

CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC. and WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Vol. 21, No. 4

"Heirs Who Care"

November 1997

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Washington Cemetery Back in Business

As promised in the last newsletter, we have now identified the previously unsold burial plots in Washington Cemetery. There are dozens of full lots, half lots, and quarter lots, mostly in Sections A and D, and at least 50 single spaces in Section I, which can be sold in pairs. Many of you will suffer "sticker shock" at our new prices, but if you call around, you will see that these are very competitive. One thing we offer that most "modern" cemeteries do not is the right to have individual upright headstones of your choice (within reason) for each person.

To ease the shock, we are offering an introductory 10% discount. Through February 1998, single spaces will cost \$1,800 each, quarter lots (3 spaces) \$4,455, half lots (6 spaces) \$8,100, and full lots (12 spaces) \$14,850. All lot sales revenue will be deposited either in the Endowment Fund or the Improvement Fund; none will be used for routine maintenance expenses (these will continue to be covered by Endowment Fund *interest* plus your donations.)

In keeping with our new responsibility for operating a "real" cemetery, CCWCC now charges an interment fee in addition to the gravedigger's charge, however, the total cost of interment is no more than other cemeteries and may be less, depending on the services desired. To reduce subsidence and aid in improving the appearance of the cemetery, we now require use of an "outer burial container," often called a vault or concrete box, which may be purchased from CCWCC or any funeral home, and may be placed in advance of need if you wish. Please contact **Leona Zaboroski** for further information on lot sales, interments, or outer burial containers.

More Monument Repairs Completed

The Monument Company and Natural Stone, Inc. have repaired and cleaned 29 more old headstones for \$6,295, or an average of \$217 each. Newly restored headstones in Section A are: Albert William **Paulig** (1880-1909), Hermann **Stolz** (1863-1902), Jennie Clementine **Kuhlmann** (1892-1898), Charles **Bender, Jr.** (1850-1904) & Mabel **Bender** (1876-1898), John **Loeffler** (1869-1895), John R. **Molkenbur** (1836-1894), W. E. **Leopold** (1893, age 53) & Anna Marie **Leopold** (1902, age 56), Mathilde **Lieb** (1862-1900), Dr. W. B. **Olive** (1864-1901), Nellie **Nolan** (1861-1881) & Sallie **Nolan** (1875-1885), Lillian **Hillendahl** (1836-1898), Benjamin **Wilbushewich** (1867-1902), Johann Heinrich **Depenbrock** (1825-1897), Frederick E. **Winkler** (1897-1917), Marie E. **Winkler** (1864-1955), Charles A. **Drucks** (1892-1935), Louis Salvador **Migues** (1859-1899).

Section B: John H. **Culmore** (1852-1901), Horace Spencer **Alexander** (1891-1891), Bessie **Seegar** (1895-1911), Genevia **Seegar** (1895-1915), James M. **Hykes** (1836-1900), Elizabeth Jackson **Crummy** (1849-1892), John **Crummy** (1850-1910). *Section C:* Felix **Goetzmann** (1819-1899) & Mary A. **Goetzmann** (1834-1888), four **Leopold** infants (18??, 1892, 1895, 1898), Robert E. **Hanna** (1995-1899). *Section P:* Joseph Louis **Clede** (1887-1887) & Edmond Bryan **Clede** (1899-1899), Estelle Dustin **Pender** (1858-1892).

We encourage everyone, especially those who may be related to any of the above, to visit the cemetery soon and see what has been accomplished with *your* donations. Our thanks to all who have contributed to this project so far. We are continuing to raise money for this project: repair and stabilization of the 92 headstones in Phase 4 is expected to cost about \$25,000. Please help as much as you can.

Clements' Corner

Leona Tonn, Last Washington Cemetery Caretaker

Compiled from census records and the Sat., July 9, 1977, editions of The Houston Post and Houston Chronicle, with assistance from her friend, Leona Zaboroski.

Leona Tonn, the oldest of five children of Paul and Emma **Tonn**, was born about 1906 on a farm near Round Top, Texas. In the late 1930's, Leona came to work for the Nolands as cook and live-in housekeeper. After the deaths of W. L. **Noland** in 1941 and his son Raymond in 1951, Leona became more and more involved with cemetery operations. She is first listed in the Houston City Directory in 1950, as a bookkeeper. Her brother Gus and his wife, Ruby, moved to Houston in the late 1940's, where he later worked as a painter for Jesse **Sharman**, a brother of Mrs. W. L. Noland.

After Mrs. Noland died in 1970, Leona lived alone at the cemetery, mowing grass, cutting weeds and underbrush, tending the graves as best she could. She received a salary of \$140.00 per month plus her home. Additionally, some families paid her \$7.00 per year to provide "special care" for their lots. Mrs. Othello **Van Dusen**, 74, said of her, "She mowed, she chopped weeds, she worked very hard. She kept our plots clean for us. She was a very nice person." Irene **Rosselli**, 77, a friend, said Leona was sometimes frightened by noises coming from the cemetery at night. Occasionally people would shine lights on her windows. "The last thing I told her was to take care of herself. She said she'd do the best she could." Yet for all that she was adamant about remaining in the house at the cemetery, feeling she said, that she had lived there so long it was "home." And that she was safe there, her two small dogs providing protection.

In an interview with *The Houston Post* in 1975 for a story on neglected cemeteries, she said that thousands of dollars in maintenance fees from survivors were past due on her books. "They haven't died or moved away," she said. "They just don't care." So she stayed on, doing the best she could, isolated in a small cottage, keeping vigil for a handful of surviving families that did care.

The vigil ended sometime between Thursday afternoon, July 7, when a couple visited with her, and 9:30 Friday morning, when Ruby and Gus discovered her body. The medical examiner ruled her death a homicide after an autopsy showed that she died of suffocation. Someone forced open the rear door of the frame cottage and literally ransacked the

entire house in an attempt to find money or valuables. Unfortunately, the police never had any credible suspects. She is now all but forgotten, but the file of her unsolved murder is still open. The case has never been closed.

The *Post* story noted that discovery of her body "came just before two Houston city councilmen were due to arrive at her house to discuss with her the possibility of the city taking over maintenance of the weed-covered cemetery. That move would have been the latest in a series of steps initiated two years ago to preserve historic records associated with the century-old cemetery. The caretaker kept the records in her home."

Although she had lived on the cemetery grounds for most of her adult life and made it her mission to care for Washington Cemetery when at times it seemed like she was the only one who cared, she had also expressed her desire to be buried near her parents at the church cemetery in Carmine, Texas, near her birthplace. On July 10, 1977, that wish was honored.

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We need historical material for the next newsletter. Please send any historical tidbits, anecdotes, etc. pertaining to Washington Cemetery or to your loved ones buried here to our **Historian, Gov Clements**.

Treasurer's Report

With the start of our new fiscal year October 1, it is once again time to begin collecting the annual maintenance donations. Have you visited the cemetery lately? People who haven't been here for a few years are always amazed at the transformation since they saw it last. Unfortunately, it all takes money.

The Board recently increased the suggested annual donation to \$50.00. This is the first increase since 1990, and quite frankly, we think the cemetery looks more than 25% better than it did then. Of course, we always gratefully accept any amount. Because our greatest need is for current Maintenance, we must ask that the first \$50 you donate in any fiscal year be earmarked for the Maintenance Fund. Donations to the Improvements & Repairs fund will be used for monument repairs and Strangers' Rest markers.

A non-cash donation may be more advantageous to some people for tax reasons. If you donate appreciated stock directly to CCWCC, you can both avoid paying income tax on the capital gain and deduct the full market value as a charitable contribution. Treasurer **Jim Daily** has the details.

INCOME and EXPENSES (Unaudited) – Fiscal Year 1997

CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.

Net Assets -- October 1, 1996	\$455,498.45		
INCOME: Maintenance	\$12,362.25	EXPENSES: Maintenance/Security	\$24,512.07
Endowment Fund	8,339.50	Utility Bills	709.77
Improvement Projects	1,814.00	Newsletter	983.35
Research/Legal	610.00	Postage/Office Supplies	151.55
Interments	400.00	Bond & Bank Charges	409.00
Lot Sales	600.00	Monument Repair	16,000.00
Net Investment Income	20,066.32	Court Petition	7,562.11
Total Income	\$44,192.07	Total Expenses	\$50,327.85
		Net Assets -- September 30, 1997	\$449,362.67
FUNDS: Maintenance/Operations	\$19,990.79	Improvement Projects	\$4,180.57
Endowment	\$423,597.97	Research/Legal	\$1,593.34

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Net Assets -- October 1, 1996	\$16,302.69		
INCOME: Operations/Administration	\$2,040.00	EXPENSES: Newsletter & Postage	941.00
Project "PATHH"	0.00	Project PATHH	0.00
History	210.00	Monument Repair	0.00
Gravesite Restoration	15,640.00	Strangers' Rest Markers	660.00
Interest	498.00	Fundraising	24.81
Total Income	\$18,388.00	Total Expenses	\$1,625.88
		Net Assets -- September 30, 1997	\$33,064.81
FUNDS: Operations/Administration	\$4,355.68	Project "PATHH"	\$7,536.18
Historical Projects	\$591.16	Gravesite Restoration	\$20,581.79

Please return the entire form below with your check and mail to **James L. Daily, Treasurer**. All donations are deductible on Form 1040 (Schedule A). If your company (e.g., Exxon, Southwestern Bell, Tenneco) will match your donation, please donate to the WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST; otherwise, please make your annual donation to CCWCC, INC., as usual. **PLEASE NOTE!!** CCWCC and the Historic Trust are separate organizations with separate bank accounts. Please do not combine donations to both organizations in one check!

Donor Name _____	Surname(s) of Deceased _____
Please send acknowledgment <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Plot Number (if known) _____
CONCERNED CITIZENS FOR WASHINGTON CEMETERY CARE, INC.	WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST
____ 1998 MAINTENANCE Donation (\$50.00)	____ 1998 ANNUAL Donation (\$50.00)
____ IMPROVEMENTS & REPAIRS	____ GRAVESITE RESTORATION
____ ENDOWMENT FUND	____ HISTORY/RESEARCH
Phone Number _____	Matching Gift from _____

Winter/Spring Work/Visitor Days

The April and October workdays were rained out, but we welcomed over 70 visitors at the cemetery during the Open House on October 25. As in years past, we have designated the fourth Saturdays of January through April as visitor/work days, that is, **January 24, February 28, March 28, and April 25, 1998**. Additionally, we'll try to compensate for the raindays with an extra workday on **December 6, 1997**. Please come and visit with us. For more information or a reminder, please call **Leona Zaboroski**.

New Board Members, New Address

When our Treasurer, **Julie Itz**, declined to be nominated for another term, we searched through last year's membership survey forms for someone willing and able to handle the increasingly complex finances of the organization. We are pleased to announce that **Jim Daily**, a retired accountant and long-time supporter of CCWCC, both volunteered and was elected to fill this very important position. Accordingly, the cemetery mailing address has been changed. Please send checks and financial communications to the new address. We also welcome **Bill Gay** as a new Director. We say thank you to Julie for her many hours of dedicated service to CCWCC and wish her well in her other pursuits.

Randalls and Kroger Help WCHT

The **Randalls Good Neighbor Program** (WCHT #2810) reports total purchases of \$22,111 through Sept. 30. To obtain a **Kroger Share** card, please contact **Jim Daily** at (713) 686-3167. These programs are a great way to help WCHT's restoration projects.

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

Change in Lot Resale Policy

CCWCC's new legal status does not permit it to assist individuals in selling lots as was done in the past. Of course you may still sell your lot on your own, such as with a classified ad. The change will be made on the cemetery books after the transaction is completed and the buyer or seller provides a copy of the deed to CCWCC and pays a transfer fee.

In Memoriam: Mary Lorraine Fischer

Miss Mary Fischer, age 72, a faithful and dedicated member of CCWCC since the earliest days and a former CCWCC Board member, was laid to rest in Washington Cemetery on August 12, 1997.

Mary gave freely of her time to help others in many ways: singing in the choir at Central Congregational Church, delivering meals to the homebound for Operation Sunshine, and of course, helping to restore Washington Cemetery. All who were fortunate to know Mary loved her and admired her pleasant caring manner and willingness to do whatever was asked of her. We will miss her and always remember her.

Former CCWCC President Carl Curry , age 80, died Nov. 4, 1997. He will be greatly missed.
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Memorial Gifts and Bequests

It is with great gratitude that we acknowledge over \$1000 in donations in memory of **Mary Lorraine Fischer, Robert H. Fuller, Naomi Millard Haggard, and Russell Howard Neel, Sr.** To these 34 donors, and to all of our faithful supporters, we say, *Thank you for your help. It is much appreciated.*

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