

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

P. O. Box 63592, Pipe Creek, Texas 78063-3592 (713) 864-7886 www.WashingtonCemetery.org

Vol. 35, No. 1

"Heirs Who Care" - Since 1975

December 2017

WCHT OFFICERS

President----- Robert Zaboroski
Vice President----- Catherine Fitch
Secretary----- Bernice Mistrot
Treasurer ----- Lloyd Shenberger

WCHT TRUSTEES

Gov Clements (Historian)
Donald Gehring (Webmaster)
Charles Jackson
Elizabeth Larimore

WCHT President Gus Mistrot Dies



Gustave Antoine Mistrot, III, 88, died on November 16, 2017, after two years of alternating poor health and amazing recoveries, thanks to a variety of high tech medical interventions and his own indomitable spirit. After eight months in home hospice, last July he became one of the 2%

of hospice patients who improve so much that they no longer qualify for the service.

He was born in Houston on May 16, 1929, the only child of Gustave Antoine Mistrot, Jr. and Emily Helene Kirlicks Mistrot. Gus was always grateful for the education and discipline provided by the Basilian Fathers at St. Thomas High School and by the Aggie Corps of Cadets. He worked as a petroleum engineer from his graduation from Texas A&M in 1950 until his retirement from Conoco in 1994.

Soon after he married Bernice in 1984, they began researching his family history and discovered a great-grandmother buried in Washington Cemetery. Gus served on the boards of Concerned Citizens for Washington Cemetery Care, Inc. and Washington Cemetery Historic Trust for 31 years, including nine years as Treasurer of CCWCC and the last 14 years as President of WCHT. He was a key member of the team that created WCHT in 1992, helped CCWCC gain legal control of the cemetery in 1997, and negotiated the merger of CCWCC into Glenwood Cemetery Inc. in 1999, thus assuring excellent present and future care for Washington Cemetery.

Gus belonged to the Sons of the American Revolution, the General Society of the War of 1812, Sons of

the Republic of Texas, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and the Military Order of the Stars and Bars. Together with **Catherine Fitch** and **Bernice Mistrot**, he was honored by the Texas Society SAR in 2015 for his work over the last 15 years to mark the graves of 200 veterans of the War Between the States who are buried in Washington, Glenwood, and Magnolia cemeteries in Houston. He was laid to rest in Glenwood beside his parents, grandparents, and another great-grandmother. He will be greatly missed.

Robert Zaboroski Elected President

The Trustees met on December 11, 2017, and unanimously elected Robert Zaboroski as the new President of WCHT. Robert is a native Houstonian and has been around Washington Cemetery longer than any other Trustee. His father, Louis, did concrete work in the cemetery and built concrete copings for plot owners in the 1930s and 1940s. He continued to routinely visit the cemetery and do special projects after that, due to his long-time friendship with the Nolands (on-site caretakers), until his death in 1970. Robert's mother, Leona, visited the family plot frequently and developed a lasting friendship with Ms. Leona Tonn, who had assumed the role of on-site caretaker after the death of Mrs. Jennie Noland in 1970. Leona was an avid member of CCWCC (she and Gus Mistrot were both first elected as Directors in March 1986) and was a founding Trustee of WCHT, where she served until 2012. She vigorously participated in, and was very proud of, the efforts of CCWCC to restore the cemetery to its rightful state. Robert is a graduate of the University of Houston, a Texas CPA (retired), and retired chief financial officer. We look forward to his energetic leadership of WCHT.

Clements' Corner

In this edition of Clements' Corner, we'll review the several milestone anniversaries in Washington Cemetery history that occurred in 2017.

130 years ago – 7 Feb. 1887: *Deutsche Gesellschaft von Houston* purchased 27 acres outside the Houston city limits to establish a cemetery for the German community. 31 Mar. 1887: The first burial in the new cemetery was 3-year-old **Pauline Ottilie Zeitler** (Lot C-63 E½).

95 years ago – 1 Apr. 1922: *Washington Cemetery* incorporated for 25 years. This was the third and final charter (the first two were in 1879 and 1900).

70 years ago – 1 Apr. 1947: Last charter expired; not renewed. Cemetery continued to operate informally.

40 years ago – 8 July 1977: The last caretaker, **Leona Tonn**, became a crime statistic. Her assailant was never found. 8 Aug. 1977: Concerned Citizens for Washington Cemetery Care (CCWCC) was incorporated. Major cleanup, restoration, and fundraising efforts began.

25 years ago – 10 Apr. 1992: WCHT created to assist in funding historical research, monument restoration, road repair, and other major improvements.

20 years ago – 16 July 1997: The 129th District Court formally authorized CCWCC to “restore, operate, and maintain” Washington Cemetery, the first step in the process that led to CCWCC Inc. being merged into Glenwood Cemetery Inc. two years later, though each cemetery retains its separate historical identity.

5 years ago – 21 Feb. 2012: The Texas Historical Commission formally designated Washington Cemetery as a “Historic Texas Cemetery.”

Strangers Rest Marker Project

The task of identifying and properly marking hundreds of unmarked single graves continues, although not quite as quickly as we had hoped. The goal is to replace each small numbered concrete marker with a larger granite marker engraved with name, dates, and place of birth if known. Glenwood and the monument company have asked us to order them in groups of at least ten that are buried near each other, so there has been some delay while we accumulate enough requests to make an order of ten.

We are close to that point, and will clear the backlog with an order in late December. Please try to get those orders in soon, so you won't have to wait for the next batch. If you just need one more fact checked before you request a marker for your loved one, we may be able to assist with the research. Please contact WCHT Vice President **Cathy Fitch** at **StrangersRest@WashingtonCemetery.org** with any questions you may have about this project.

Death Certificate Collection Project

Committee chair Robert Zaboroski reports significant progress in the past year in our quest to collect digital images of Texas death certificates for persons buried in Washington Cemetery, enabling us to enhance the WCHT burial database by adding birth and death dates and correcting the spelling of names.

Since August 2016 we have added over 1200 certificates. Of the 7650+ burials here, about 5000 are in the 1910-1982 period when certificates are readily available on-line. To date, we have been successful in collecting 29% of these. Initially, our primary focus has been on Strangers Rest burials, where we have found certificates for 88% of the roughly 1300 single-grave burials during the referenced time period.

Special thanks go out to our volunteers **Sharon Fisk** and **Patricia K. Victor**, and trustees **Catherine Fitch**, **Bernice Mistrot**, and **Lloyd Shenberger** for their diligent efforts in this time-consuming process. As the numbers indicate, we have a long way to go to complete the search. We welcome volunteers of all ages. If you have internet access either at home or in a library (especially an LDS library) and would like to help with this project, please contact Robert by email at **Volunteers@WashingtonCemetery.org**.

Phase 12B Monument Repairs Completed

During the 2016 monument cleaning project, about a hundred headstones were leveled as well as being cleaned. The list below is only part of the work done; it will be continued in future newsletters.

Section B: Edward E. **Kuerbis** (1835-1917) & Lena P. H. Degenkolbe **Kuerbis** (1848-1903), George Hampton **Cook** (1883-1927) & William Price **Cook** (1891-1927), Byron Crawford **Seegar** (1851-1928), Frank **Hedgecock** (1862-1892), Thomas **Hedgecock** (1831-1896), Johann Christian **Sauer** (1835-1892), Isabella Kniep **Von Haxthausen** (1853-1896), Mary Bell Sherfy **Ritchie** (1877-1910), Henrietta Caroline Bohlau **Kohlmann** (1875-1918).

Financial Report – Fiscal Year 2017

For the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2016 and ending September 30, 2017 net assets increased by \$7,889. Total income for the period was \$10,581

compared to the previous fiscal year of \$8,014. Expenses for the period were \$2,692 compared to \$28,374 for the previous year.

INCOME and EXPENSES (Unaudited) – Fiscal Year Ending September 30, 2017

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

Net Assets – October 1, 2016		\$ 169,618		
INCOME:	Operations/Administration	\$ 5,360	EXPENSES: Monument Restoration	\$ 0
	Historical Projects	50	Strangers Rest Project	0
	Monument Restoration	<u>2,870</u>	Newsletter & Postage	2,457
	Total Donations	\$ 8,280	Administration	<u>235</u>
	Other Income			
	Net Investment Income	<u>2,301</u>		
Total Income		\$ 10,581	Total Expenses	\$2,692
			Net Assets -- September 30, 2017	<u>\$177,507</u>
ASSETS:	Cash	\$ 30,507	EQUITY: Unrestricted Net Assets	\$163,043
	Securities (CDs)	147,000	Temp. Restricted Net Assets	<u>14,464</u>
		<u>\$177,507</u>		<u>\$177,507</u>

WCHT is a 501(c)(3) organization and all Trustees are volunteers. There are several ways to support Washington Cemetery. Donations can be mailed to Washington Cemetery Historic Trust, P.O. Box 63592, Pipe Creek, TX 78063-3592 with the form below. Or, you may make a donation through PayPal or with your credit card by going to our website, www.washingtoncemetery.org, and clicking on **Make a Donation** under the **Quick Links** on the right hand side of the home page. Also, if you shop at Randalls, you can link your Remarkable Card to Washington Cemetery Historic Trust (WCHT #2810). You can also help reduce our operating expenses by receiving your newsletter by email. Subscribe to the email newsletter by going to our website www.washingtoncemetery.org and clicking on the green box **Subscribe to our Newsletter** under the Quick Links on the right hand side of the home page. The emailed newsletter is free, but we ask for a minimum \$5 donation if you would like to receive a hard copy newsletter through the mail. For further information, please contact Treasurer Lloyd Shenberger at Treasurer@WashingtonCemetery.org.

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST	
Donor Name _____	ID No. _____ Phone No. _____
E-mail Address _____	Future newsletters will be e-mailed
_____ 2018 Annual Donation (\$25.00)	Strangers Rest name(s) _____
_____ Strangers Rest Marker(s) (\$100.00 each)	
_____ Gravesite Restoration	Your interest in Washington Cemetery _____
_____ Newsletter Subscription (\$5.00)	
_____ TOTAL	Matching Gift from _____

Executive Director's Report

It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the loss of our friend Gus Mistrot. Gus made significant contributions to both Washington and Glenwood cemeteries and he will be sorely missed.

This past year has been a mixed year for us considering the effects of Hurricane Harvey. I am pleased to report that Washington Cemetery suffered little in the way of damage from this storm and we are fortunate in that regard. Glenwood was not so fortunate but we have managed to recover.

In August 2016, we reported on the completion of Lake Whitaker, our new source of irrigation water for both Washington and Glenwood cemeteries. We are now in the process of installing an automatic irrigation system in Washington Cemetery, which we expect to complete by the end of this year. It has been a long time coming but it was entirely dependent on our ability to provide adequate pressure and sufficient sustained water capability to cover both cemeteries without compromising one or the other. We now have an almost unlimited water supply for both cemeteries.

Moving forward, plans are now underway to revamp the front entryway of Glenwood. Washington Cemetery will be a direct beneficiary of this effort. We plan on installing a new roadway from Glenwood's entryway tying in directly to Washington Cemetery. This new connection should enhance and boost the visibility of Washington Cemetery.

I encourage you to visit the cemetery and we welcome your suggestions.

Richard A. Ambrus, Executive Director
Glenwood and Washington Cemeteries

WASHINGTON CEMETERY HISTORIC TRUST

P. O. Box 63592 1302
Pipe Creek, Texas 78063-3592

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2017 Washington Cemetery Burials

The following seven persons were laid to rest in Washington Cemetery during the year 2017.

	<u>Lot No.</u>	<u>Burial Date</u>
Ronald Elton Moy	A-065	02 Feb 2017
Charles Conrad Stelzig	A-070	27 Apr 2017
Birdie Sojourner Brogdon	A-122.5 E½	11 May 2017
Radmila Gavrilovich	G-044	16 May 2017
Ugo O. Nweke	A-040 NW¼	19 Aug 2017
Daniel Wm. Lakenmacher	C-008	30 Nov 2017
Helen Smith Brittain	H-058 W½	02 Dec 2017

Thank You to Our Supporters

The Trustees would like to thank everyone who has subscribed to our email newsletter, made donations, contacted us, shared family information that helped us clarify cemetery records, looked up obituaries or death certificates, purchased Strangers Rest markers, or assisted in any other way with the continuing efforts to restore Washington Cemetery and its records and honor our ancestors buried here.

Again, thank you for your generosity. Your participation is vital to the success of our mission and is greatly appreciated. We wish everyone a Happy Holiday season and all the best in 2018.

2018 Calendar of Events

Glenwood Cemetery Annual Meeting
Thursday, May 17, 10:00 a.m., Lora Jean Kilroy
Visitor and Education Center at Bayou Bend,
6003 Memorial Drive Houston, Texas 77007