

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

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"Heirs Who Care"

August 2001

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Washington Cemetery High and Dry

Although the rest of the City of Houston suffered \$4 billion in damages from the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Allison on Saturday, June 9, 2001, Washington Cemetery sustained no damage of any kind. While 18-wheelers floated on Interstate 10, only a couple of miles away, Glenwood's General Manager **Richard Ambrus** and President **Carrington Weems** drove through Washington Cemetery and reported that both the developed part of the cemetery and the vacant acreage at the back remained above the waters at all times.

We are very grateful to have been spared, and salute the foresight (or luck) of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* in selecting this site almost 115 years ago. Our thanks too, to Glenwood management, who were on the spot that day, prepared to deal with the situation.

Status of New History Book

Many of you are wondering just where is the new book that was announced two years ago? The short answer is that it is closer to completion than it was then, but still has quite a ways to go. There are about 1300 family plots in the cemetery, plus at least 1500 single graves in Strangers Rest. At this time, we have received about 240 pages of biographical text and about 200 photos for 1615 people buried in 335 family plots and 25 in Strangers Rest. (The 1988 book included about 850 biographies.) About 700 more biographies have been requested or promised, but have not yet been received. With addition of the veterans list, plat maps, several chapters about the history of the cemetery, and a comprehensive every-name index, the new book will be near 400 pages.

That's the good news. However, the scheme we announced a year ago, to begin at Section A, and finalize stories one plot at a time, in order, proved

unworkable. Nearly every story has required some further research to confirm names and dates and make the story more complete or accurate. At this time, less than 10% of the 1640 biographies have been finalized, and only 3% have been indexed with finished photos. Fifty percent are in various stages of completion; a few need only typing but most are missing a few facts. Thirty percent were in the 1988 book, but we have received no additional information for these people. And finally, about ten percent have just names and dates; considerable research is needed to write real biographies for these folks. So far, we have no photos for this last 40%. If you can help with any part of this "monumental" project, please contact **Bernice Mistrot**.

Ginger Daily and **Sam Belinoski** have scanned about 125 photos, and are continuing to work their way through them. They ask that if you are sending photos that you wish to have returned, please let us know that when you send them in. A stamped return envelope would be nice. Or, contact your photo compiler if you have already sent in photos that you would like to have returned.

So the bottom line is, we are working through a backlog, and making progress. However, there are quite a few of you out there who have not returned the check copies you have been sent, and even more who have not yet "gotten around to" sending in stories and photos of your loved ones. There will not be another history book after this one. This is *it!* Please send your material to the Compilers listed on Page 4.

Cemetery Burial Database Growing

Eleanor Beebe reports that she has now completed input of burials through 1943, with just over 6000 burials entered. She is also adding information from obituaries and headstones to the database.

Clements' Corner

Glenwood Plot D-035 NW¼	Joseph Brunner
Glenwood Plot D-048	Anton Brunner
Glenwood Plot H-108 E ½	Eliza Roy
Washington Plot A-019	Fred Lackner
Washington Plot B-013	D. C. Helberg
Washington Plot B-076	John Brunner
Washington Plot B-104	Fritz Leverkuhn
Washington Plot B-127 W½	Gustav Tips
Washington Plot F-027 S½	William Arto
Washington Plot H-003	John Miller

Compiled by Bernice Mistrot, largely from research done by Janet Wagner, with additional input from Earl Arto, William Bammell, Daniel Bode, Doris Howard, Jeanne Johnson, Norma Jean Kopecky, and Conrad Tips. This article is not in the format of the new history book because several members of this family are buried in Glenwood, including the matriarch, Louise Schiermann. It is presented here because there are numerous ties to Washington Cemetery and to early Houston history in general. Additions or corrections are welcomed.

Louisa SCHIERMANN (ca. 1815-1867) was born in Germany and immigrated to Harris County in 1839. Her year of birth is quite uncertain – she was reported as age 34 on the 1850 census but 39 in 1860, and her headstone on Glenwood Plot D-48 says she was “in her 55th year” at her death. She was married five times, and had at least six (maybe eight) children.

Louisa had a brother, Frederick SCHIERMANN (?-1858), who married Emilie Fredericke ETTLINGER in Houston on 31 Mar. 1844. Their first child, Mary Louise (1845-1915), married Gustave H. TIPS (1839-1917), buried in Washington Plot B-127 W½, together with two sons, Edward (1872-1896) and Louis (1876-1915). A third son, Robert TIPS, married Mary KERN and is buried in Glenwood Plot F-18½. The younger Schiermann children included Louis SCHIERMANN, Mrs. Louise P. STUDE, and Mrs. Charles WEISS.

By her first marriage, Louisa SCHIERMANN had one daughter, born in Germany, Anna Maria Louisa GERDING, (1836-1916), who married William QUENSELL (1829-1890) on 4 Sep. 1853. The Quensells had 12 children, ten of whom died in infancy and were reinterred in Washington Plot A-19 “from Brunner” on 28 March 1910. The other two children were:

Emma (1858-1941), married Chris HELBERG (1854-1912), buried in Washington Plot B-13. (No information has been received on this family for the new history book.)

Laura (1871-1954), married Fred LACKNER (1873-1952), buried in Washington Plot A-19. Laura Lackner had three sons; the youngest, Edgar Earl, left a \$100,000 bequest to the Washington Cemetery Endowment Fund in 1998.

William Quensell, a younger half-brother of Christian Bethje, was originally buried in the Helberg plot, B-13, and was moved to Plot A-19 after his wife’s burial there in 1916. Plot A-19 was purchased by Mary ISENSEE prior to 1906, but there were no Isensee burials. Cemetery records do not show when or how the plot ownership was transferred to LACKNER.

By her second marriage, Louisa had one son, born in Germany, Frederick HOBEIN (ca. 1838 – ca. 1860-67). He was age 12 in

1850; in 1860, he was 21 and working as a bartender for Peter GABEL (buried in Glenwood Plot C-26) and John WAGNER (buried in Washington Plot C-85). Fred disappears after 1860 (not named in his mother’s probate in 1867). He is the only one of Louisa’s children whose burial place is unknown.

By her third marriage, to Henry REINERMANN (?-1844) on 19 Dec. 1840, Louisa had no children. However, on 15 Sep. 1841, Henry legally adopted Louisa’s two children, Louisa and Fred, and changed their names to REINERMANN, to enable them to inherit his headright of 1/3 league (1476 acres) on White Oak Bayou. Henry’s will was probated 27 Aug. 1844.

By her fourth marriage, to Joseph SANDMANN (?-1846) on 27 Apr. 1845, Louisa had twins, Joseph Jr. and Josephine, who were born in April 1846. Joseph Sr. died on 17 Oct. 1846, leaving his wife and children a land grant of 640 acres in Austin County. Josephine died in July 1848, 21 months after her father’s death. Joseph Jr. also predeceased his mother (in 1867, according to his headstone). Louisa, Joseph, their twins, and a lady believed to be Joseph’s mother were reinterred in Glenwood Plot D-48 on 25 March 1910.

By her fifth marriage, to Christian Ludwig BETHJE (ca. 1823-1876) on 17 June 1847, Louisa had at least two (maybe four) daughters:

Bertha (1850-1931), married Anton BRUNNER (1841-1930) on 25 Feb. 1870, and had children Bertha (1871-1878), Louis (1875), and Lillie (1878), all buried in Glenwood Plot D-48, which Anton bought in June 1878, five months after the death of his daughter Bertha.

Eliza (1856-1910), married Max ROY (1850-1940) in 1878, and is buried in Glenwood Plot H-108 E½, which Eliza bought in March 1910, two months before her death.

Minnie and Nancy BETHJE are believed to be young children of Louisa Bethje. They were reinterred in Glenwood Plot H-108 E½ on 28 March 1910, together with C. L. Bethje. No other records of Minnie and Nancy have been found. In 1974, all three were moved from Plot H-108 to D-48.

Louisa died 25 Oct. 1867, leaving three surviving children: Louisa Quensell, Bertha Bethje, and Eliza Bethje. Her estate included 4353 acres of land in four counties.

In 1888, Anton Brunner began developing the Brunner Addition, then one mile west of Houston’s city limits. By 1896, the town of Brunner was incorporated and had its own post office. (Rufus ARCHER, a Confederate veteran and early postmaster in Brunner, is buried in Washington Plot B-101 W½.) The major north-south avenues were Brunner (now North Shepherd) and Bethje (now North Durham); other streets included Reineremann, Roy, and Sandman. It is unknown why Settegast-Kopf was engaged to remove eighteen members of this family from Brunner to Glenwood and Washington Cemeteries in March 1910, nor is their exact original burial location known.

Anton BRUNNER (1841-1930) was a shoemaker. He was born in Eggenfelden, Bavaria but grew up in Texas. The 1926 *New Encyclopedia of Texas* says that both of his parents died in the first year after arriving in Texas; Anton and his three younger siblings were separated and raised by strangers; and Anton lived for five years on a farm with Louise Schirman and C. L. Bethje, whose daughter Bertha he married in 1870. (However,

he was not living with them in 1850 or 1860; in fact, none of the four have been located in the 1850 or 1860 censuses.)

Anton's sister, Theresa BRUNNER (1842-1923), immigrated to Texas with her brothers about 1848. She married Anton Balthazar SCHMIDTZ in 1862, and they had four daughters: Agnes SMITH, Cecile YATES, Theresa "Tracy" BEATTY, and Katherine ARTO (1875-1952). Anton Schmitz served the Confederacy in Company C, 4th Texas Infantry, and became a U.S. citizen on 24 Oct. 1872. He died in 1882, and is buried at St. Vincent's Catholic Cemetery. His wife, Theresa, is buried with her daughter and son-in-law, Katherine and William John ARTO, in Washington Plot F-27 S½. Also buried in that plot are two of William and Katherine Arto's six children: Lillian (1892-1894) and Katharine (1899-1900).

Anton's brother John BRUNNER (1848-1941), also a shoemaker, purchased two adjacent half-plots in Washington Cemetery in 1892: B-73 E½ and B-76 E½. His sister's young granddaughter, Lillian ARTO, was buried in Plot B-73 in 1894, but subsequently removed to Plot F-27 S½ (though there is no cemetery record of her reinterment there). Plot B-73 E½ was then sold to Irene RUNYAN, and Plot B-73 SE¼ was later transferred to Irene Runyan's nephew by marriage, Herman F. GEHRING. There are no burials in this Gehring plot at this time; he is buried in Washington Plot B-104 with his mother, Amelia (LEVERKUHN) GEHRING STEVENS, his grandparents, Fritz and Friedericke (BODE) LEVERKUHN, his unnamed infant, and several other family members.

John BRUNNER married Mary HYKES (1869-1904), daughter of James M. HYKES (1836-1900). They had at least four children: Hermia (1889-1905), Elmo Jay (1891-1892), Infant Son (1893-1893), and Irwin. All of the above, except Irwin, are buried in Washington Plot B-76 E½.

Anton's other brother was Joseph BRUNNER (ca. 1849-1898), buried in Glenwood Plot D-35 NW¼, which is adjacent to Anton Brunner's Plot D-48. Joseph married Henrietta ESCHENBRENNER (1856-1941), and they had at least three children. She later married a Mr. CERNAL. Henrietta and their infant who died in 1880 are also buried here. Unfortunately, there are no headstones on this plot.

* * * * *

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

Finally, we have a mystery Brunner buried in Washington Cemetery: Johann BRUNNER. He appears in the cemetery chronological burial record on Plot P-3, but his headstone is on Plot H-3, which is owned by John MILLER.

There is just one headstone on Plot H-3, with two names: Johann BRUNNER (24 Dec. 1870 – 20 Feb. 1911) and Mrs. Victoria MILLER (10 Aug. 1827 – 21 Nov. 1901), born in Germany, age 74y 3m 11d.

Also buried in Plot H-3, but without headstones, are: Maria A. MILLER, buried 18 Aug 1904, age 61
Mr. J. W. MILLER, buried 4 Jan 1905, age 62

The relationship between the Millers and the Brunners is unknown, as is the relationship (if any) between this John Brunner and the one buried in Plot B-76.

Treasurer's Report (August 1, 2001)

During the last three months, WCHT has received 45 donations from individuals. In addition, an award of \$250 was received from Holland Masonic Lodge No. 1 honoring Bernice Mistrot as the lodge's "Community Builder" of the year.

The assets of WCHT total \$154,300. Of this amount \$108,700 is held in the Improvements Fund for continuing restoration projects. Also, \$33,700 is held in the Operations/Administrative Fund and \$11,900 in the Historical Projects Fund. The unaudited financial statement follows.

Fund Balance - April 30, 2001	\$150,600
Income - donations	2,200
Income - interest	<u>2,200</u>
Total Income	4,400
Expenses - administrative	100
Expenses - newsletter and postage	<u>600</u>
Total Expenses	700
Fund Balance - July 31, 2001	\$154,300

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST	
Donor Name _____	Phone Number _____
E-mail Address (if applicable) _____	
_____ 2001 Min. ANNUAL Donation (\$20.00)	Surname(s) of Deceased _____
_____ GRAVESITE RESTORATION	_____
_____ HISTORY/RESEARCH	Plot Number(s), if known _____
_____ TOTAL	Matching Gift from _____

150th Anniversary Celebration at Central Congregational Church

The First German Evangelical Lutheran Church in Houston, now known as Central Congregational, was founded by **Pastor Caspar Braun** in September 1851. Many former members of this church are buried in Washington Cemetery, and CCWCC held its regular meetings at the church for many years.

On September 16, 2001, the current pastor, **Dr. Clark Chamberlain**, will preside over special services commemorating the 150th anniversary of its founding. The celebration begins with worship services at 11:00. Music will be provided by the Piping Rock Singers. Communion is open to all.

The worship services will be followed by a barbeque from 12-3, during which the *Houston Liederkrantz* will perform. Cost of the barbeque will be \$10, payable at the door. No one will be turned away, reservation or not, but the church asks that you make a reservation by September 10 so they know how many to plan for. For reservations and further details, please contact the church at (713) 529-3589.

A commemorative coin has been minted and one will be given to each person attending. Additional coins can be purchased for \$1 each.

The church has prepared a 250-page commemorative history book, complete with color photos. Unfortunately, it will probably not be printed in time for the celebration, though there may be some advance copies to look at. Orders will be taken and you will be advised when it is ready to be picked up at the church. Each church history book is \$25, plus \$5 shipping if you prefer to have it mailed.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Thanks to our Corporate Donors

WCHT continues to receive matching gifts from ExxonMobil, Chase Manhattan Bank, and other corporations. An easy way for you to help fund our restoration projects is to participate in Randalls *Good Neighbor Program* (WCHT #2810) or use Kroger's *Share Card*. For details, or to obtain a Kroger *Share Card*, please contact **Treasurer Jim Daily**.

Fall Open House and Visitor Days

Mark your calendar now for the **Open House on Saturday, October 27** and the **Fall Visitor/Work Days on Saturdays, October 13 and December 8**. Board members will be there from about 10-4 all three days (weather permitting) and we'll have the record books available. We need some volunteers to take photos of restored monuments, and others to search the area around some monuments that are yet to be restored, seeking hidden bases and other missing parts. The search for hidden markers in Strangers Rest will also continue.