

HERITAGE GAZETTE

WINTER 2021

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

LOCKWOOD COLUMBARIUM

We've been talking about it for decades, and now HCC has a new/old columbarium for cremated remains! The final stage of a multi-year adaptive reuse project is now gleaming with 194 granite faced niches, including two interior benches. We choose a light grey trim and soft pink granite to keep the space light and airy. Different sizes will accommodate two to six urns or boxes, and the granite faceplate can be engraved with names and dates. We've already had a pre-sale, and lots of interest in the project, which is available now, and will be on the website soon.

A naming contest for the columbarium amongst our dog walking community resulted in a winning entry from Christine Romero – The Lockwood Columbarium – in memory of our beloved Belva Lockwood, the first Presidential female candidate on a major party ticket in the 1880s, and a lawyer who tried cases in the US Supreme Court.

What is now our new columbarium for cremated remains was once a mausoleum, built in 1892 to hold caskets. It was utilized by the Wilson and Barton families until April of 1983. Our cemetery was over-

grown and abandoned during that period, and the relatives removed the caskets to another cemetery. They deeded the vacant mausoleum back to the cemetery in December of 1984. It has sat vacant ever since.

With cremation rates rising nationally and dramatically in Washington, DC, HCC has been building obelisk shaped columbaria to hold cremated remains. They sell out almost as quickly as we can build them, but they only

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Located along Mausoleum Row, the old family crypt has been converted into modern columbarium space.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

“As a burial ground, partly national, great architectural might be united to fine horticultural taste, and thus form a retreat to which stranger as well as the citizen would feel a melancholy pleasure in repairing, to tranquilize the agitations of feeling, while meditating in solitude amid the silent repositories of the dead.”

—George Watterston, *New Guide to Washington*, 1842
Watterson-Hamilton Vault R32/S201



George Watterston’s statement is as true today as it was in 1842 when he included Historic Congressional Cemetery in his tourist guidebook for the District of Columbia. While much in our current world is in turmoil, we at HCC have committed to making our grounds a site of respite. This is, and will continue to be, a peaceful and safe place to process life in its many forms and loss in every sense of that word. Congressional Cemetery is a tranquil retreat, an oasis amid chaos, and we hope that the “stranger as well as the citizen” feel welcome here.

The power of this cemetery is unique. While it is a place for the deceased, it is also a place for the living, where visitors from all walks of life can make new, lasting, and healing connections in solitude and among others. We enjoy following the historical precedent, when it was common for cemeteries to function as public spaces where families gathered to picnic, visit, and wander the grounds. Far from a dark and dreadful place, as cemeteries are often perceived, Congressional Cemetery can be a place of serene contemplation or lively community, depending on the day.

Just a quick walk around the grounds can reveal hidden treasure. I encourage you to stop to read the tributes etched in stone, noticing the birth and death dates, and taking in the beauty and creativity of the designs, both simple and complex. You can commune with nature along the way and enjoy the property as your surrogate “front yard,” soaking in the landscape as it changes with the seasons while connecting with loved ones past and present.

We are still looking forward to a time when we can open once again to join together in creating new memories and forging new connections to this place we all hold dear. That time, I hope, is drawing near. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy this latest news from our special place on E Street and thank you for staying connected and involved during this challenging time to help preserve the stories and experience that make Historic Congressional Cemetery such a beloved treasure for our nation and our community.

—Joel Samuels, Chairman of the HCC Board



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Well, 2020 went by fast, after a very, very slow beginning. I'm happy to report despite the grounds being completely closed for three months, dozens of canceled events, postponed rentals, and restricted gatherings, we managed to come up just \$4,000 short of our \$1,273,000 budgeted income. Many of our dedicated supporters such as you made that possible. We met the qualification to have our PPP loan forgiven, adding two new employees who monitor the traffic and membership at the front gates the 80 hours a week that we are open. While hope is on the horizon, it looks like 2021 will be more of the same, at least for the first half of the year.

Visitors and the community know we take our K9 Corps seriously, and we were delighted to have Congresswoman Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) join the K9 Corps in 2020! And, you must know that she dutifully sat on the waitlist for a few years, just like everybody else. We currently cap the membership to 800 dogs, which translates into about 600 humans. With the pandemic raging and people at home, many members added a second dog to their lives that now enjoy the benefits of running free in the cemetery. We've also donated a fenced area of our side yard to City Dog & Cat Rescue as their facilities were very small. We enjoy seeing dozens of dogs and cats get a new home every Saturday, handed over through a car window. I even got to hold six kittens at once!

Director of Site Sales and Funerals Crystal Palmer



Paul K. Williams, President

has adapted to selling sites online and through a new virtual process that fits the needs of those planning their estates and final wishes. We've also limited funeral sizes, and have protocols in place for safe distancing and virtual attendance.

January 2021 was a strange and anxious period of time for those of us that both live and work on Capital Hill. Road closures and Metro delays, along with the extended perimeter fence around the Capitol itself made commuting difficult for some staff members and impossible for others. We closed the cemetery on January 6th and heeded our Mayor's curfew orders and are looking forward to a post Covid-19 period in the coming year.

—Paul K. Williams, President

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

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Telephone: 202-539-0543

Tax ID Number: 52-1071828

Please contact us for wire instruction or banking information

**ADOPT-A-PLOT VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR, MONICA MILLS,
TRANSPLANTS TO COLORADO**



Monica and Annie

In November, we bid farewell to our Adopt-A-Plot Volunteer Coordinator, Monica Mills. Serving in this role for a year and a half, Monica has been instrumental in beautifying the Cemetery. Some of her most notable contributions to the program include planting over 1,500 daffodil bulbs throughout the Cemetery, working with an Eagle Scout to renew the Mausoleum Row garden space, and introducing 15 new gardeners to the program.

Directly supervised by her pup, Annie, Monica was in charge of coordinating adopters, recruiting new adopters, managing volunteer days, recommending plants and gardening techniques, coordinating plant donations, and gardening around the gatehouse, chapel, all three columbaria, and the Methodist memorial, in addition to her own adopted plots. Monica also prepared the Sousa memorial garden prior to Sousa's 2019 birthday celebration, served as a leader for the 2019 September 11 Day of Service, and collected location data for the Cemetery's first Adopt-a-Plot map.

She will miss being a part of the hard-working volunteer group. When asked, Monica said her favorite aspect of her role with the program was working with

the people who thoughtfully and generously poured their time and love into choosing plants, preparing the soil, and maintaining the plots. For Annie, it's the smell of newly up-turned dirt and her canine friends that she will miss most of all. Monica hopes the program continues to gather volunteers to create a flourishing community and beautiful space to share.

Monica's best gardening advice is to "think of gardening as a science experiment." There are a lot of factors involved to get the plants established, and "watching a plot fill out and thrive is truly a miracle!" As Monica and Annie transplant from D.C., we wish them so much happiness as they get established in Colorado. We know she will thrive, but we will miss her.

If you wish to reach out to Monica, she can be reached at monicam.20003@gmail.com

**NEW ADOPT-A-PLOT VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR, EMILY BLACK, BLOSSOMS
IN NEW ROLE**

When walking through the Cemetery, have you ever noticed a family plot bursting with fragrant lavender and rosemary or adorned with roses and lilies? These are the thoughtfully planted Adopt-a-Plots cared for by generous volunteers. Some volunteers are K9 Corps members, future residents, or even Capitol Hill resi-



Emily, Scott and Pepper

AROUND THE GATEHOUSE

dents interested in a venue to exercise their passion for gardening.

The Adopt-A-Plot Program is mutually beneficial as an outlet for creativity for volunteers as well as beautifying the Cemetery, adding bursts of color and a caring hand to areas otherwise forgotten as a result of the normal course of time and distancing of descendants. Daniel Holcombe kicked off the program in 2014, and interest has continued to grow.

Emily Black, a K9 Corps member and an Adopt-A-Plotter, has taken over the role of Volunteer Coordinator for the program with the departure of Monica Mills. She and her husband walk their Border Collie mix rescue pup, Pepper, and care for the Shedd plot. While Pepper is a fan of the Cemetery's pinecones, Emily is a Program Manager for a tech company, an avid scuba diver, and a camping and National Parks enthusiast.

The best gardening advice Emily has ever received was about the proper way to prune plants to encourage them to push their energy into new growth. With this knowledge, we are sure Emily will be able to continue to shape the program into a vibrant community. Her goal is to develop a way to highlight the program for Cemetery visitors and bring attention to the plots and their gardeners for their generous contributions.

In addition to our new Volunteer Coordinator, the

Adopt-A-Plot program has another new feature. With Monica's help, we have created a full map of the Cemetery illustrating the location of each plot and also indicating if the plot is available or claimed. While 70 plots have been claimed, we still have plenty of room for more gardeners! 115 plots, in varying sizes and with different sun/shade conditions, are available for adoption.



Inspired by Monica and Emily? Do you have a green thumb and nowhere to use it? Would you like to put your newly acquired quarantine gardening skills to the test? Interested in joining the HCC Adopt-A-Plot program? Contact Emily Black at eblack.dc@gmail.com For details about the program.

CONSIDER DONATING STOCK

Make a bigger impact by donating long-term appreciated securities, including stock, bonds, and mutual funds, directly to HCC. Compared with donating cash, or selling your appreciated securities and contributing the after-tax proceeds, you may be able to automatically increase your gift and your tax deduction. It's simple and easy using our brokerage account at National Capital Bank. When you donate stock to HCC, you'll generally take a tax deduction for the full fair market value.

HOW DOES THAT EVEN HAPPEN?! FENCE DAMAGE & REPAIR

As you may have guessed, it's expensive to crash your car into a National Historic Landmark! Unfortunately, we had a drunk driver hit a portion of our fence



AROUND THE GATEHOUSE



along Potomac Avenue at high speed—at noon on a Monday, nonetheless. The accident happened October 19; the driver survived, the fence did not. When the estimates and bids were completed, damage was estimated to be \$34,000 with our insurance paying the bill.

The damage was extensive, as the impact moved a total of 50 feet of heavy granite caps and demolished the fieldstone wall below. Three sections of the c.1856 wrought iron pickets and decorative supports were bent or displaced. Somehow, the driver was able to miss all of the 52 newly planted trees nearby.

Work has begun on the repair, which is a complex situation due to the wrought iron pickets set inside the granite 165 years ago this month. Fortunately, we had two contractors that knew the construction technique well, having both worked on restoring and installing our new front gate a few years ago. Flatherty Iron Works in Alexandria, Virginia removed the wrought iron for repairs in their shop, while Olde Towne Landscaping from Frederick, Maryland went to work disassembling and reassembling the granite caps and fieldstone wall. Work is progressing nicely, and should be complete by the time you read this newsletter. 🍷

(AMAZON) SMILE!

Did you know that your shopping on Amazon can benefit Congressional Cemetery?!

Just go to AmazonSmile for any Amazon purchases and choose: Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery as the recipient! A portion of your purchase will go directly to support the Cemetery.

CONSERVATION UPDATE

2020 marked a successful year for Congressional Cemetery conservation despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. In a typical year, as the cool March evenings begin to hover over 40 degrees, conservation would begin, but 2020 was definitely not a typical year. The pandemic shut down the cemetery, and conservation did not get underway until July.

Margaret and David were joined for two months by Kathleen Keith, a Historic Preservation major from the University of Mary Washington, and for five months by Jenna Hershberger, a recent graduate from

Even with four months lost and the crew only able to work two days a week, close to 30% of the stones in the first quadrant of Section 3 were repaired. Shielded in masks, the team worked together to excavate failed foundations, pour new foundations, replace corroded iron pins with stainless steel, repoint mortar joints, and reset unsteady headstones using a motorized gantry.

- 155 stones cleaned
- 39 new foundations set
- 30 stones repointed
- 20 pins removed/drilled
- 2 plot fences painted
- 149 stones complete out of 535 total

In addition, contractors conserved the Hamilton Family Vault and two headstones in Section 3. Our monthly PRO (Preservation & Restoration Opportunities) Crew Day brought 22 volunteers to the cemetery.

Over the winter months, the Director of Conservation has been coordinating with the cemetery's ArcGIS administrator to develop a GIS map for recording memorial condition assessments and treatments performed in order to create a searchable database. Being able to track conditions and treatments will enable staff to make more informed preservation decisions. We expect the map and database to be ready

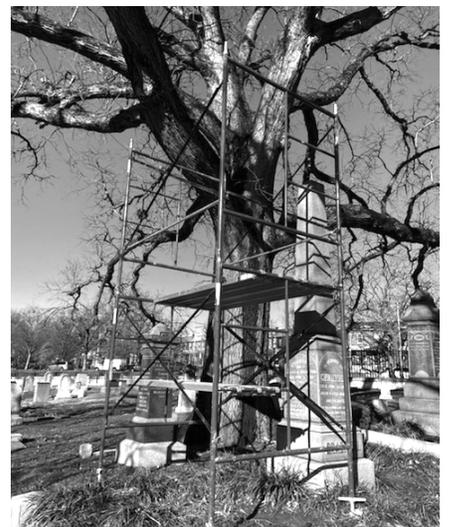
for data collection within the next month and will enthusiastically enter the 535 assessments and 145 treatments performed in summer 2020.

With the pandemic still looming over us in 2021, we plan to complete another 30% of Section 3's first quadrant with hopes of accomplishing even more than that, and contractors will be hired to conserve six memorials in the area.

If you are interested in helping with our conservation goal, please reach out to Margaret at mcanilang@congressionalcemetery.org 



Some examples of this year's projects



THE CONNECTION PROJECT CORNER

FRANKLIN SHELTON
BERLIN, MD

Congressional Cemetery is special to me because it is the final resting place of my great-grandfather Benjamin Franklin Shelton, my great-great grandparents and great-great-great grandparents Moses and Sarah Shelton, as well as several other Shelton ancestors.

It took a circuitous route and many years to discover this, however and that is the story I share with you now. In the mid 1960's my father's sister, Catherine Shelton Mitchell, shared with my wife Sharon and me an old, yellowed and battered newspaper article that she had in a frame in her home. The article was about her great grandfather, my great-great grandfather, Joseph Gales Shelton, who was a Metropolitan DC police officer.

The article intrigued me because it reported that my great-great grandfather, like my great-grandfather, grandfather, father, brother, a nephew and myself, was a police officer in Washington, DC. My wife and I both searched several times over the years to try to locate the newspaper article on microfiche. We visited the Library of Congress, the Washingtoniana room of the MLK Library; we spoke with the curator at Ford's Theatre, and even the historian of the Metropolitan Police Department, without success. The challenge was that while we remembered that the article was dated October 1907, we did not remember the exact date or the name of the newspaper in which it had appeared. We found that there were six newspapers in print in 1907, so it was a challenge to say the least

In 1995, just weeks before I was to retire from the U.S. Capitol Police, I received an unexpected letter in the mail. It was from my cousin in Charlottesville, VA, the granddaughter of my Aunt Catherine. In her letter, she said her grandmother had given her the framed newspaper article and she thought perhaps I would like to have a copy of it. If only she knew how pleased I was to finally see it again.

The paper had deteriorated even more, and many of the words were illegible, but we did make out the address given for the family home: 12th Street, SE. While we were in DC, we rode through that neighborhood and decided perhaps that house had been razed to make room for the elementary school that was built there.

My wife had an idea that since the family home was on 12th Street, perhaps my ancestor was interred at Congressional Cemetery. Now the Internet was our new friend and my wife googled the cemetery and found the website and a database where you could search for the names of people buried there. She hit the jackpot! She not only found his name, but also the transcript of the October 2, 1907 article that we had been searching for all those years. An added bonus was that there was a second article which we were unaware of dated October 25, 1907.

As I mentioned above, six generations of Shelton men have served the city of their birth as law enforcement officers. But only one of us —my great-great-grandfather, Joseph Gales Shelton, served in the White House as a bodyguard to President Abraham Lincoln. 

WHAT IS THE CONNECTION PROJECT?

Share your story (or stories) with us. You can visit <https://congressionalcemetery.org/connectionproject/> to share YOUR Congressional Cemetery Connections. Fill out a simple online form, download a document to work on at your own pace, or print it out and deliver it to the gatehouse. We want to make this as easy as possible to share your connections with us. You can share as many or as few stories as you like.

JOSEPH GALES SHELTON (R96/S82)

BY SARAH KIRSPEL

When the Shelton family shared their story through the Connection Project, I could not help but be intrigued! Joseph Gales Shelton sounds like a very interesting fellow. Since I have not been at the Cemetery that long and I had not heard of J. G. Shelton before, I decided to check out the articles mentioned. The first article casually mentioned that Mr. Shelton escorted President Lincoln to Ford's Theater the night he was shot! Mr. Shelton also helped carry the fatally wounded President to the Petersen's Boarding house across the street.

Here is the second article:

The Evening Star, October 25, 1907

Jos. G. Shelton Dead

Veteran Policeman and Native Washingtonian

Arrangements were completed today for the funeral of Joseph G. Shelton, a veteran policeman, whose death was announced in *The Star*, yesterday. The services will be held at the family home, 406 12th street southeast, at 2 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, and the interment will be at Congressional Cemetery. It is said former associates of deceased will act as pallbearers.

Joseph G. Shelton resided in Washington since his birth here, March 5, 1829, and was identified with nearly every movement for the advancement of the interests in general and East Washington in particular.

Appointed a policeman October 18, 1861, soon after the old Auxiliary Guard had been merged into the first Metropolitan Police Force, he performed the

duty of a patrolman in the exciting and trying period of the Civil War. He had many thrilling experiences with deserters, bounty jumpers and desperate charac-



Photo taken by the Shelton family several years ago on a visit to the Cemetery.

ters who flocked to Washington during the war period.

There was a saying among the policemen in those days of the fire and smoke of war that there was on any average one murder a day in this city. The policemen were therefore required to perform heroic service. It is said Mr. Shelton was one of the officers who responded to the call of Patrolman Clements when he arrested single-handedly nearly an entire company of Zouaves near the Capitol in 1862. Many of the intoxicated Zouaves were taken to the old Central Guardhouse on Louisiana Avenue, between 9th and 10th streets, and there put through the “ducking” process. It is explained that the drunken men were placed in small cells and the hose turned on them, deluging them with water until they were sober enough to be released.

On the Pension Roll Mr. Shelton served as a policeman until April 15, 1887, before the era of call boxes and patrol wagons, when owing to physical

disability, he was placed on the pension roll of the Department. He also retained his membership in the Police Relief Association. He was also stationed at the White House during the Civil War, and was frequently detailed as a bodyguard to President Lincoln. His sagacity and bravery won for him high esteem about the city and among the police force where he had many friends. He was on terms of personal friendship with Mr. Lincoln as the result of his position at the Executive Mansion and was also acquainted with many other famous men of that day.

He was stricken with paralysis about three weeks ago without warning while he was conversing with his daughter, Miss Sarah E. Shelton, and fell to the floor. Several times since the attack it was feared he would die, but on each occasion of an apparent relapse he seemed to rally. He gradually lost strength, however, and the end came at ten minutes past 2 o'clock yesterday morning. 

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/>

Our new application is a progressive web app which can be downloaded directly from the cemetery's website and onto a mobile device. The code base supporting those old Apple and Android apps is officially retired which will throw an error when users try to access the old version of the app.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have twenty niches each, so an investment was made by the Board to adaptively reuse the Wilson-Barton mausoleum into a columbarium.

The process started a few years ago when HCC hired Silman Associates, a structural engineering firm to assess the possibility of removing the individual crypts that had contained the caskets. It turns out that yes, they helped support the roof on the structure. So, HCC hired Sundance Contracting to remove the cement roof and the crypts, and install a new, thick cement roof, complete with skylight for better interior lighting since there is no electricity located nearby. A French drain was installed to accommodate any infiltration of water, now or in the future, that was connected into our culvert system. The floor was leveled and only then could we see the raw structure we could design around.

We had Flaherty Iron Works visit to get inspiration from other mausoleum gates, and they came up with a decorative double wrought iron gate that was created

and installed in late 2019. Carrier Mausoleums Construction (CMC) of Quebec, Canada was retained to design and build the interior niches. Each niche has an aluminum box with lock and key, faced with either grey or pink granite secured with a bronze floral. The 194 niches are individually purchased, as are two granite benches in the center which hold three niches each, being offered to extended families as they can hold dozens of urns or boxes. The build out was completed in the summer of 2020.

We're waiting for the weather to break to have Margaret Canaling to repoint and clean the rough granite exterior. A new path to the doorway will be built utilizing recycled materials on hand, and landscaping will be installed on each side. As a final stage, plans are being made to have "Lockwood Columbarium" engraved on the blank granite nameplate. All the elements combines cost approximately \$65,000 and we can add another completed restoration project to our growing inventory. 

CALLING ALL FORMER APHCC BOARD MEMBERS

We are making an effort to better stay in touch with our former APHCC Board members. We have done our best to track down the addresses and contact information for former board members, going all the way back to 1976! A lot has changed since then, people have left the area or moved on, and we do not always get new contact information. If you or someone you know has participated on the Board and did NOT received an invitation to the HCC Board Reunion for March, please contact the office to give us your updated contact information.

Yes!

I want to help preserve and restore Congressional Cemetery with a tax deductible donation.

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$250 Other _____

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Anonymous Yes No

Check enclosed, made payable to Congressional Cemetery

Please charge my credit card Visa Mastercard

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Thank you!

Please mail with your donation to the return address on the mailing panel or use the envelope inside this newsletter.



Association for the Preservation of
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Check the Event page on the website for details!

March 9 Tombs & Tomes Virtual Book Club
April 3 Docent Tours Season
"Only at Congressional" Intro Tour,
Saturdays, 11am, \$5
Sunday Strolls Guided Tour, Sundays,
1pm, \$5

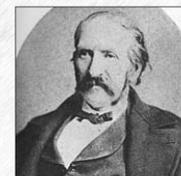
Tours have limited capacity and advance tickets are required. Reserve your ticket at: <https://congressionalcemetery.ticketleap.com>

May 11 Tombs & Tomes Virtual Book Club
May Last Call! Prohibition: Twilight Tours
June 4 Cinematery: Dinner & a Movie—*Dracula*
July 2 Cinematery: Dinner & a Movie—*Frankenstein*
August 6 Cinematery: Dinner & a Movie—*The Mummy*
September 3 Cinematery: Dinner & a Movie—*Wolfman*



(Weird Al 2009-)

THE PLACE FOR LIVE, YOUNG GOATS.



(Alexander Rutherford 1814-1872)

AND THE PLACE FOR DEAD, OLD GOATS.

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