

# WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Vol. 29, No. 1

"Heirs Who Care"

February 2005

## WCHT OFFICERS

President----- Gus Mistrot  
Secretary -----Bernice Mistrot  
Treasurer --- Lloyd Shenberger  
Historian----- Gov Clements

Eleanor Beebe  
Catherine Fitch  
Charles Jackson

## WCHT TRUSTEES

Richard June  
Elizabeth Larimore  
Edgar Moy  
John Petzold  
Carl Young  
Leona Zaboroski

## WCHT Welcomes Three New Trustees

As predicted in the last newsletter, Treasurer **Jim Daily** has "retired" as a Trustee, effective December 31, 2004. **Ginger Daily**, who was officially appointed as a Trustee three years ago, has also decided to step down as a Trustee, but thankfully, she has agreed to continue fine-tuning the photos for the new Washington Cemetery history book. There is no way to measure the many hours that both Jim and Ginger have given to Washington Cemetery as Treasurer and as Chief Photo Restorer over the last seven years. We thank them both for their past service and look forward to working with them in the future at their reduced level of involvement.

The three new Trustees, filling the positions vacated by the Dailys and Sam Belinoski, are Eleanor Beebe, Richard June, and Lloyd Shenberger, all of whom have been active with WCHT in the past.

Five years ago, **Eleanor Beebe** graciously agreed to take on the very labor-intensive task of putting all of the burial records into a computer database. Former CCWCC Board member **Ruth Daulley** had entered the first 2000 burials, and Eleanor has added about 5500 more. She is now adding information from headstones and other sources, plus names of lot owners, with the goal of creating the most accurate list possible of lot owners and persons buried here at some time (including those who are no longer buried here). Inconsistencies in the original records make this job challenging, so she has had to do some detective work to figure out some of the entries. She also did about 15% of the headstone transcriptions, which are now being input to the database.

**Richard June** is the grand champion headstone transcriber; he did about 30% of the transcriptions of headstones on family plots. He has also been part of the proofreading process after the transcriptions

were input to the database. He will continue with the transcribing and mapping in Strangers Rest.

**Lloyd Shenberger**, a CPA, was a WCHT Trustee in 1997-98 and served on an Audit Committee then, but had to step down due to other responsibilities. We are delighted to welcome him back, this time as our new Treasurer. He will be maintaining both financial records and the mailing list, just as the Dailys did; therefore, please send all donations and address changes to the address shown on the bottom of pages 3 and 4.

We welcome these new Trustees and look forward to working with them to improve both the appearance and the records of Washington Cemetery.

## In Memoriam: "Jess" Petty

**James C. Petty, Jr.**, age 92, died Sunday, November 21, 2004 in Austin, Texas, and was buried in Washington Cemetery beside his first wife Margaret (Murphy) Petty, who died in 1988. His second wife, Mattie Lee Petty, died in July 2004.

Jess was an outstanding athlete on the Rice Institute track team and was inducted into the Rice Athletic Hall of Fame in 1978. He just barely missed (by a few inches) going to the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, and then it turned out that in earlier competitions, he had beaten all three of those who did get medals in Berlin.

Jess was one of the 12 incorporators of Concerned Citizens for Washington Cemetery Care, Inc., which was responsible for restoring Washington Cemetery from the abandoned overgrown jungle that it had become by the late 1970s. To see it today, one can scarcely imagine the condition it was in, prompting the 1977 organization of CCWCC. Mr. Petty served as Treasurer during those difficult first six years.

We will miss Jess and offer our condolences to his son Jim and his wife Carol.

## Clements' Corner

The following article is in the format of the new history book being compiled.

### PLOT SR-4036 EDWARD OETKEN

*Compiled by WCHT Historian Gov Clements, based largely on Fogle-West Funeral Home records, which are now at Clayton Library, plus censuses.*

#### **Edward OETKEN (1 February 1878 – 17 December 1959)**

Edward was the ninth of ten children born to George OETKEN and his wife Christiane Clara. Edward grew up on the family farm near Walhalla, Texas (14 miles north of La Grange in northern Fayette County), where his parents were among the earliest settlers. He grew to be five feet eleven inches, weighing just 140 pounds at death. Being one of the younger children, he helped his parents on the farm when they were in their late sixties. By 1920, he had migrated to San Antonio, where, although he never joined the military, he was a civilian employee at Fort Sam Houston, employed as a laborer at the Salvage Warehouse, Zone Supply Office.

About 1927, he moved to Houston where he was engaged in the dairy and cattle industry. His residence was at 4708 Libbey Lane in northwest Houston. He was a bachelor in marital terms, and a Southern Baptist by religion. He was a member of Faith Memorial Baptist Church in Denver Harbor. The minister of that church, Rev. T. Lamar MATHIS, conducted his funeral service at the Fogle-West Chapel.

At the time of his death in the Livingston Funeral Home due to a cerebral hemorrhage, he was 81 years old, having outlived all of his siblings except his sister Emma (Mrs. Theodore E.) KNEIP, a resident of Austin. Also surviving were several nieces and nephews, including a niece, Mrs. Willard ROSENE.

## Contact Addresses and Phone Numbers

**Glenwood Cemetery**, 2525 Washington Ave.,  
Houston, TX 77007-6020, phone (713) 864-7886,  
fax (713) 864-6429, <info@glenwoodcemetery.org>.

**Burial Database:** Eleanor Beebe.

**Veterans Database:** Gus Mistrot.

**History Book Text:** Bernice Mistrot.

**History Book Photos:** Ginger Daily.

**Newsletter Editor:** Bernice Mistrot.

Deadline for material for June issue: May 15, 2005.

## In Memoriam: "Vic" Gehring

*(Much of this article is adapted from the obituary published in the Houston Chronicle.)*

Long-time CCWCC Board Member and WCHT Trustee, **Herman Victor Gehring, Jr.**, 89, a fourth generation Houstonian, died Saturday, August 21, 2004 after being on dialysis for 4½ years. Vic was born in Houston on October 30, 1914 to Freda (Erzt) Gehring and Herman Victor Gehring, Sr. He was a life-long member of Trinity Lutheran Church, serving his congregation on the Building Committee, as a Trustee, and in other capacities.

His parents, grandparents, and one great-grandfather are buried in Washington Cemetery. Vic wasn't simply a Board member of WCHT – he really got in there and got his hands dirty. He was part of the crew that completed the cleanup and demolition of the caretaker's house in 1991 and an enthusiastic participant in the Strangers Rest discovery project. He also obtained a number of grants from Exxon for the improvement of Washington Cemetery.

Vic was a 1936 business graduate of Rice Institute. He went to work for Humble Oil and Refining Company shortly after graduating from Rice and worked for them 47 years, building refinery and pipeline construction projects in Texas and Louisiana. No matter where he was in Texas or Louisiana during the weekdays, he returned to his home in Houston on the weekend.

He was a second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps during World War II and was stationed at Ellington Field and at Key Field in Meridian, Mississippi. While stationed in Meridian he met Martha Hollis, to whom he was married for 57 years.

Vic loved the outdoors and spent many happy hours on his weekend farm near Brenham. After retirement, he and his wife Martha enjoyed traveling to many places in Europe and the U.S. Vic is survived by his wife Martha; their three children, Don Gehring, Peggy Young, and Mary Sue Wilson; seven grandchildren and one step-grandson; one sister, Lucile Nerger; and several nieces and nephews.

Vic will be greatly missed for many reasons, especially his kind and gentle nature. We extend our sympathy to his wife Martha and their family.

## UDC® Jefferson Davis Medals Awarded to Two WCHT Trustees

WCHT President **Gus Mistrot** and Secretary **Bernice Mistrot** were presented with Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medals on January 23, 2005, during the Confederate Heroes Day program at The Museum of Southern History in Richmond, Texas. The Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal is the highest civilian award given by the UDC, and is awarded "for excellence in history, essay writing, declamation, and any other points of special attainment in keeping with the organization's aims and purposes."

The Mistrots received their awards for "Preserving Confederate History by verifying, researching, and documenting the lives and restoring the graves of Confederate Veterans buried in Washington Cemetery, Houston Texas." The awards were presented by **Sherry Davis**, President, and **Carolyn Lee**, immediate past President, of The Southern Cross Chapter 2502, United Daughters of the Confederacy.

In addition to researching the Confederate veterans buried in Washington Cemetery, the Mistrots have also assisted **Magnolia Cemetery** with research on seven Confederate veterans whose new headstones will be dedicated on Saturday, April 16, 2005 during the Confederate Memorial Day service conducted by District I, UDC. For more information on this event, contact **Bill Bammel**

Dedication of another dozen or so new Confederate headstones in Washington Cemetery is tentatively scheduled for the fourth Saturday of October.

\* \* \* \* \*

Please return the form below with your check and mail to the new **WCHT Treasurer, Lloyd Shenberger**. All donations are deductible on Form 1040 (Schedule A).

## Treasurer's Report (January 1, 2005)

During the three months ended December 31, 2004 WCHT received 51 donations from individuals. In addition, WCHT continues to receive funds from the **Randalls Good Neighbor Program** (WCHT #2810) and **Kroger Share Card**. To obtain a Kroger Share Card, please contact Lloyd Shenberger.

While WCHT is currently receiving funds through the matching gift programs of **ExxonMobil** and **J. P. Morgan Chase** foundations, many other corporations have matching gift programs for employees and retirees. All of these programs serve as great ways to help finance WCHT's restoration projects.

The total assets of WCHT amount to \$185,698, of which \$94,772 is held in the Improvements fund for continuing projects. The unaudited financial statement follows.

Fund Balance – September 30, 2004	<b>\$177,176</b>
Income – donations	2,323
Income – investments	<u>6,838</u>
Total Income	9,161
Expenses – historical	0
Expenses – newsletter and postage	<u>639</u>
Total Expenses	639
Fund Balance – December 31, 2004	<b>\$185,698</b>

The investment income of \$6,838 includes a gain realized when our investment in 7.00% Chase Capital preferred stock was called for redemption.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST	
Donor Name _____	Phone Number _____
E-mail Address (if applicable) _____	
_____ 2005 ANNUAL Donation (\$20.00)	Surname(s) of Deceased _____
_____ GRAVESITE RESTORATION	_____
_____ HISTORY/RESEARCH	Plot Number(s), if known _____
_____ TOTAL	Matching Gift from _____

## 2004 Burials in Washington Cemetery

The following persons were laid to rest in Washington Cemetery in 2004.

	<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Burial Date</u>
Harvey A. Meisler	F-030 W½	9 Feb 2004
Juanita L. Tingle Molk	C-002	4 Jun 2004
Patrick A. "Burrell" Pereira	A-052 E½	3 Jul 2004
Laurencia Hernandez Rojas	I-002 E½	17 Jul 2004
William Right Parker Jr.	B-034	18 Oct 2004
James C. Petty Jr.	B-132	16 Nov 2004
Helene Denise Dula Webster	F-036 SW	15 Dec 2004
Rev. Walter M. Crofton Jr.	B-144	30 Dec 2004

## Glenwood Annual Meeting on June 16

All original Owners of lots in Washington Cemetery (or surviving spouses, executors, or descendants of deceased lot owners who have completed a Glenwood Declaration/Proxy form) are invited to attend the Annual Meeting of Glenwood Cemetery, Inc. The primary purposes of the meeting are to elect the Board of Directors and to review the important events of the year.

If no one in your family received the Declaration/Proxy for your lot last year, and you wish to become the representative for your family lot, please contact the Glenwood office at (713) 864-7886. You may also write to Glenwood Cemetery, 2525 Washington Ave., Houston, Texas 77007-6020 or send e-mail to Martha Peterson.

## Spring Work Days Comin' Right Up!

It's hard to believe there are only a couple more months of pleasant working weather before the heat settles in again. We hope to finish up the transcription proofreading in family plots and begin the mapping of Strangers Rest. We look forward to seeing you there. Of course, you're always welcome to just come and visit.

## History Book Needs Helpers

The history book project has stalled because a lot of effort has been going into documenting the veterans who need headstones. If you would like to help with typing or research, please contact any Trustee.

### Spring Calendar of Events

#### Washington Cemetery Work/Visitor Days

Saturday, February 26, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 26, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Saturday, April 23, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

#### Confederate Memorial Day

Saturday, April 16, 10:00 a.m.

**Magnolia Cemetery**, 816 Montrose

(enter American General parking lot from either West Dallas or Allen Parkway)

#### Glenwood Cemetery Annual Meeting

Thursday, June 16, 10:00 a.m.

51st Floor, 1301 McKinney (Chevron Tower)

## WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED