The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

The Heritage Gazette
Spring 2006

Walking Tours Available on Web Site
Variety of Interests Seen Through Tours

The repertoire of self-guided walking tours on the website has grown, with three new tours now available to download. All the tours are designed to be used without a tour guide, taking you through the cemetery, highlighting different perspectives of its famous residents and monuments.

**Gravestone Styles** is a tour focusing on important representations of gravestone styles from different eras, as well as on unique stones and monuments. Colonial and Victorian monuments and symbols, typical family stones, box tombs, family vaults, unusual carvings and inscriptions, and the congressional cenotaphs are all discussed, with accompanying photos and locations.

**Navy/Navy Yard** tour focuses on the U.S. Navy and the Washington Navy Yard, but other notables are included at each stop. There are a remarkable number of persons associated with the U.S. Exploring Expedition (1838-1842) and R.Adm. Charles Wilkes, who commanded the expedition. His autobiography contains his opinion of these individuals (slanted as they may be) and they are included where appropriate.

There are 8 commandants of the Navy Yard interred here, you will visit 7 of them. Three others were removed to Arlington. Continued on Page 3.

Choctaws Honor Ancestor
*Push-Ma-Ta-Ha* Was Famed Chief

Chief Phillip Martin of the Mississippi Choctaw made a donation of $10,000 to Congressional Cemetery on behalf of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Chief Martin visited the cemetery in the fall of 2005 to be interviewed at *Push-ma-ta-ha’s* grave as part of a documentary. The Choctaws have been long supporters of the Association.

*Push-ma-ta-ha* became a leading Choctaw Chief around 1800 and began playing a major role in negotiations with other tribes and peoples, including the Americans. In 1802, he took part in the Fort Confederation meeting, his first major formal treaty with the United States, and from then on played a key role in all dealings between the Choctaws and the U.S.

In the War of 1812 he was the first to lead a party against the British and their Indian allies (Creeks and Seminoles).

Continued on Page 3.

New Web Site for Congressional
*Features, Photos, & Extensive Records*

Historic Congressional Cemetery has a brand new website! Thanks to the tireless efforts of Sandy Schmidt, the new website is up and running. The new site not only contains new information but has been redesigned for ease of use. “The new site preserves everything that existed on the previous site,” Sandy says, “but things have moved to make it clearer what information is there.”

Most of what was on the old site can be found under the “Genealogy/History” menu. Some things like gravestone photos

Don’t Be Foolish on April 1st
Come to Spring Volunteer Day

It’s no joke, April 1st marks the kick off of 2006 events at Congressional Cemetery with Spring Volunteer Day and the planting of 15 new trees. A combination of shade trees and flowering trees, the planting is part of the ongoing work towards fulfilling the Landscape Plan completed last year for the Cemetery. Two or three volunteers are needed to plant each tree successfully, and Casey Trees will provide expert guidance. “We are planting 15 trees at Congressional as a part of our Request for Planting (RFP) program,” says Jim Lyons, Continued on Page 3.
Letter from the Board ~
30 Years of Stewardship

Next year will be a big year for us here at Congressional Cemetery as we celebrate our 200th anniversary but we should pause nonetheless to note with pride that 2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery. Founded in 1976, the Association picked up on the rising interest in America’s beginnings. The founders of the Association, like the founders of the cemetery 200 years ago recognized a civic need and gathered enough citizens and resources to turn needs into dreams and dreams into realities.

The Association’s mission is to care for the physical and cultural heritage that is inherent in so many aspects of Congressional Cemetery. Beyond the prominent household names like Sousa and Hoover are scores of others whose lives shaped our city and our nation. Few burial grounds can boast of such a broad sweep of national figures from our nation’s earliest days.

The archeological record left for us is a treasure house of cultural history as well. From the simple L’Enfant street grid to the artistry of gentle rose petals carved in stone, from the daily log books to the cobblestone swales, our stewardship includes the physical plant as well as the wealth of biographies you can find on our web site.

Congressional’s unique role in the nation’s history demands nothing less than Stewardship in the fullest sense. Stewardship requires a deep sense of heritage and an obligation to honor both our past and our future. We’ve made great strides in that regard in the last few years. In this 30th year of our Association, we can be proud of the work we’ve done and look forward to our future contributions to America’s past.

~ Patrick Crowley

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The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible.

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30 Years of Stewardship

Congressional Cemetery’s 3rd Saturday volunteer program is run by professional conservators who belong to three professional conservation groups, the Washington Conservation Guild (WCG), the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC), and the Association for Preservation Technologies, Washington, D.C. Chapter (APTDC). Last year they urged their colleagues to support a year’s “adoption” of the Cemetery for the purpose of creating guidelines for the preservation of monuments in the cemetery. These groups, plus the Cemetery’s own volunteer corps and the U.S. military, provided labor for at least one volunteer day per month from April through October 2005.

The Cemetery’s Conservation Task Force (CTF) planned, oversaw and executed all these volunteer efforts throughout the year. The volunteer days consisted of surveying stones to record basic information about location and condition, treatments including re-setting (e.g., straightening, rebuilding foundations, re-mortaring joints), cleaning (removing biological and chemical staining), and repairs (e.g., joining broken stones, replacing corroded pins).

In 2005, approximately 1,200 stones have been surveyed, and 45 stones have been reset, cleaned and or repaired. The cost of the conservation work done by the CTF, if performed by paid professionals, would be approximately $30,000. If you are interested in joining the CTF on a volunteer day, please contact Catherine Dewey, catherine_dewey@nps.gov or 202-257-0482 for additional information. Ω

Save the Date:
2006 Annual Meeting
April 15th is the 2006 Congressional Cemetery Annual Meeting and Lecture, held at the Cemetery in the Chapel. Budgets, goals, and projects for the coming year will be reviewed; the meeting is free and open to the public.
Continued from Page 1.

He joined the southern army U.S. with 500 of his own warriors. He took part in 24 battles, and served directly under General Jackson in his Pensacola campaign, winning the General’s admiration for his leadership and the skillful discipline of his “wild” warriors. For his services, Push-ma-ta-ha attained a distinction no other Native American has held — the rank of brigadier general in the American Army.

In 1824 he was a member of a deputation sent to Washington to visit the President to strengthen the friendship between the Choc-taws and the American people. Unfortunately, Push-ma-ta-ha died of diphtheria on December 24, 1824, while in Washington. His last words were: "When I am dead, let the big guns be fired over me", and they were, as a mark of respect to the man.

His funeral was one of the most remarkable the Capital had seen. Thousands lined the route, and the casket was borne in a mile-long procession that included bands, cavalry, infantry, and a host of carriages filled with celebrities. After Push-ma-ta-ha’s death, President Jackson sent a medal to his oldest surviving son (he had five children) as a testimonily of respect for a warrior whose attachment to the U.S. government had been unshaken throughout his life. Jackson frequently expressed the opinion that Push-ma-ta-ha was the greatest and the bravest Indian he had ever known, and John Randolph of Roanoke, in pronouncing a eulogy on him in the Senate, uttered the words regarding his wisdom, his eloquence, and his friendship for the whites that afterward were inscribed on his monument.

April 1st Volunteer Day

Continued from Page 1.

Casey Trees Executive Director. “RFP was designed to encourage communities to come to us with their own ideas for regreening their neighborhoods.

Casey Trees provides the trees, tools, and the technical assistance of our trained Citizen Foresters. We count on the community to provide the volunteers, enthusiasm, and commitment to plant the trees and maintain them for years to come. Capitol Hill East is blessed with the beautiful and historic Congressional Cemetery. We’re glad to be able to play a role in helping with its restoration.”

Anyone interested in volunteering on April 1st should come to the cemetery at 9am that morning, dressed in sturdy shoes and clothes that can get dirty. For more information contact Patrick Crowley at pcrowley@congressionalcemetery.org.

The mission of the Casey Trees Endowment Fund is to restore, enhance, and protect the tree canopy of the Nation’s Capital.

From the Manager’s Desk ~

Time Off to Work for Peace

In my last column, I mentioned having spent most of the last 40 years working in some pretty dicey places around the world. Well, just as we were getting into winter last November, I got a call from an old friend asking if I could take a break from my stress-free semi-retirement job here at Congressional Cemetery to do a small piece of work in Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast) in west Africa.

With approval from the Board (I guess they figured a few weeks in the tropics would be good for my disposition), I traveled to Africa late in the month for a temporary reprise of my old career in international development.

My friend is Country Director in Cote d’Ivoire for International Rescue Committee (IRC), one of the most respected US organizations working in conflict areas around the world, and this country has been in a state of sporadic civil war for most of the last decade. My task was to design grassroots activities that might aid reconciliation efforts taking place at international diplomatic levels.

The country was, and still is, divided north-south between rebel and government-controlled areas separated by a UN-monitored Zone de Confiance (usually called a demilitarized zone but it sounds much better in French), which stretches across its mid-section like a cummerbund. You don’t hear much about this situation. A relatively small number of people have been killed and/or displaced by this particular conflict, so far. It’s very different from Rwanda, for example. There isn’t one clearly defined group against another. The government and its local media were displaying a nasty tendency to try and couch the conflict in ethnic terms, and the same canard was being picked up by western journalists, who rightly assume their readers wouldn’t be interested in the more complex economic and political reasons.

Unfortunately, organizations like IRC working at the community level have to combat the cynical rhetoric of the politicians in order to do their job. Fortunately, by the time I left, African leaders themselves had had their fill of the egre-gious behavior on the part of the government and, backed by Kofi Annan and the UN, were stepping in to put a lid on the rhetoric. I’m hopeful, given the fact that there is little “major power” involvement in this particular situation, that this same African leadership will be able to demonstrate its ability to resolve the conflict and let this lush rich corner of the continent return to normal.

— Tom Kelly
Elbridge Gerry enjoyed a long and distinguished patriotic career. As a young man, he signed the Declaration of Independence and served in the Continental Congress throughout the War that created the new nation. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, and then Governor of Massachusetts. In 1812 he was elected Vice President of the United States with James Madison. Less than two years into his term, Gerry died in Washington, D.C. and was interred at Congressional Cemetery, a burial ground that had come into being just seven years earlier. But it would be nearly a decade before Congress appropriated funds to create a memorial to mark his burial site.

As Gerry’s career came to a close, that of John Frazee, a 24-year-old stone cutter, was just beginning. Following his indenture to a local builder, Frazee established his own stone business in his hometown of Rahway, New Jersey. Among professional pursuits that included building houses and running a singing school, Frazee began carving gravestones.

Grave monuments likely formed a relatively small part of his work life, but it was the part that interested him most during the early years of his career. His sandstone memorials from the 1810s that have survived in Rahway Cemetery in New Jersey show a light touch and an individuality of style that set them apart from neighboring stones by other carvers.

As he became more proficient and successful, he moved his business to larger venues, first to New Brunswick, N.J., and then to New York City in 1818. There, in partnership with his brother William, he began carving ornamental mantels for prosperous clients and memorials for church interiors. The memorial he created for Sarah Haynes in Trinity Church in New York City in 1821 shows the quality of his work. It was likely works like this one that brought Frazee to the attention of the U.S. Congressmen who commissioned him to create a marble memorial for Gerry’s gravesite nearly a decade after the Vice President’s death.

The twelve-foot tall Gerry Memorial that Frazee completed during the summer of 1823 was the cemetery’s most impressive to date. Rising from a two-stepped base, the body of the monument carries inscriptions that pay homage both to Gerry and to the Congress that commissioned the work. Sitting on an octagonal base above the capstone is an urn and an eternal flame that the monument’s patrons hoped would keep alive Gerry’s memory.

Even though its details have been softened by nearly two centuries weather, the fineness of Frazee’s carving is evident in the acanthus leaves and garlands that soften the memorial’s corners, as well as in the varied typography of his inscriptions. But to really glimpse the quality of Frazee’s memorial carving, visit the churches of lower Manhattan—Trinity Church, the Dutch Reformed Church [now First Chinese Presbyterian Church] and especially St. Paul’s Chapel monument to John Wells.

Completed in 1825, the Wells Monument is crowned by Frazee’s earliest marble portrait bust. It may also be the first marble portrait carved by an American born sculptor. Portraiture would be Frazee’s mainstay by the 1830s. A second Congressional commission came his way in 1831 when he was employed to carve a marble bust of John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, for placement in the Court’s chamber in the Capitol. The commission was a coup for the largely self-taught sculptor. Earlier government commissions for sculptural projects had invariably gone to academically-trained, foreign-born sculptors. The Jay portrait was well-received and Frazee soon found himself creating...
Benjamin B. French Allee Installed
Namesake Lodge Plants Trees

Fourteen Kentucky Coffee trees, known as the Benjamin B. French Allee, now line Congress Street south of the Chapel, installed thanks to the Benjamin B. French Masonic Lodge. The Lodge donated the trees this past fall in honor of French. Kentucky Coffee Trees have foliage resembling the acacia tree, which is revered by the Masons and important in their symbolism.

Benjamin Brown French (1800-1870), is known today for his extensive diaries covering the Civil War period, and dedicated his life to public service. He was educated as a lawyer and before coming to Washington served in the New Hampshire Legislature. In Washington, he was elected Assistant Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives and then Clerk of the House until 1847, when he was elected first president of the Magnetic Telegraph Company, founded by Samuel F. B. Morse.

French also had a long and distinguished Masonic history, was affiliated with the National Lodge #12 on May 7, 1846, and was elected Grand Master of the District of Columbia, serving for seven consecutive years. While Grand Master, he laid the cornerstones of the east extension of the U.S. Capitol Building, the Smithsonian Institution and the Washington Monument. Nationally known for his political and Masonic roles and for his poetry, French’s obituary appeared on the front page of the New York Times. He is interred in Congressional Cemetery.

The Benjamin Brown French Lodge #15 was chartered in 1853, while Benjamin B. French was serving as Grand Master, and held its first communication in 1854. The Lodge has met continuously in the Georgetown section of Washington.Ω

John Frazee, Sculptor

Continued from Page 4.

Neo-classical portrait busts for a host of prominent New Yorkers and Bostonians, among them Nathaniel Prime, Daniel Webster, Nathaniel Bowditch, and John Marshall.

While the 1830s were the salad days for Frazee, they would prove to be the beginning of his decline and eclipse by younger, better-trained American sculptors who always seemed to get the plum commissions that he wanted. Portrait busts were fine, but large-scale public monuments to Washington and other heroes of the nation’s beginning were the commissions that he thought were his due and he never missed an opportunity to condemn the work of more successful competing sculptors. His grandiose nature, coupled with the verbal attacks he leveled at colleagues, did little to endear him to prospective clients.

By the end of the 1830s, Frazee’s sculptural production slowed to a trickle and he became supervisory architect for the construction of the New York Custom House on Wall Street. In returning to the building trades, he was able to bring a sculptor’s eye to the design of the building’s interior plan and ornamental finishes. More important, the work provided him with a steady paycheck when his health was failing and his responsibilities as a family provider were growing.

Jane Probasco, Frazee’s wife of nearly twenty years, died during the cholera epidemic of 1832. Together they bore ten children, five of whom survived childhood. A year after her death, Frazee married seventeen-year-old Lydia Place, with whom he would have ten more children. Chronic rheumatism plagued him since at least the mid-1830s making work difficult to impossible and contributing to the financial trouble that followed him until his death in 1852. The tiny monument that marks his own grave in Brooklyn’s Green-Wood Cemetery records only his name and the dates of his birth and death. It is a meager, impoverished remembrance, light years from the elegant memorial he carved for Elbridge Gerry nearly thirty years earlier, a time when all things seemed possible. Ω

To learn more, see:


Dennis Montagna, Ph.D., does Monument Research and Preservation for the National Park Service in Philadelphia, Pa.
**Tours Available on Web Site**

Continued from Page 1.
(Thomas Holdup Stevens), Oak Hill (Beverly Kennon, his monument remains at Congressional Cemetery) and Baltimore (Alexander Semmes). The online tour includes an interactive cemetery map with 20 stops and information about each one. **Vistas** is an interactive cemetery map with views from 16 locations, with accompanying interpretive explanations.

The **General Tour** remains a popular choice, with 18 stops showcasing the most interesting, significant, and unique residents and monuments of Congressional Cemetery. An accompanying map shows all 18 locations so that the tour can be walked independently.

Check out all the cemetery tours at [www.congressionalcemtery.org](http://www.congressionalcemtery.org)

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**Bayscapes Seminar & Tour at HCC**

Alliance for Chesapeake Bay

Join the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for a Bay-Scaping Seminar and Tour on Saturday, May 20th, 9am – 11am. Discover how BayScapes are not only low maintenance, but beneficial to the whole community and local wildlife.

BayScapes are environmentally sound landscapes that create wildlife habitat, conserve water, and prevent pollution. By using native plant species, BayScapes require less mowing, less fertilizing, and less pesticide use than most non-native varieties. Less maintenance means less chemical and nutrient pollutants make their way into the Anacostia River and the Bay. In addition, native plants are often more drought-resistant than traditional lawns, requiring less watering.

Along with reducing maintenance, BayScapes provide diverse habitat for songbirds, small mammals, butterflies, and other creatures. Native species are also less likely to take over surrounding habitats, unlike introduced invasive species such as English ivy, Norway maple, and Japanese honeysuckle.

Participants will learn more about our region’s native plants and how they affect water quality, then tour the grounds to view the cemetery’s own BayScape gardens, installed in 2005 and 2006 by local volunteers. Refreshments provided. Please RSVP to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at (410) 377-6270 or kdowling@acb-online.org. No cost, rain or shine.

*The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is a regional non-profit that builds and fosters partnerships to protect and to restore the Bay and its rivers.*

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**New Web Site**

Continued from Page 1.

are now divided between multiple menus to make them easier to find. A new section, “Tours/Education,” contains new walking tours and an enhanced Washington, D.C. school tour.

The complete Interment Index and Interment Index for the Methodist Episcopal Cemetery are now under a new section, “Cemetery Records.” Most of the Methodist Episcopal Cemetery remains were reinterred at Congressional in 1898. Sandy and other volunteers are adding the Daily Logs from 1898 on and plan to include the Range/Site book as well.

Another new section, “Local History,” contains articles written by James Croggon (Range 66, Site 273) and the Rambler, describing people and neighborhoods in the early days of Washington, D.C. This is a wonderful adjunct to the profile of city history through all the people buried here who did so much to shape the city. Future plans for this section of the website also include adding newspaper clip files highlighting Washington, D.C., policemen, firemen, and others, many of whom are interred at Congressional.

Keep checking back often to see how the new website continues to expand! [www.congressionalcemtery.org](http://www.congressionalcemtery.org)

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**Dog Walkers Fund Landscaping**

*Contributions & Fees Maintain Yard*

Once again in 2005, the K-9 Corps raised enough money to pay for the lawn mowing throughout the year, which costs approximately $55,000. In addition, dog walker fundraising and volunteer efforts in 2005 saw 30 new trees planted in the Northeast section of the grounds, a terrific new website, [www.cemeterydogs.org](http://www.cemeterydogs.org) launched in February, and a new Gator purchased to help maintain the landscaping. In 2006 that gator will deliver water to a new watering stop provided for the dogs, and we plan to plant more trees in 2006 in our continuing effort to beautify the cemetery.

Congressional Cemetery’s K-9 Corps is made up of association members who contribute $125/year, which makes them eligible to walk their dogs in the cemetery. There is also a registration fee of $40 for each dog. These members spend quality time with the canine member of their families in the beautiful and historic setting of Congressional Cemetery. We’d like to take this opportunity to thank the many K-9 Corps members who volunteered over the last year. Whether it was part of the third Saturday mornings, the tree party, or one of the poop patrols, your help was greatly appreciated and continues to make a big difference in the ongoing effort to maintain this historic landscape.
Congressional Quiz
A Sculptor of Men

John Frazee left his mark on Congressional Cemetery in a way that few others have. He was a self made man and an accomplished sculptor, but did he do all of the following?

- Frazee was an indentured laborer at a stone quarry before establishing his own stone business.
- Frazee ran a singing school before establishing his own stone business.
- Frazee sculpted the bust of Chief Justice John Jay that resides in the Supreme Court chamber.
- Frazee had a small family by his second wife who was an artist in her own right.
- Frazee’s own gravestone rivals that of his famous memorial to Elbridge Gerry.


Countdown to our 200th Anniversary
I want to help preserve Historic Congressional Cemetery.

___$25 ___$50 ___$100 ___$250 ___Other

Donations of $250 or more are deposited in our Third Century Endowment Fund which is matched by our Congressional Appropriation and managed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

___My check is enclosed (made payable to Congressional Cemetery).
___Please bill my credit card. ___Visa ___MasterCard

Card Number ______________________ Exp. Date____________
Signature ______________________________________________

Name __________________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________
City/State/Zip __________________________________________
Phone __________________________ email __________________

Does your employer make matching contributions?
Would you like the matching gift form?  _____

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Around the Yard

Car Bomb Rattles Neighbors
Gatehouse Windows Destroyed

An attempted murder outside the Cemetery gates in December ended up with a near miss for the intended victim and a houseful of broken glass for the Gatehouse. The 1:00 AM blast shook the neighborhood for blocks and knocked out 16 Gatehouse windows. All 30 gatehouse windows will be replacements with thermally insulated glass with an historic feel. Insurance will cover half the cost of the new windows. Ω

Ruth Obelisk Installed
Tall Memorial First in Long Time

Congressional Cemetery has a wonderful and impressive collection of tall family obelisks marking the legacies of Washington’s early families. Most of them date to the 1800s but we now have a new tall obelisk to honor the parents of Association volunteer Ann Barsi. The 12 foot granite marker can be found along the 9/11 Memorial Grove path near the Sousa bench. Ω

Spring Tours: April 22 & 23
DC Cultural Tourism Program

The Association will continue its participation in the city-wide neighborhood tours sponsored by DC Cultural Tourism. The annual spring and fall tours promote a “beyond the Mall” series of tours throughout the city. The Saturday and Sunday tours begin at the main gate at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM each day. Tours are free but donations are always appreciated. Tours will be led by Patrick Crowley. Ω

Eagle Scout Memorial
Scouts Honor Derek Richardson

Boy Scout Derek Richardson earned his eagle badge two years ago by designing and building the visitors pavilion at the front gate of Congressional Cemetery. After Derek died in a car accident last year, his fellow scouts decided to honor him with a plaque in the floor of the pavilion. The plaque was installed last winter in a ceremony attended by over 40 of his fellow scouts, friends, and family. Ω

Fraternity Digs In
Alpha Phi Omega Sculpts

The University of Maryland chapter of Alpha Phi Omega pays tribute to the founder of the fraternity by offering a day’s worth of volunteer work at Congressional Cemetery where the founder is buried. This year’s visit concentrated on sculpting the hardscape around the spring-fed run that flows along Prout Street east of mausoleum row. Ω

Friends Honor Mr. Cozier
Association Gifts in Liu of Flowers

Association member Marshall Cozier passed away this year and was interred at Congressional Cemetery in February. Cozier’s family asked that donations be made to the Association in lieu of flowers at the funeral home or church. Numerous gifts have been received for which the Association is grateful to Marshall Cozier and family. Ω
Congressional Cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The Heritage Gazette
Spring 2006

Spring Calendar
Apr 1 – Spring Volunteer Day
Apr 15 – Cemetery Annual Meeting
Apr 15 – 3rd Saturday Volunteer Day
Apr 19 – Bayscaping at Prout Run
Apr 22 – DC Cultural Tourism tours
Apr 23 – DC Cultural Tourism tours
May 13 – Navy Yard Volunteers
May 20 – BayScape Seminar and Tour
May 20 – 3rd Saturday Volunteer Day

Reserve Your Place in History
Interment Sites are available in Historic Congressional Cemetery
Call for details—202-543-0539

The Ward Six September 11th Memorial Grove at Historic Congressional Cemetery

Your continued support for the Association makes it possible for us to continue restoring and improving the grounds and historic markers.