk mail??* If you don't want to receive the Washington Cemetery newsletter, we'd like to know about it so we can save your time, our money, and everyone's trees. We will be glad to continue sending you the newsletter even if you cannot help financially--we understand that many people who are interested in Washington Cemetery are also on "fixed" incomes that have shrunk even smaller with the fall in interest rates. But if this is junk mail to you, *please*, drop us a postcard, or make a quick phone call, or simply write "Addressee Unknown -- Return to Sender" on the front of the newsletter and mail it back to us.

## In Memoriam: Martha Holloway Fischer

Mrs. Martha Holloway Fischer, age 101, a longtime supporter of CCWCC, was laid to rest in Washington Cemetery, on February 8, 1992. We can only guess at how much she will be missed by friends and family. We are, however, very grateful to her 22 friends and relatives who honored her memory by making donations to CCWCC. One way we get the most value from your donations is by not sending individual acknowledgements. To those 22 people, and to ALL our faithful supporters, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. IT IS MUCH APPRECIATED.

**CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR  
WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.**

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## New Look for Newsletter

Through the wonders of modern technology, we have been able to expand the newsletter from two pages to four for very little additional cost. This change will enable us to bring you more historical and genealogical news. This month we feature the story of Harry W. Brown (Lot B-78), philanthropist and early real estate developer in the Heights.

If you have any suggestions or material to be included in the next newsletter, please direct them to the editor at the address below. We always like to hear from our readers.

## More Original Records Found

A four-inch thick ledger, showing lot purchases and payments made from about 1918 to 1943 has surfaced. There is no burial information in this book -- only financial records. In 1918, the annual fee for a 20-foot by 20-foot lot (12 grave spaces) was \$3.00, with a 10% reduction if payment was made by January 15. A quarter lot cost 75 cents per year. By 1943, the full lot price had risen to \$10.00 per year (or \$9.00 if paid promptly). By comparison with other 1943 prices and wages, today's suggested donation of \$40.00 per year looks like a bargain.

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