

HERITAGE (AZETT)

WINTER/SPRING 2020

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

DECADE IN REVIEW

s we start into the Roaring 2020s, it seems timely to Jook back at some of the highlights of the last ten years. The decade started with no digital records or front gate, matching the first million dollar endowment and a staff of two full-time and two part-time staff. Today we have a vibrant board, professional staff, solid financials and budgeting processes, routine maintenance and restoration efforts, and a lot of confidence in our future. Here are just a few highlights from the last ten years.

2010

National Park Service accepted the application for the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom for the graves of William Boyd, John Dean, David A. Hall, and Hannibal Hamlin



Chapel organ refurbished Dead Man's Run 5K established

• 2011

Secretary of the Interior designated Historic Congressional Cemetery as a National Historic Landmark on June 14

National Blue Star Memorial plaque installed

Two benches with engraved signatures of 13 signers for the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence installed.

INSIDE

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• 2012

Paul K. Williams joins APHCC as President.

Historic Congressional Cemetery book by Rebecca Roberts and Sandra K. Schmidt published

Arsenal Monument restored and rose garden added

Bee hives arrive in the Cemetery

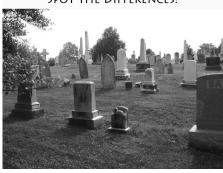
• 2013

Pride 5K established Tombs and Tomes Book Club established Day of the Dog Festival established

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SPOT THE DIFFERENCES!



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As you may have noticed, since being named Chair of the Board for the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (HCC), I have used this space to share stories about what makes HCC special to me. I have done so in the hopes of inspiring all of you who are connected to Congressional to consider the ways



in which this amazing place is special to you. Since joining the Board of HCC, I have been struck by the depth of the connection that each Board member feels to our cemetery – in ways that are unique among all of the Boards I have served on. Over the course of the remaining time that I serve as Chair of the Board, I intend to share other ways in which HCC has touched me, and we will be creating an opportunity for you to share your stories as well. (Stay tuned for more information on that in our next newsletter.)

For now, though, I would like to use this first newsletter of the calendar year to highlight some of the projects being undertaken in the year ahead to work to fulfill HCC's mission and vision and to improve the experience of all who step onto our grounds.

While we are engaged in a number of projects in the coming year – many of which will happen behind the scenes – I would like to focus here on four projects that will be visible to anyone who spends time at HCC this year.

FAMILY MAUSOLEUM CONVERSION TO NICHE SPACE

The Johnson mausoleum located along Mausoleum Row has been vacant since the bodies were removed in the 1980s and the historic granite structure (constructed in 1892) was returned the cemetery. In 2019, HCC installed a new waterproof roof, complete with skylight, and removed the individual crypts. In 2020, the mausoleum renovation will be completed, creating nearly 180 granite-faced cremation niches along with two benches for the interior. A new wrought iron gate also has been installed in the entrance to the mausoleum. Construction should be complete in the summer of 2020. This project will reinvigorate one of the beautiful mausoleums of Mausoleum Row and will also provide new niches for those looking beyond the current columbaria for a permanent resting place for those who have been cremated.

New side porch for the Gatehouse

Work continues on the ongoing project to complete a side porch for the Gatehouse at the entrance to the cemetery. The side porch will be able to be used for tours and other programs as a sheltered starting point. This project will also complete the front gate restoration project that began in

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THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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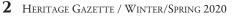
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The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are deductible to the extent permitted by federal tax laws. Funding for the preservation and maintenance of Historic Congressional Cemetery is provided in part by the Congressional Cemetery Endowment, which was created with matching funds provided by the U.S. Congress and administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.







FROM THE PRESIDENT

s quickly as 2020 is beginning to speed by, it's time to reflect a wee bit back on the previous year at Historic Congressional Cemetery. We hit several milestones with perhaps the most exciting setting a new fundraising record of \$1,345,000. We even exceeded the budget by more than \$100,000. This was accomplished by a very dedicated staff and a cadre of talented volunteers that often worked weekends and evenings during events, introducing new activities and promoting site sales for people and pets. We streamlined several events that were not performing at their most profitable with our mission to "fail fast" when needed.

The year 2019 also witnessed a record number of site sales, a trend that has been increasing over the past five years. Through our media coverage, events, and tours, people have learned not only where we are, but who we are and that we are a historic yet active cemetery. We have mapped thousands of sites that are available for purchase and at the same time created new real estate with our three obelisk columbaria and the transformation this spring of the 1892 vacant and now restored Wilson-Barton mausoleum into a columbarium with an incredible 178 niches inside to meet the rising trend of cremation in the metropolitan area. We hosted a total of 72 funerals last year, and site sales, funerals, and associated fees equal about 35% of our annual income.

And Congressional Cemetery wouldn't be a special place without our beloved canine members. Their annual fees bring in nearly a quarter of a million dollars, and their humans donate tens of thousands more. I occasionally lecture to other cemeteries each year at the International Cemetery, Cremation, and Funeral Association (ICCFA) about the pros and cons of the program which is expanding to other cemeteries especially when they hear that dollar amount is unrestricted cash each and every January, a magical circumstance for any non-profit. We limit the number of

dogs to 800 and everyone has a host of rules to follow. The program is so popular, as of this writing, we have 500 people on the waitlist hoping to join — about a five year wait.

One of the aspects that I enjoy most about this position is that every day is different. Our staff expects the unexpected (ever answer a phone in a cemetery?) and we are always striving for new ways to make it interesting and profitable. After two years of trying, for example, the city allowed us to host a herd of baby goats for Goat Yoga — the first time in the city! The catch? Lots of paperwork, a team of veterinarians, and only about ten days to sell tickets. The bonus? Bottle feeding baby goats was allowed in between the yoga sessions! Over the course of two days, we hosted 250 thrilled yoga practitioners and young goat enthusiasts that had never even seen a live farm animal before. Oh, and we sold \$18,000 worth of tickets in those ten days.

Our Kingdom of Animals pet section was completed, and now is the final resting place of several beloved animals whose clever names can be seen on the granite obelisks or in individual sites. Many are visited by their counterparts who enjoy the cemetery grounds each and every day.

While we did accomplish many restoration and preservation projects in 2019, we have even more planned for 2020 that you will be learning about. The Association was also proud to contribute \$110,000 this past year toward our endowment that is held by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Its quarterly disbursements now have reached \$300,000 per year, funds that are restricted to buildings and grounds, restoration and preservation of this beloved National Historic Landmark. If you haven't visited in a while, you will certainly see the difference your donations and that of my amazing staff have contributed to this cherished historic cemetery.

—Paul



CALLING ALL FORMER APHCC BOARD MEMBERS

On March 19 we will host an APHCC Board Reunion at 5:30 pm, in the chapel. This event offers a chance for current and past board members to reconnect and reminisce. It is also a time to celebrate the many accomplishments of the APHCC Board since its inception. A Guided Tour will start the event, followed by a cocktail hour. If you or someone you know has participated on the board and has not received an invitation, please contact the office to give us your new address.

HCC Annual Meeting

Congressional Cemetery will host the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery's Annual Meeting on April 18, President Paul K. Williams will present a brief annual report, sharing the highlights of the past year. This annual meeting will take place at 10:00 am and is open to all members.

SECOND ANNUAL FAMILY REUNION

On April 18 at 11:00 am, HCC will host its second annual Family Reunion for descendants of those buried at the cemetery as well as current site owners. HCC staff invites attendees to bring documents and

records to augment the cemetery's family files. Archivist Dayle Dooley will pull historic records and site information for perusal and share about the records at the cemetery. Plan to join us and others with family buried here to connect, reconnect and share stories.

New Urn Boxes



With the new columbarium and other new inurnment options at Congressional Cemetery, comes the need for urn boxes to fit in the niches. Shopping for a cremation urn is always a chal-

lenge, especially when a loss is recent. Congressional Cemetery has a wide selection of urns from Perfect Memorials for sale for all interests, style preferences, and budgets, measured to fit in our niches. Urns for ashes can be made out of almost any material, from



HCC Family Reunion





metal to stone to wood, and come in a number of different shapes. While many people prefer a more traditional vase style cremation urn, other options include chests, cubes, and more.

WELCOME TO THE NEW STAFF

Kimberly Marcus is a Washington, DC native, raised one block from our Congressional Cemetery. Kim is a mom of two very active children, (Preston, 5 and Taylor 2). She is recently married as of last June to her best friend, Tyree Marcus. Her hobbies include reading, writing, and traveling. She is currently in the midst of receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications at Trinity University College. Her experience in office management will add a great addition to our team and we look forward to having her with us!



Director of Programs and Special Events



Born and raised in Delaware, Sarah Kirspel is recently married and a new transplant to the area. She lives in the Del Ray neighborhood of Alexandria with the loves of her life — her husband, Travis and 2their two bulldogs, Della and Dixie. A graduate of York College of Pennsylvania, Sarah earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree in History with a Political Science minor. Sarah is a graduate of Duquesne University's Master of Arts program with a degree in Archival, Museum and Historical Editing Studies. Sarah started at First State Heritage Park as an historical interpreter in 2011. From there, she served as the Interpretive Program Coordinator there for three years and then served as the Superintendent until 2019. She is excited for all of the many opportunities at Congressional.



UPDATES TO WEBSITE

If you visit our website, you may notice a new format! It's a new and updated version of our website first created seven years ago and contains all of our popular pages and pictures, with a more appealing aesthetic. We've also incorporated our blog, online store, and a robust new events page.

BENJAMIN B. FRENCH MASONIC LODGE No. 15: HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY'S "VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR" AWARDEE: MONICA MILLS



Monica Mills

Monica took over the popular Adopt-A-Plot program in 2019, and coordinates landscaping and beautification done by volunteers who have agreed to tend to over 85 individual family plots in the cemetery by planting flowers, shrubs, mulching and pruning. Monica coordinates happy hours, tiller sharing, and general

information sessions for new gardeners that collectively have made a tremendous difference to our landscape. Congressional Cemetery is the final resting place for hundreds of individuals whose bond of Masonic fraternal brotherhood is witnessed by the symbols etched into their gravestones. The Benjamin B. French Lodge #15, chartered in 1853, sponsors this award each year.

HIRAM-TAKOMA LODGE NO. 10: THE "Sousa Distinguished Service Award" AWARDEE: WILL TEASS

An architect and dogwalker, Will volunteered to design a side porch for the cemetery to compliment our newly restored gate and hardscape at the Gatehouse. He got more than he bargained for after myriad meetings with the Historic Preservation Review Board necessitated



Will Teass

changes and approvals and evening presentations to the Advisory Neighborhood Commission. We look forward to building his excellent design in the spring of 2020. Sponsored by the Hiram-Takoma Masonic Lodge #10, this award recognizes efforts to help preserve and restore the historic structures at Congressional Cemetery

CONNOLLY-DIDDEN DOCENT OF THE YEAR: **CHARLES WALTON**

Charles has gleaned and retained a tremendous amount of historic information and interesting facts on Congressional Cemetery and its residents, and is always at hand to provide an impromptu tour for special groups or for our docent led free tours given every Saturday at 11 am. Rain or shine, Charles is always ready and willing to give a tour! This award is named in honor of Gerry and Marian Connolly and George (Sunny) Didden, the original signers and pioneers of the "Committee for the Preservation of Congressional Cemetery."



GET THE WORD OUT! CHANGES FOR THE NEW HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY APP

Historic Congressional Cemetery's app is changing with the times. We are getting the word out to our families and visitors — our mobile app is now installed directly from our website onto devices to replace the older version of the app. The app can easily be downloaded from this page on our site: https://congressionalcemetery.org/records-search/

Since the new mobile app has been live on our website since November, the old Apple and Android Apps have been removed from the store. As part of the most recent mobile app update, the apps have been moved away from the Apple and Android stores due to strict limitations in mobile app development imposed by the stores. Instead our new application is a progressive web app which can be downloaded directly from the cemetery's website and onto a mobile device.

For now, any users who still have the old Apple and Android apps downloaded to their mobile devices will still be able to access and utilize the app. In early 2020, the code base supporting those Apple and Android apps will be retired which will throw an error when users try to access the old version of the app.

It's Baaaack! Goat Yoga Returns

We are not kidding around, the baby goats from Mary Bowen's Prosperity Acres in Maryland will return to Congressional Cemetery on May 2 and 3! Bowen has emphasized the therapeutic value of interacting with the animals. It helps people to connect and focus on the present moment. This year, Congressional Cemetery is partnering with St. Mark's Yoga Center to offer five 45-minute gentle yoga classes over the course of the weekend, each with a unique instructor. Be sure to bring your own mat and clothes you don't mind getting a little dirty. This is an amazing opportunity to spend some time with cute baby goats. Last year, attendee Rachel Holmes told the Washington Post, "I'm so blissed out. I feel



Goat Yoga returns this year!

like you're a little bit more inward usually with regular yoga, and this sort of opens you up to what's going on in nature around you. Plus they're soft and cuddly." Tickets are available for \$40 on Congressional Cemetery's website. The ticket includes mimosas in the public vault. Also available for purchase is Baby Goat Bottle Feeding and Baby Goat Snuggle Time for those not interested in the yoga. Grab your tickets now — they will go fast!

Information for your estate planning, bequest, stock gift, endowment match, or donation:

Legal Name: The Association for the Preservation

of Historic Congressional Cemetery

Legal Address: 1801 E Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

Telephone: 202-539-0543

Tax ID Number: 52-1071828

Please contact us for wire instruction or banking

information



AMERICAN HERITAGE

REMEMBERING C. DUDLEY BROWN

With the dawning of a new decade, Historic Congressional Cemetery remembers former board member C. Dudley Brown, one of Washington, D.C.'s most distinguished interior designers, historic preservation expert and restorationist. Considered a



respected friend and trusted advisor, C. **Dudley Brown** joined the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery in 1976 and helped to lead the organization during some of its most tumultuous times until his

retirement from the Board in 2008. "His energetic, charming, usually bow-tied presence grace[d] many social and professional events." In 2006, he was honored with the Mayor's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation for his work in the preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery. ² Born in Cleveland in 1930, Mr. Brown settled in the Washington area in 1952. According to his family, he came to the area to work for the Department of the Navy. In 1961, he established the interior design program of the General Services Administration's federal supply service and designed the interiors if the official residences of federal executives³ before opening his own business – C. Dudley Brown & Associates in 1964. This Capitol Hill firm had notable clients, including the Cosmos Club, the Australian ambassador's residence, Glenview Mansion in Rockville, Capitol Hill Presbyterian



Church, Kent Valentine House in Richmond and other historic houses and churches.4 He was past president of the Arts Club of Washington and the DC chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers and the founding president of the Washington chapter of the Victorian Society in America.5 At 88 years old, C. Dudley Brown passed away in Nashville at the home of his nephew.



- 1. Chevy Chase Historical Society, Winter 2008, p.1
- 2. Chevy Chase Historical Society, Winter 2008, p.1
- 3. Washington Post Obituary, July 7, 2018
- 4. Chevy Chase Historical Society, Winter 2008, p.1
- 5. Washington Post Obituary, July 7, 2018



DECADE IN REVIEW

Decade in Review continued from page 1

Eco-Goats graze at Congressional to clear invasive species

Tolling Bell restored through a Capitol Hill Community Foundation grant

• 2014

Asphalt removed and pavers installed between totem pole and 17th street gate

East End garage roof replaced

House gantry addition completed

Mausoleum Row roofs replaced: fill removed, barrel vault roofs repaired and sealed, replaced with a green roof through an American Express and National Trust for Historic Preservation "Partners in Preservation" grant.

First obelisk columbarium installed



2020 Board Retreat



Certified as a green Hybrid Cemetery by Green Burial Council

2015

Ground Penetrating Radar project started

Adopt-A-Plot program established

Staff grew to include five full-time and two part-time positions

Cinemetery established

Soul Strolls established

160 feet of E Street and Jail wall rebuilt, reusing historic brick on interior

\$10,000 grant awarded by the Near Southeast Community Partners Organization for front gate restoration project

"Little Library" installed near the chapel

Campaign to mark Charles Siegert's grave with a headstone successfully completed

Safe room converted into climate controlled archival space

2017

Cemetery main gate relocated to original location from 17th and H Street. Original gate expanded to accommodate modern vehicles and replaced iconic Congressional Cemetery arch

Second obelisk columbarium installed

Continued next page



DECADE IN REVIEW

Decade in Review continued from page 7

Havenner vault restoration completed

"The Dead Tell the Best Stories" audio walking tour created by Liz Ruskin

Structural engineering report for removal of nonhistoric crypts in Wilson-Barton Mausoleum

2018

New landscaping and pedestrian pathways installed Driveway and sidewalk repaired Green roof and skylight added to Wilson-Barton Mausoleum to create a modern niche interior

Gadsby Vault restored with matching funds from Gadsby Tavern Museum in Alexandria, VA Brademas Mausoleum unveiled and dedicated

Kingdom of Animals pet cemetery established Goat Yoga introduced

Weather station installed

Gatehouse front step converted into ADA compliant

Lease renewed for 25 years between Christ Church, Washington Parish vestry and Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

Letter from the Chair continued from page 2

2018, extending the hardscaping (brick sidewalk) and landscaping into the side yard of the gatehouse. This porch will provide a new entrance to the Gatehouse as well as a protected (and heated!) area for event checkins and gate checkers, eliminating the need for the temporary gazebo currently located across the road from the gatehouse. That gazebo space, in turn, will be replaced with a brick patio and fieldstone bench for visitors and anyone participating in tours.

DOG WASHING STATION NEAR THE GATE

As part of the final phase of the front gate restoration project, the water faucet located at the front entrance to the cemetery will be transformed into a dog washing station and drinking fountain for our beloved K9 corps members. A rounded flagstone and granite bench will ensure (or try to ensure!) that dogs will stay in the area so that owners can then wash off their canine's paws before leaving the cemetery.

17TH STREET GATE WALL RESTORATION AND **NEW NICHE SPACE**

As a longer-term project, the Board is developing plans for the area around the 17th Street Gate. That area —

which features a failing retaining wall in need of replacement — provides an opportunity to create another functional but beautiful focal point in the cemetery. At present, we are considering the development of a grotto-like columbarium space with options for a comingled ossuarium and nearly 800 cremation niches. This will continue to provide alternatives for those looking to make HCC their final resting place. At the same time, trees, benches, and scatter gardens are all being planned in the currently unused driveway space. This project is in its early stages, but we are actively developing plans to move this project forward.

As you can see, the year ahead is going to bring exciting new spaces for all of our different HCC constituencies. In 2020, we look forward to continuing to sustainably evolve Congressional Cemetery to fulfill our mission to preserve, promote, and protect our historic and active burial ground while respectfully celebrating the legacy of those interred here through education, historic preservation, community engagement, and environmental stewardship.

—Joel Samuels



SLIGHT-LY LOST (AND FOUND)

his summer, we hosted an unexpected visitor! Archivist Dayle Dooley found this young man, visiting from the United Kingdom, wandering the cemetery, looking for his distant relatives. When she learned his surname, she knew immediately where to find his family. His last name was Slight. While that may not seem easy to find, the Slight family has quite a history at Congressional Cemetery. One of Dayle's favorite names in the cemetery, Pringle Slight, and his son Robert, were well known in their day for their work with the Capitol. Here is an excerpt from The Dome of the United States Capitol, An Architectural History, Washington, DC by William C. Allen

Pringle Slight 1790-1860 M.C. Meigs Papers, Library of Congress

A master carpenter, Slight was employed in January 1825 by Charles Bulfinch, who was just finishing the Capitol's first dome. He subsequently became the Capitol's "handyman", performing such jobs as fixing sticking desk drawers for the Senate, repairing clogged gutters for the Commissioner of Public Buildings, and installing shelves for the Clerk of the House of Representatives. When Walter came to the Capitol to begin construction of the extensions he appointed Slight the foreman of carpenters.

Slight's years of experience proved invaluable when it came time to dismantled the old wooden dome. Having maintained the dome for years, he knew it well. The copper covering on the outer dome, for example, had been replaced by Slight, who advised captain Meigs on how it could be economically removed using curving ladders he had devised

for its installation. Slight also warned Meigs of the weak spot in the center of the rotunda floor-a circular opening he had helped close in 1828 to prevent rising damp air from ruining Trumbull's paintings. Meigs designed the tripod scaffold to stand clear of the former opening. Slight and his men built the scaffold as well as the temporary wooden roof that protected the rotunda during construction of the new iron dome. Ironically, his son Robert, a rigger on the new dome, slipped from the scaffold and was found dead on the temporary roof. Slight died in 1860 after 15 years of helping to build, maintain, improve, dome and redome the Capitol.



Distant relative of the Slight family from England comes for a visit



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