

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

Vol. 22, No. 2

"Heirs Who Care"

May 1998

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Glenwood Responsibilities Expanded

CCWCC is authorized to sell burial plots by virtue of last year's court order. Since CCWCC has no paid staff, we have contracted with Glenwood Cemetery to provide the staffing for sales, interments, and current record keeping on behalf of Washington Cemetery, in exchange for a portion of the compensation to be received, effective July 1, 1998. The Glenwood office is open 8:00 to 5:00 Monday-Friday, which enables their staff to meet you readily at either cemetery for any current cemetery need.

The CCWCC and WCHT volunteers will continue to do the historical and restoration functions: assisting families with historical questions, approving new monuments, restoring damaged monuments, and locating and marking graves in Strangers' Rest. See page 4 for a handy list of phone numbers.

Strangers' Rest Map Becomes a Reality

The still-evolving map of Section H is 60 pages, each representing a 25-ft square. As of this writing, we have mapped 911 graves as follows: 231 with headstones, 613 graves identified only by the numbered markers unearthed over the last five years, 14 blank markers, 12 markers lying loose on the ground so we aren't sure where they belong, and 41 cradles or headstone bases with no markings. We believe we have now located and identified about 2/3 of the 900+ single-grave burials in the period 1909-1932, plus many more outside that period.

In early April, we set 86 newly discovered markers in concrete, and have located a couple dozen more since then. The next step is to determine full names and dates of birth and death so we can order the nameplates. We need your help on this. Some of the information can be obtained from the library,

and some will have to come from the families of those buried in Strangers' Rest. Either way, please contact **Bernice Mistrot** if you can help us to identify these formerly "lost" graves.

Metal nameplates have been ordered for the following 30 people: Mrs. Margaret (**Sessaman**) **Aaron** (1847-1923), Infant son of F. E. & Edith (**Christian**) **Argo** (1917), George Ben **Battison** (1921-21), Infant son of J. G. & Marguerite (**Gardner**) **Bryant** (1920), Infant son of G. O. & Ruth (**Bell**) **Buckner** (1921), Anna **Buhler** (1885-1910), Infant daughter of L. M. & Ethel (**Wilson**) **Carlisle** (1916), Infant daughter of Charles H. & Bessie (**Stringer**) **Chives** (1919), Infant son of Roman & Rosario (**Moreno**) **Columga** (1920-20), Jeremiah **Dinehart** (1838-1911), Frank **Foster** (1862-1914), Gordon F. **Jones** (1919-20), Mathew F. **Kaline** (1885-1919), Mrs. Bessie **Kirby** (1894-1911), Infant son of Mr. & Mrs. Edward **Kopp** (1916-16), Archie Raymond **Lantz** (1914-14), Ophelia Leona **Mesa** (1917-17), Charles F. **Miller** (1825-1910), Edna **Moore** (1917-19), Sebastian **Morales** (1919-19), Infant son of W. H. & Hazel (**Watson**) **Patotzka** (1919-1919), Mrs. William J. **Riney** (1886-1910), Vivian **Rogers** (1920-20), Franislado **Rosass** (1921-22), Baron **Sabine** (1918-19), Ethel R. **Smiley** (1919-19), Mrs. Annie E. (**Mitchell**) **Stanley** (1843-1920), William P. **Voebel** (1915-15), Gerald Simpson **Webb**, Jr. (1922-24), Mrs. Cassie R. **Whitney** (1862-1910).

More on Lot Sales and Resales

There has been some confusion about the lot sales program. Only those lots that have never been sold are being offered for sale at this time. To sell unused spaces within family lots, CCWCC would have to notify the owner(s) and/or next of kin, and obtain court approval (an expensive, lengthy process). CCWCC does not have sales records prior to 1978. Copies of a few very early deeds may be available from the Real Property section of the Harris County courthouse (see page 3).

Clements' Corner

Houston Firefighters

Compiled from the book History of the Houston Fire Department, 1838-1988, by the Houston Fire Museum, Inc., 1988, and cemetery records, with assistance from Louise Jahnke, daughter of John and Laura Little.

Several Houston firefighters have been interred at Washington Cemetery in the last 100 years, however, these three deserve special mention for having lost their lives while serving the citizens of Houston.

Herman J. "Dutch" Wagner, 2 June 1871 - 25 May 1912, Lot D-2, East 1/2. Born in Chicago, Wagner joined Washington Co. 8 of the Houston Volunteer



Fire Department 1 Jan. 1895, five months before the nine volunteer units merged to become the new full-time paid HFD. On 19 May 1912, Captain Wagner of Station 8 was part of the crew fighting an intense blaze that started in the six-story Stowers Furniture Company store at Main and Capitol and soon spread to the Mason and Latham

Buildings on the same block, plus the Masonic Temple on the opposite side of Capitol. Property loss to the four buildings was over a million dollars. As the firemen trained their hose streams on the Temple, successfully saving the Dodge Hotel next door, a heavy beam from the Temple fell on Wagner, partially paralyzing him. He died six days later at St. Joseph Hospital, after a valiant fight, leaving a young widow and an infant son, also named Herman. His headstone is adorned with a porcelain portrait (unfortunately, damaged) and Fire Department insignia. Others buried in this lot are his widow, Venia Clark Wagner, who died 28 October 1962 at age 80, and Jane Clark, her mother, who died 13 February 1929 at age 73.

Harold A. Denny, 6 Sep. 1905 - 1 May 1924, Lot D-44, SE 1/4. Born in Houston, Denny joined the fire department in 1924, likely encouraged by his sister, Laura Denny Little, and her husband, Captain John S. Little of Station 9, with whom he lived. On the fateful day, Mrs. Little sent Denny to the station with Captain Little's bedsheets just before Engine 9 was dispatched to a fire at the Bluefront Boarding House at Preston and Milam. Denny, the rookie pipe and ladderman, was on the rear of the

pumper as it exited the North Main viaduct, where it was struck by a streetcar. Denny was killed instantly and one other firefighter was seriously injured. Several Denny relatives are buried nearby. His father, John Charles Denny, was buried on the same lot (D-44, SE $\frac{1}{4}$) on 20 June 1930; his mother, Mary Leach Denny, died 26 December 1948 in Oklahoma City at age 88, and was buried between her husband and son. Harold's sister Edith and her husband, Henry C. Thomas, rest eternally on Lot D-44, SW $\frac{1}{4}$. His oldest brother, William, died in a railroad accident 15 April 1915 at age 31, and is buried with his wife Katie on the Keck lot, D-43 W $\frac{1}{2}$.

John Sellis Little Sr., 19 Nov. 1883 - 11 July 1929, Lot D-29, East 1/2. Born in Knoxville, Tenn., Little



joined the fire department on 4 June 1913 and rose to Captain of Station 18. On 2 July 1929, Engine 18 was sent to a house fire that produced a large orange glow in the sky. The firefighters were apparently distracted by the glow and failed to see the 54-car Gulf Coast Lines train bearing down on them at Telephone Road and

Lombardy. The collision demolished the engine and killed three firemen: pipe and ladderman **Edgar H. Grant** was killed instantly, pipe and ladderman **Harry L. "Red" Oxford** died the next day, and Captain Little endured several surgeries and fought hard for his life, but succumbed nine days later at Memorial Baptist Hospital. He was buried in Washington Cemetery 13 July 1929, and reinterred beside his wife Laura at Forest Park Lawndale on 8 August 1966. There are two other burials in this lot: John Charles "Carl" Denny, brother of Harold Denny, who died in Florida and was interred here 29 Aug. 1990, and his wife, Bertha Julia Denny, who died 8 March 1968 at age 65.

Another firefighter buried in Washington Cemetery is **William Henry Koenig** (1861-1935), a member of Houston's first volunteer fire department (see *Clements' Corner*, March 1995).

* * * * *

Please contact Historian **Gov Clements** if you can share information about other firefighters or law enforcement officers buried in Washington Cemetery, whether or not they died in the line of duty. Deadlines for these stories and other family history material are 1 Jan., 1 Apr., **1 July**, and 1 Oct.

Early Deeds to German Cemetery Lots

Continued from May 1996 and August 1996. Some (but not all) early lot sales are recorded in the Harris County Deed Records. The following are listed for "German, Society Cemetery" in the Grantor index.

| Last Name | First Name | Sec. | Lot | Date |
|--------------|-------------|------|-----|------------|
| McKeever | J. C. | C | 103 | 08/20/1889 |
| Warburton | Amelia A. | C | 34 | 05/22/1890 |
| Osterman | John | C | 27 | 08/19/1890 |
| Buck | Mrs. Lane | C | 62 | 10/28/1890 |
| Witcher | Jno. | B | 36 | 05/07/1891 |
| DeBajligethy | H. C. | B | 5 | 09/17/1891 |
| Kennedy | Jno. | B | 85 | 04/28/1892 |
| Alexander | H. G. | B | 35 | 05/07/1892 |
| Anderson | Frank | B | 22 | 06/09/1892 |
| Snope | J. S. | G | 16 | 06/30/1892 |
| Stanley | Mary | C | 104 | 07/07/1892 |
| Bente | Chas. | B | 94 | 07/15/1892 |
| Schiele | Richard | C | 127 | 07/15/1892 |
| Heath | Mrs. M. A. | A | 80 | 08/26/1892 |
| Bruner | J. B. | B | 76 | 08/29/1892 |
| Vincenz | C. H. W. | B | 84 | 09/28/1892 |
| Loc. Engrs. | Bro. of | B | 96 | 10/13/1892 |
| Kennelly | H. V. | A | 74 | 12/11/1892 |
| Crummy | Jno. | B | 92 | 04/04/1893 |
| McClellan | G. B. (sic) | G | 26 | 01/01/1894 |
| Colby | Wm. | B | 117 | 05/09/1894 |
| Cochran | O. L. | A | 132 | 05/12/1894 |
| Behr | F. W. | B | 106 | 07/27/1894 |
| Colby | F. C. | B | 112 | 07/27/1894 |
| Parish | M. E. | B | 21 | 10/19/1896 |
| Brady | Mary | B | 108 | 08/01/1900 |
| Michels | F. A. | B | 75 | 06/21/1901 |
| Bissonet | Jno. S. | A | 112 | 03/12/1902 |

To be continued in a future issue

* * * * *

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 WCHT are separate organizations with separate bank accounts. Please do not combine donations to both organizations in one check!

Treasurer's Report (May 1, 1998)

During the last three months, we have received 68 donations from individuals. Additionally, WCHT has received matching gifts from Exxon and Chase Manhattan Bank. This period also benefited from our first lot sale. We received a down payment of \$3,700 (which was added to the Endowment Fund), with a balance of \$11,100 due in June. Finally, we sold the common stocks, realizing a net gain of \$5,100. The proceeds from these sales were reinvested in a high-quality common stock mutual fund. So do we still need your donations? *Yes!* The \$6,600 income from Endowment fund investments covered only about 80% of the normal operating expenses. The unaudited combined financial statement of CCWCC and WCHT follows.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Fund Balance - January 31, 1998 | \$526,200 |
| Income - donations | 5,300 |
| Income - interest, dividends, realized gain | 11,700 |
| Income - lot sales | <u>3,700</u> |
| Total Income | 20,700 |
| Expenses - maintenance, administration | 8,000 |
| Expenses - monument restoration | 1,700 |
| Expenses - legal | <u>500</u> |
| Total Expenses | 10,200 |
| Fund Balance - April 30, 1998 | \$536,700 |

The total value of CCWCC is now about \$502,800, including \$428,000 in the Endowment Fund and \$40,200 in the Improvements Fund. The total value of WCHT is about \$33,900, including \$19,900 in the Improvements Fund and \$7,500 for road repair.

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 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 _____ |

Memorial Day Celebration Modified

The previously announced Memorial Day celebration at the cemetery on **Saturday, May 30**, has been scaled back to an Open House, due to other commitments of the committee members. Also, the Confederate Navy headstone we planned to dedicate at that time arrived with the name misspelled and requests for two more Confederate headstones are pending. We hope to be able to reschedule the dedication of all three headstones in the Fall. But don't let the lack of a formal program keep you from coming out on Memorial Day and enjoying the peace and beauty of Washington Cemetery!

New Landscaping Installed

The next time you're at the cemetery, take note of the new plantings alongside the entrance road and the 70 new trees planted by Glenwood throughout the cemetery. The cemetery has never looked better.

Driveway Replacement Planned

CCWCC plans to enhance the entrance to the cemetery by replacing the broken sidewalk and repaving the driveway in front of the gate to provide a wider turning radius and smoother entrance. This long-overdue project will be entirely funded by a part of the money recently received as bequests. Unfortunately, the project will require closing the cemetery to traffic for about two weeks, depending on weather. The contract has not been let nor do we yet have the city permits so timing is uncertain, but we hope it will be in June or July. We will try to post a notice at the cemetery a week or so before work begins. You may wish to call **Leona Zaboroski** to check on the status before traveling a long distance.

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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

Free Concert by German Singing Groups

The public is invited to help the *Houston Sangerbund Damenchor* celebrate its 60th anniversary on **Sunday, May 17**, as it hosts the 52nd (since WWII) *Deutsch Texanischer Sangertag*. Opening ceremonies begin at 1:00 p.m. at the SPJST Hall at 1435 Beall Street at West 15th in the Heights. The free concert features German choral music presented by *Austin Sangerunde Damen und Mannerchore*, *Chorgemeinschaft Texas*, *Dallas Damen und Mannerchore*, *Houston Liederkrantz Gemischerchor*, *Houston Sangerbund Damen und Mannerchore*, *San Antonio Beethoven Damen und Mannerchore*, and *San Antonio Liederkrantz Mannerchor*.

The *Houston Sangerbund Damenchor* was organized in May 1938 during a three-day *Staats Sangerfest*, which was hosted by the then 55-year-old *Houston Sangerbund* and held at the old City Auditorium in downtown Houston. During an afternoon *Kaffeeklatsch* hosted by the Ladies Auxiliary for all of the women guests present, the *Deutscher Damenchor Lieder Heim* from Dallas surprised everyone by performing the "Blue Danube." The Houston ladies, not to be outdone by their sisters from the North, immediately organized their own chorus, which has been performing ever since.

Washington Cemetery Contacts

Lot Sales: Glenwood (after June 30, 1998)
New Interments: Glenwood (after June 30, 1998)
Monument Approvals: Sam Belinoski
Historic Burial Records: Leona Zaboroski
Strangers' Rest Records: Bernice Mistrot
CCWCC Treasurer: Jim Daily
Newsletter Editor: Bernice Mistrot
Clements' Corner: Governor Clements

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