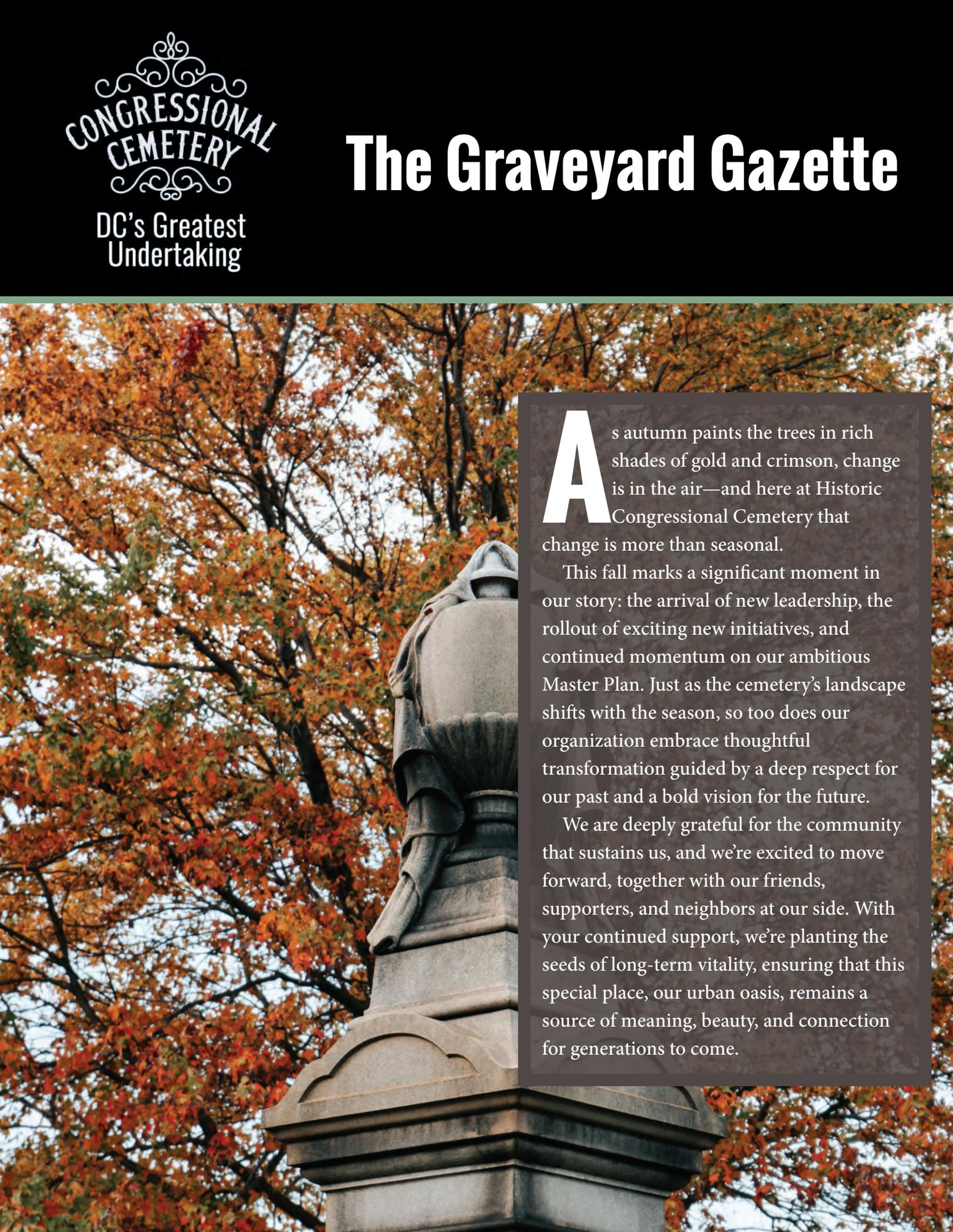




DC's Greatest
Undertaking

The Graveyard Gazette

A photograph of a stone statue in a cemetery, set against a background of trees with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The statue is a classical-style figure, possibly a personification of Liberty or Justice, wearing a draped garment. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the statue and the trees.

As autumn paints the trees in rich shades of gold and crimson, change is in the air—and here at Historic Congressional Cemetery that change is more than seasonal.

This fall marks a significant moment in our story: the arrival of new leadership, the rollout of exciting new initiatives, and continued momentum on our ambitious Master Plan. Just as the cemetery's landscape shifts with the season, so too does our organization embrace thoughtful transformation guided by a deep respect for our past and a bold vision for the future.

We are deeply grateful for the community that sustains us, and we're excited to move forward, together with our friends, supporters, and neighbors at our side. With your continued support, we're planting the seeds of long-term vitality, ensuring that this special place, our urban oasis, remains a source of meaning, beauty, and connection for generations to come.



Letter from the Chair

Fall season is already upon us. I am sure you have taken note of that as we move out of the dog days of summer and enjoy the cooler mornings and evenings that make sipping that cup of coffee as you walk through the cemetery that much more enjoyable. I enjoy this part of the year as we look forward to the holidays, the change of season, and a packed events schedule at Congressional.



The change of season also marks a moment of reflection and renewed energy for the cemetery. To that end, I am sure you have heard that Congressional Cemetery has a new Executive Director! I am delighted to welcome Mark Hudson to the cemetery. Not only is Mark ushering in some of that renewed energy, but he also brings a wealth of experience in historic preservation and nonprofit leadership. The board is excited about his promise and vision for Congressional and looks forward to how he will build on our past successes, while also introducing his own ideas to help advance the cemetery towards a strong and sustainable future.

At the same time, we continue to advance our Master Plan—a thoughtful blueprint that ensures the cemetery’s unique history is preserved while enhancing the experience for all who visit. This plan will guide our priorities for restoration, programming, and long-term care of this extraordinary landmark, safeguarding it for generations to come.

Of course, Congressional is also looking forward to a busy fall that is full of interesting programs and events. I encourage you to look at our calendar. There is something for everyone!

None of this is possible without your partnership and participation. In fact, it is essential. Our annual giving program provides the foundation for everything we do—from maintaining our beautiful grounds to supporting the very programs that bring the cemetery to life. Meeting our operational fundraising goals this year is critical to sustaining our momentum and ensuring that Congressional Cemetery continues to thrive as both a sacred place of remembrance and a vibrant community resource.

On behalf of the board, thank you for your generosity and steadfast support. Together, we are writing the next chapter in this cemetery’s remarkable story.

With gratitude,

Richard Greene

Richard Greene
Board Chair

P.S. Ready to help today? Scan the QR code on page 4 to make your gift now—every dollar keeps HCC thriving.

The Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery

1801 E St. SE
Washington, DC 20003
202-543-0539
www.congressionalcemetery.org
staff@congressionalcemetery.org

Board of Directors

- RuthAnn Clark
- Sam Cornale
- Richard Greene, *Chair*
- Palmer Hough
- Joseph Imamura
- The Rev. John Kellogg
- Ruth Kroeger
- Marsha Lea
- Stephanie Lipscomb, *Secretary*
- Jamie McGinnis
- Nathan Neal
- Sid Neely, *Treasurer*
- Allison Parker
- Deborah Perry
- Julia Roberson
- Rhonda Sincavage
- Larry West

Staff

- Margaret Canilang, *Records Manager*
- Antonio Coghill, *K9 Corps Liaison*
- Kurt Deion, *Education Specialist*
- Dayle Dooley, *Archivist*
- Jim Guckert, *Director of Facilities and Grounds*
- Mark Hudson, *Executive Director*
- Lisa Malear, *Director of Site Sales and Funerals*
- Andrea McCants, *Finance*
- Anthony Orlikoff, *Director of Programming*
- Kennedy Simpson, *Education Specialist*
- Jen Walter, *Office Manager*
- Gabriella Welsh, *Events and Communication Coordinator*

Contributors:

- Heather Gleason, *Development Consultant*
- Kitty Linton, *Photographer and Social Media Specialist*
- Laura Lyster-Mensch, *Death Doula-in-Residence*
- Sharon Metcalf, *Circle of Life Designer and Arboretum Partnership Coordinator*
- Ashley Molese, *Curator-in-Residence*

Inside

- 2** From the Chair
- 3** From the Executive Director
- 4** Support Our Mission
- 5** Around the Gatehouse
- 7** Yappy Beginnings
- 10** Chiefs and Colonization
- 12** Land of Young Mr. Lincoln

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.



Dear Friends,

As I reflect upon my first few weeks at Congressional Cemetery I am filled with gratitude for having been given the opportunity to lead this extraordinary organization. The passion of the staff and board had already been demonstrated during the conversations leading to my selection. What has thrilled me even more has been the genuine affection of the community members who engage with us. Whether it has been dog walkers, those attending a program, or people who reached out to offer a welcome, their vibrant love of the cemetery is evident.



All of this is encouraging as Historic Congressional Cemetery enters a new era. Guided by a thoughtful strategic plan and a master planning process, the organization is embarking upon a bold new era in its long history—one that will be filled with challenges and shining moments of accomplishment. I am genuinely excited to be guiding the organization through this next chapter.

With over thirty years leading heritage organizations, I believe my experience and skills are ideally suited to this moment. I have seen how successful efforts at community engagement, capital project management, and the fundraising that underlie them both can transform an organization and propel it toward further success. Despite its storied past, I genuinely believe that Historic Congressional Cemetery's best days lie ahead.

I wish to express thanks to the Board of Directors for placing their trust in me. Gratitude is extended also to A.J. Orlikoff, who so capably served as Interim Executive Director after the departure of Jackie Spainhour early in the year. A.J. took initiative and did much more than simply ensure the gates remained open.

My wife, Julie, and I have been residents of the DC area for a decade and have decided this is our home. We look forward to becoming members of the Historic Congressional Cemetery family and hope to meet each of you soon.

As we turn the pages of this new chapter in our history, I pledge to honor the cemetery's vital role as a final resting place, while also opening its gates for the community we serve. We will continue to make this a special place where we can convene, celebrate, mourn, and heal.

Sincerely,

Mark Hudson

Mark Hudson
Executive Director



Support Our Mission

Fundraising Development

Historic Congressional Cemetery embraces many things: art and architecture, horticulture and arboriculture, theater and public art, beekeeping and dog walking, history and community. Visitors come for different reasons, but once they arrive, all are united in their love of our 35 acres of lively yet serene urban green space.

Decades ago, a group of committed citizens (and their dogs!) helped build HCC into an incredible community space. Friends like you keep it going today. And now we'll all work together to usher in a new phase for HCC with the ongoing Master Plan, which will chart a host of various grounds improvements, visitor services upgrades, and much more. That's why we believe a charitable donation to HCC this year will help support us more than ever.

There are many ways to show your support for all HCC does and all it represents in the community. Whether you donate valuable time as an adopt-a-plot volunteer, renew your K9 membership annually, or sponsor a tree, your gifts are the engine that keeps HCC moving into the future.

No matter what brings you to Congressional Cemetery, thank you for your support. You ensure it remains a welcoming place of respite and reflection in our increasingly chaotic world.

So many ways to support your favorite cemetery!



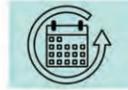
Sponsor a Tree. Fall foliage is simply stunning at HCC. Sponsoring a tree helps preserve this tree canopy.



Transfer Stock. The ultimate tax-savvy way to donate. Through our new partnership with GWCF, you can now directly donate gifts of appreciated stock.



Celebrate a Life. A tribute to a loved one to ensure their legacy lives on in this special place, regardless of whether they are laid to rest at HCC or not.



Make it Monthly. Make a more significant impact over time. Your monthly gift helps HCC plan with greater confidence throughout the year.



Time it Right. The gift of volunteer time is precious. Your time is our true treasure! And we couldn't do any of it without you.

We're Grateful for You!

Thank you for supporting the longevity of Historic Congressional Cemetery. Your charitable contributions will make this special place a treasure for generations to come. For more information, please contact us at (202) 543-0539.



Want to make a tax deductible donation to Historic Congressional Cemetery? Scan the QR code to give online! Want to contribute in a different way? No problem! Please send us the enclosed envelope. We greatly appreciate your support.



Around the Gatehouse



Curator-in-Residence Ashley Molese assists volunteers at the grave rubbing workshop in preparation for an arts activity at the Gays and Graves festival.

Below: Dr. Desai-Newsom poses for a photo with Director of Programming A.J. Orlikoff at the grave of Leonard Matlovich during the Speaker Series event.

In celebration of WorldPride 2025 in Washington, DC, Historic Congressional Cemetery proudly expanded its LGBTQ+ programming with a series of events that honored both history and community. A highlight was our Cemetery Speaker Series event featuring Dr. Desai-Newsom, who explored the pink triangle's evolution from a mark of oppression to a symbol of queer resistance. The conversation, set amid the historic grounds, invited powerful reflection on remembrance, identity, and justice.

Later in the month, we introduced the very first Gays and Graves festival, hosting an afternoon of joyful celebration, remembrance, and creative engagement. One of the event's signature components was a grave rubbing art workshop, where participants created memorial rubbings from LGBTQ+ headstones as a form of tribute and connection. As the only cemetery recognized as an official WorldPride event site, HCC offered a unique space where commemoration and celebration coexisted. We remain proud to uplift LGBTQ+ stories not just in memory but in vibrant, living action.



Want to attend an upcoming event or program? Check out our events calendar by scanning here!



Featured K9 Corps Member



Name: Lukka

Age: 14 (15 in November)

Member Since: 2012

The Tuxen Family

Likes: Visiting John Philip Sousa's plot, cemetery zoomies, and sharing treats with friends Maddie, Gracie, Snooks, Tilly, and Delmar

More than 120 people and their furry family members have joined us for our Yappy Hours this year. Our final Yappy Hour of 2025 is on November 20. We have something special planned! Keep an eye on our social media and website for more information!

Annual Plot Reclamation Notice- New Process Beginning in 2026

Starting in January 2026, Congressional Cemetery will publish a list annually of cemetery plots eligible for reclamation. Plots are considered eligible if we have not received contact from the owner or their descendants within the past 75 years. This list will be posted on our website and included in the first newsletter of each year.

If you believe you own one of the listed plots, or are a descendant of the original owner, please contact us with proof of lineage. Once verified, we will update our records and begin the transfer or attestation process (fees apply).

If no contact is made by December 1 of that year, the plot will revert to the cemetery's care at the start of the new calendar year. This process ensures both responsible stewardship of our grounds and the availability of burial space for families in need.

Grief Karaoke at Congressional

More than 100 people showed up to a beautifully lit chapel to attend the kickoff of the event "Grief Karaoke" by Leigh Davis in early August.

As part of the interactive art, the chapel was lit up to make the art site-specific. Lighting was used to highlight the chapel ceiling and the wooden architecture. It was used as a "container" to help people feel safe.

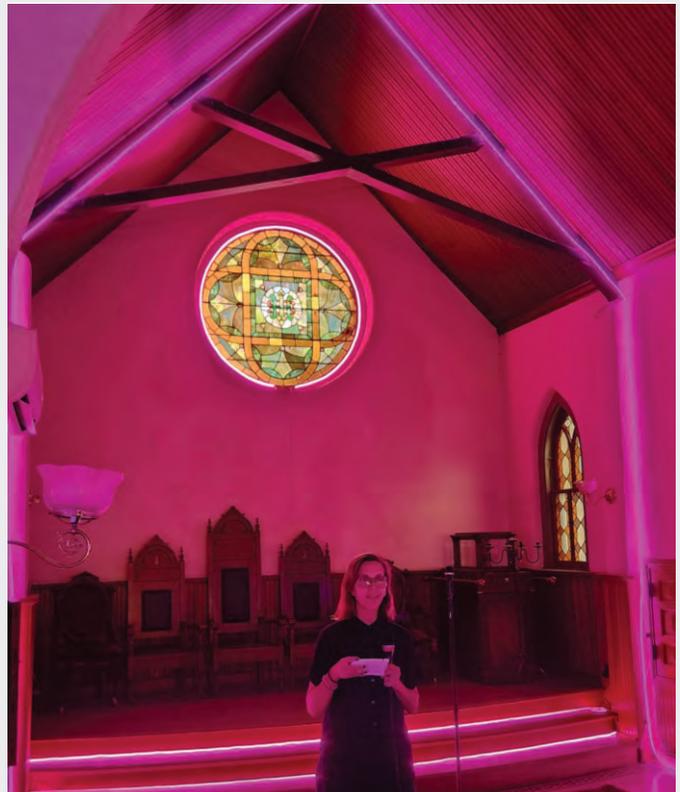
For about a decade Davis has been creating socially engaged, public artwork around the topic of grieving. She previously sang in the Threshold Choir, a group of singers that are trained with hospice to sing to the dying.

"Over the past few years, our work has gone from being quiet and solemn, to bursting at the seams in response to

grief," Davis explained. "Right now, with everything going on in the world, we need more space for grief."

Davis believes that we need space to grieve, and coming together to sing karaoke helps people to feel less alone. "We need to create spaces for people to be together, even people who don't sing. You feel so much less alone."

"There were so many expressions of grief. I've never seen such a diverse crowd of regions, languages, and people. Even if you don't sing, karaoke brings us together."



Leigh Davis welcomes attendees with remarks before Grief Karaoke.



Yappy Beginnings: The History of the Congressional Cemetery K9 Corps

By Jen Walter, Office Manager, Historic Congressional Cemetery

In the 1800s, it became a popular pastime to picnic and socialize in park-style cemeteries. In 2011, *The Atlantic* published an article about the “Forgotten History of Cemeteries.” “Cemeteries we built for ourselves, increasingly after 1830, were places with winding roads and picturesque vista [...] The great rural cemeteries were built at a time when there weren’t public parks, or art museums, or botanical gardens in American cities.” (Greenfield, 2011)

Today, Congressional Cemetery can boast that it adheres to this nineteenth-century vision. As an urban oasis for people and dogs alike, there are currently more than 600 K9 Corps families who volunteer at HCC, assisting with special events, Adopt-a-Plot, and in other areas of the cemetery.

But before there was the official K9 Corps that the community knows today, there was a “Congressional Cemetery Canine Corps,” according to K9 Corps member Elizabeth Nelson.

Elizabeth and Nick Alberti moved to Capitol Hill in 1985 with their German Shepherd mix, Shakti, and their 95-pound Doberman and Great Dane mix, Shiba. “We heard about other people walking their dogs there and checked it out,” Nick said. “We realized it was a good place to walk our dogs.”

Within a couple of years, there were more families walking in the cemetery. The grass was unchecked, however, and the roads were in disrepair. “We weren’t actively recruiting members, but between 1985 and 1990, we would see the same people walking,” recalled Nick.



Victor and Christine Romero in September 2025. They have walked four generations of Weimaraners at the cemetery, dating back to the 1980s.

“The same people were there in the mornings and after work.”

“One of my friends, his aunt, was interred there,” Nick explained. “But he didn’t feel that he could pay his respects to her. People just didn’t want to go to the cemetery by themselves.”

“Almost all of the original people who walked their dogs at the cemetery had rather large dogs,” Elizabeth remembered.

Christ Church, Washington Parish, which owns Congressional Cemetery, didn’t have the resources to properly maintain the grounds at that time.

By 1988, Victor and Christine Romero had been living on Capitol Hill for a couple of years. They’d often walk their

Weimaraner, Ludwig, through the neighborhood. One day they were walking by Congressional Cemetery, and the caretakers asked them, “Would you like to walk your dog through the cemetery?”

Several people remember Ivan and Shirley Smith, who were living in the gatehouse at the time. They were caretakers of the cemetery and also dog lovers.

Southeast DC had a reputation for being dangerous at the time. “I remember them [the Smiths] telling us that the dog walkers felt safer walking in the cemetery,” David Salmon said. David was living with the Smiths in that period, while serving as a missionary.

The Romeros said that in the beginning there were about 20 families walking their dogs at the cemetery. It didn’t take long for a community to form.

“From day one, the canine group was volunteer driven,” Victor Romero explained. The families that were walking at Congressional Cemetery started organizing, gathering to clean it up. Victor recalls the dog walkers

holding rummage sales, Halloween parties, and canine holiday photos. “We would get together on Saturdays and clean up trash. We filled multiple bags of trash.”

As the group of dog walkers grew to around 30 families, they wanted to make sure they were seen as an asset both to the community and to the cemetery. “The original rules were a piece of paper,” Elizabeth said. “The rules were to clean up after your dog, don’t throw balls and hit tombstones, don’t stand on the tombstones. We included that there was an expectation of volunteering.”

“I kept thinking something needs to be done about this,” explained Patrick Crowley, former vice chair of the cemetery’s board of directors and former interim executive director—referring to the upkeep of the cemetery.

Patrick started walking at the cemetery when his long-haired St. Bernard, Shannon, was almost hit by a car walking around Lincoln Park in the mid-90s. “By then there were about 40 families walking their dogs.”

“Tombs were falling down, and the grass was high,”



Patrick Crowley and one of his Saint Bernards, circa 2003.

Crowley said. “I kept thinking, why don’t they fix this place up? Then I realized that ‘they’ is you.” Shortly after, he wrote to the board of directors to ask to join their ranks.

The K9 Corps would get together on Saturday mornings, have coffee, and start cleaning up. They organized to clean up trash, to cut the grass, and to mark the first tombstones for conservation.

“We got lucky,” the Romeros said. “Our group had lawyers, grant writers, lobbyists, and more.” Christine added that it wasn’t long before the walkers realized that they could leverage the professional skills of their group to help the cemetery.

The dog walkers held rummage sales, Halloween parties, canine holiday photos, and other events that brought the community together and raised funds for the cemetery’s upkeep. Records show that early Canine Corps members raised anywhere between \$2,000 and \$12,000 in donations.

Christine and Patrick both served on the Board of Directors for the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery (APHCC).

By 1997, Congressional Cemetery was added to the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s list of the most

endangered historic sites. On September 27, 1998, Congressman James T. Walsh (R-NY) announced a 1:1 endowment of \$1 million to save Congressional Cemetery. The cemetery would have to complete a 1:1 match to receive the funds.

In July 2001, Crowley proposed the official K9 membership program. October 2001 saw the establishment of the official K9 Corps. Membership was capped at 225 members. Finally, in June 2002, the first K9 Corps dog tags were created.

More than one generation has left its mark on Congressional Cemetery and the K9 Corps. Liz Pierotti’s mother, Joan, was a DC public school teacher. Pierotti recalled, “Mom was an animal lover her entire life. We always had dogs.”

Pierotti reminisced that often Joan would put her dogs in the car and drive to Congressional Cemetery to walk her dogs. “She would meet her girlfriends there before the official K9 Corps.”

Pierotti had her own child in 1996, and would walk with him and their dogs at Congressional Cemetery. “I can’t tell you how much my life, my mother’s and my dogs’ lives have been enriched. I feel grateful for what we have at the [Congressional] Cemetery.”

When Joan passed away in 2023 at the age of 87, she was buried at Congressional Cemetery, near one of her favorite spots, looking out across southeast DC and the Anacostia River. “She always told us she wanted to be buried at Congressional Cemetery,” Pierotti explained. Pierotti’s husband died 10 days before her mother and is also buried at Congressional. The Pierotti siblings call the area “The Garden.” All three of Joan’s children belong to the K9 Corps. Joan and Liz both have dogs buried in the Kingdom of Animals at Congressional Cemetery.

“There are a lot of people that love the cemetery as much as I do. The biggest change through the years has been the number of people who care about the grounds, and it just keeps getting better and better. People come for the dog walking, the running, the events... There is beauty, peace and solace there. I always feel better after I go to the cemetery,” Liz opined.

Christine Romero described it best, “All of these things are a beautiful quilt that make up the life of the cemetery.”



Liz Pierotti and her dog, Easy, at the cemetery in September 2025.



Taza and Peter Pitchlynn: Chiefs and Colonization at Congressional Cemetery

By Kennedy Simpson, Education Specialist, Historic Congressional Cemetery

Established just 17 years following the founding of DC, Congressional Cemetery is the final resting place for people from diverse backgrounds. Before the advent of modern transportation and embalming techniques in the mid-nineteenth century, many people were buried where they died. And many of those who died while working in or visiting the early capital came to Congressional Cemetery for burial. Among these individuals were delegates, representatives, and members of American Indian groups and tribal federations from across the continent who engaged in diplomacy with the ever-growing United States of America during Westward Expansion and its aftermath from around 1800 to 1900. As indigenous land was colonized and many tribal groups were forcefully relocated, these delegates struggled to adapt to violent and sudden changes while still advocating for their people. Some held onto their native identity, seeking to be harmonious but separate from Euro-American influence. Others, often as a survival strategy, adopted new customs, political forms, and religions to assimilate with the burgeoning power of the United States. These forms of assimilation are illustrated in some of the graves they left, such as memorials from the Apache and Choctaw nations at Congressional Cemetery.

Taza (also transliterated as Tazah and Tazey) was the chief of the Chiricahua Apache from 1874-1876, succeeding his father, Chief Cochise, after his death. Taza was a strong leader in a time of tension within the Chiricahua Apache, as the war between the Apache and the United States had ended in 1872, and tribal members disagreed over the peace treaty's terms and whether it should have been signed at all. Despite an assassination attempt by a faction opposed to upholding the peace treaty, Taza, with the support of his younger brother Naiche, was dedicated to upholding Cochise's values. He



Taza's gravestone erroneously depicts a different Apache man, George (Notshi) Noch. *Kitty Linton*

continued his peaceful approach to dealing with Indian agents, delegates from the U.S. to the Native American Tribes.

The Chiricahua Apache were known by American society as the violent dissidents of the "Wild West," who were a danger and hindrance to western expansion. This was not the case for Indian Agent John Clum, who had come to know the Chiricahua Apache people as friends. He had insight into the Chiricahua Apache as people; he recognized different tribes as having different cultures and languages. He believed that this personal approach to understanding different tribes was the key to successful relationship building.

In 1876, John Clum proposed an eastward trip for a group of the Chiricahua Apache to visit Washington, DC, and the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia.

On the way, tribal members hosted performances of traditional dances, as tableaux of the “Wild West” were popular with American audiences at the time. The benefit would be twofold: one, to familiarize Americans with the Apache people; two, to raise money for the travel expenses as the group moved. A group of Chiricahua, Taza included, agreed to make the trip. In the biography edited by Woodworth Clum, John Clum’s son, it is noted that it was a trip full of levity around the campfire, hard work on the stage, and cultural shock both for the Apache people and the American people they encountered. Their voyage ended in tragedy, as upon reaching DC, Taza passed away from pneumonia. Full funeral services were held in his honor at Congressional Cemetery, including interment in a wooden coffin with silver handles. However, no marker was created or installed at that time.

It was not until the 1970s that Taza received a marker to recognize his burial. The American Indian Society of Washington, DC, designed, funded, and dedicated a memorial stone in 1971 at Range 2, Site 125, where Taza is buried. The stone depicts a man’s face—once thought to be Taza’s, but later identified as another Apache man, George (Notshi) Noche—in relief on one side and his epitaph on the other. The epitaph reads: “Son of Cochise, Chief of the Chiricahua Apaches Died Sept. 26. 1876 In Washington, D.C. Erected by American Indian Society of Washington, D.C. September 26, 1971.” The emblem of AISW is emblazoned below.

Taza was the titular character in the 1954 Rock Hudson film, *Taza, Son of Cochise*.



The back of Taza’s 1971 gravestone, erected by the American Indian Society of Washington, DC. *Kitty Linton*

Taza, as a historical figure and political leader, was unrecognized for his leadership for nearly a hundred years. He stayed obscure in historical narratives of the Apache wars. This is reflected in his grave, which lay unmarked and relatively unknown for 95 years. The San Carlos Reservation, where Chiricahua Apache had initially moved against their will, was dissolved by the U.S. Government shortly after his death.

On the opposite end of Congressional Cemetery, there is a grave for a very different American Indian chief. Peter Pitchlynn, also known by his Choctaw name of Hatchootucknee, was the principal chief of the Choctaw people from 1864-1866. Having a white father and a half-White, half-Choctaw mother, he received a more traditional western education at a boarding school and at the University of Nashville, inherited land and enslaved people from his White father, and enjoyed status within the Choctaw people because he belonged to his mother’s clan. Before rising to the status as chief, he was a diplomat and political leader in various capacities, using his mixed heritage to his advantage in negotiating with the federal government.

Pitchlynn’s strategy for the Choctaw was assimilationist in character, as he believed this to be the most effective means for cultural survival. He helped establish the Choctaw Academy, one of many Indian boarding schools founded in the 1800s to promote traditional western forms of education, and the first to have federal funding. Unlike many similar ‘Indian’ schools of the time, which sought to remove tribal identity entirely from the students through propaganda and force, the Choctaw Academy focused on education and exposure to White Americans. The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, responsible for administration and education, allowed the Choctaw Nation to have direct influence on schooling, which kept the students rooted in their home and culture. Pitchlynn also facilitated the removal of the Choctaw people from Mississippi during the Trail of Tears after a lengthy but failed proposal to the United States for Cherokee and Choctaw lands to be recognized as independent territories.

Pitchlynn was principal chief for a part of the American Civil War, advocating for loyalty to the Union, or at least neutrality. When the Choctaw were strong-armed into joining the war on the Confederacy’s side, he ultimately surrendered to the Union. After emancipation, Pitchlynn freed the enslaved people he owned, but also denied them Choctaw tribal

membership, claiming the freedmen were American. But he also denied the forced removal of the formerly enslaved out of Choctaw lands, leaving their status, and future, uncertain.

The contradictions of Pitchlynn's identity and policies are reflected in his markers—one erected at the time of his death, when he was still serving as Choctaw Delegate in Washington, DC, and the other 117 years later in 1998, both commissioned by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Pitchlynn's original marker highlights, first and foremost, his Lutheran identity. A plinth topped with an angel statue, the stone depicts the angel reading a book, indicative of Pitchlynn's life and deeds being judged and found favorable. The front of the marker depicts masonic symbols, denoting his status as a 32nd degree

Freemason, an achievement that was clearly held in high regard due to its prominent inclusion. A different side of the plinth notes his status as "Chief and Delegate of the Choctaw Nation: for whose advancement many years of his life were devoted." It also eulogizes him as "A Christian Brave," representative of his blended identity.

The 1998 marker places Pitchlynn's Choctaw heritage as the primary focus. It consists of a bronze plaque that lists his Choctaw name, his status as a chief, and a list of achievements. According to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, this was to educate visitors about Pitchlynn's contributions to the Choctaw people and about Pitchlynn as a Choctaw tribal member. Together, these markers give a more complete picture of Peter Pitchlynn's life and values, showing how the Choctaw, under his leadership, worked to keep their cultural identity while still adopting aspects of White, Christian society to better adapt to the changing landscape of the United States, and how Pitchlynn himself straddled this line.

Taza, a chief unrecognized and rediscovered, and Pitchlynn, a man who combined his Choctaw identity with White American traditional culture, were both leaders in times of great strife for their people, and both did what they thought was best to preserve their ways of life. Their graves are monuments to who they were,



This 1834 oil painting of Peter Pitchlynn was created by famed artist George Catlin. It is titled, *Há-tchoo-túc-knee, Snapping Turtle, a Half-breed*. From Smithsonian American Art Museum.



Peter Pitchlynn's grave, located at Range 87, Site 294, is topped by an angel holding a book. Kitty Linton

chosen by the people who wanted most to preserve their memories. Today, their stones tell their stories as tribal leaders suspended between the forces of colonization, assimilation, and survival.

Works Cited:

- Baird, W. David. *Peter Pitchlynn: Chief of the Choctaws*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972.
- Cassidy, Rachael. "Buried History: Hear Me My Chiefs." National Museum of the American Indian. April 8, 2013. <https://blog.nmai.si.edu/main/buried-history/>. [No Longer Accessible Online].
- Clum, Woodworth. *Apache Agent: The Story of John P. Clum*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1936.
- Creager, Charles E. *History of Freemasonry in Oklahoma*. Muskogee, Oklahoma: Muskogee Print Shop, 1935.
- Fabvssa, Iiti. "The Choctaw Academy: Investing in Future Choctaw Leaders." Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, March 31, 2025. <https://www.choctawnation.com/news/iti-fabvssa/the-choctaw-academy-investing-in-future-choctaw-leaders/>.
- Lanman, Charles. "Peter Pitchlynn, Chief of the Choctaws." *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 1870 (April 1870): 486–97.
- Necrology. "Peter P. Pitchlynn Chief of the Choctaws 1864–66." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 6, no. 2 (June 1928): 215–24.
- Porter, Joy. *Native American freemasonry: Associationalism and performance in America*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2011.



Land of Young Mr. Lincoln: A Representative's Life and Congressional Cemetery

By Robert S. Pohl, Docent, Historic Congressional Cemetery

On August 3, 1846, the citizens of Illinois' 7th district went to the polls and elected as their representative a young Springfield lawyer named Abraham Lincoln. It would be well over a year before he arrived in Washington to take his seat in the House of Representatives, but he soon found himself fully immersed in the whirl of Washington society. Along the way, he had contact with numerous future residents of Congressional Cemetery.

Just a day after arriving in Washington, Lincoln and his family moved into Mrs. Sprigg's boarding house. Ann G. Sprigg was the widow of Major Benjamin Sprigg, who had died in 1833. Since then, Mrs. Sprigg had made her money by taking in lodgers in her house across First Street from the Capitol. Lincoln lived with numerous other Whigs, mainly from Pennsylvania.

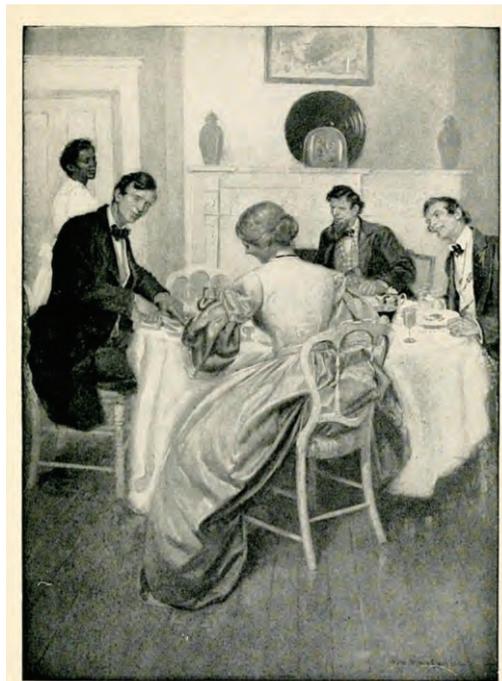
Lincoln was well-liked in his boarding house, known for the stories with which he regaled his mess-mates, much as he amused his fellow representatives in the Capitol. As befit a new member of Congress, Lincoln kept a low profile on the House floor, though he did create an uproar when he demanded of President James K. Polk where, exactly, the U.S. soldiers whose deaths had precipitated the Mexican-American War had been when they were killed.

Mrs. Sprigg continued to be a landlady even after Lincoln left office, but moved farther down First Street, close to where Nationals Park is today. In doing so, her clientele changed as she now had as boarders clerks

rather than members of Congress. By the time Lincoln returned to Washington as president, she was living with a son and apparently looking for work. In July 1864, Lincoln wrote a note to Secretary of the Treasury William Pitt Fessenden, recommending her for a job in that department:

"The bearer of this is a most estimable widow lady, at whose house I boarded many years ago when a member of Congress. She now is very needy; & any employment suitable to a lady could not be bestowed on a more worthy person."

The note did the trick, and Sprigg worked for Treasury until her death in 1870. She is buried near her husband and those children that predeceased her in range 53, site 41, near the gatehouse.



"HE ALWAYS BROUGHT A CHEERY ATMOSPHERE INTO THE DINING-ROOM"

Congressman Lincoln at Ann Sprigg's boarding house. Printed in *The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by Helen Nicolay.

Lincoln also took part in entertainments in Washington's many third spaces. One of these was at a restaurant just around the corner from his boarding house. Run by James Casparis, it featured not only food and drink, but also bowling, something that Lincoln enthusiastically, if poorly, participated in, as described by Dr. Samuel Clagett Busey in his reminiscences:

"Congressman Lincoln was very fond of bowling, and

would frequently join others of the mess, or meet other members in a match game, at the alley of James Casparis, which was near the boarding-house. He was a very awkward bowler, but played the game with great zest and spirit, solely for exercise and amusement, and greatly to the enjoyment and entertainment of the other players and bystanders by his criticisms and funny illustrations. He accepted success and defeat with good nature and humor, and left the alley at the conclusion of the game with out a sorrow or disappointment.”

Casparis was born in Switzerland around 1812, and moved to DC in the early 1840s. He married Christina Hitz, daughter of Swiss Consul General John Hitz, and then opened the Bon Ton House and Bon Ton Bowling Saloon. He would build a more impressive saloon a few years later, an establishment he ran until his death in 1869, at the age of 57. He is buried in Congressional Cemetery range 53, site 48.

Casparis had outlived his father-in-law by only a few years. Hitz had died in 1865, and his funeral, which was held at Hitz’s house on A Street SE, was attended by none other than President Abraham Lincoln, though there is no indication that Lincoln joined the procession to Congressional for the interment. Hitz is buried in range 79, site 109e.

Lincoln also went further afield in his search for entertainment, including a visit to Carusi’s Saloon at 11th and C Streets NW. Known originally as the Washington Theater, it had put on performances

**CONGRESS HALL
RESTAURANT,
WASHINGTON, D. C.**

J. CASPARIS.

NEAREST THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL.

An 1848 advertisement for Casparis’s Restaurant. From *The Washington and Georgetown Directory*, by Alfred Hunter.

whenever a theatrical troupe was in town. It was also, on March 26, 1819, the first theater to welcome a president (James Monroe). Sadly, it burned down in 1820, but the land was bought by Lewis Carusi, and while it was mainly used by Carusi for dance instruction, it was also used for concerts, including one by the Ethiopian Serenaders that Representative Lincoln and his wife visited in January 1848. The Ethiopian Serenaders were a troupe of minstrels who had taken the blackface

minstrelsy that was popular at the time and added a certain amount of class to it, removing the more ribald aspects and adding songs from current popular operas.

Lewis Carusi was the son of Gaetano Carusi, who had come from Sicily in 1805 to become the head of the new Marine band. Lewis’ brothers were also musicians, and they too were members of the band. Lewis, who was only about five at the time, was not selected. The elder Carusi and his sons, as well as a large number of other Sicilians, would become the core of this new band. Lewis Carusi died in 1879 and is buried in range 40, site 59a, close to his father.

The month after his visit to Carusi’s, Lincoln had just voted against awarding a number of generals from the Mexican-American War gold medals, and was about to vote against it again, when Representative Washington Hunt of New York interrupted the proceedings by pointing out that John Quincy Adams had suffered some sort of attack. The House hastily went into recess, while Adams was moved first to the rotunda, then to Speaker Robert Winthrop’s office. It was here that Adams expired two days later, on February 23, 1848.

The House sprang into action, appointing two committees, one for funeral arrangements, and one to accompany Adams’ body back to Massachusetts. The latter was to consist of one Representative from each state. As the only Whig from Illinois, Lincoln was appointed to this committee.

In their haste, however, leadership confused the two committees and Lincoln suddenly found himself, along with 29 other members, in charge of organizing Adams’ funeral. The committee quickly realized their mistake, and selected a subcommittee to carry out the actual work. Lincoln was not on this subcommittee.

Nor, as it turned out, was he one of those who accompanied Adams back to Massachusetts. That honor went to John Wentworth who, while not a Whig, was a staunch abolitionist and had served with Adams for five



An advertisement for a January 1848 appearance of the Ethiopian Serenaders at Carusi’s Saloon. From *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, by Roy P. Basler.

years. He would also later join the nascent Republican party.

Lincoln did, however, make his first documented visit to Congressional Cemetery with Adams' funeral procession. Whether as a member of the Committee of Arrangements, who marched in front of the coffin, or as a member of the House of Representatives, who marched behind, Representative Lincoln would have been part of the procession. Reports on the funeral in the newspapers of the day are silent on his exact whereabouts.

While Adams' body was, a week later, transported to Hancock Cemetery in Quincy, MA, two spots in the cemetery are connected with him: The Public Vault, where he spent his time in the cemetery, and the cenotaph dedicated to him at range 54, site 101.

On April 3, Representative James A. Black, Democrat from South Carolina, passed away in Washington. The funeral was two days later and took place in the House of Representatives, after which the procession went to Congressional Cemetery. Among the mourners were members of the House of Representatives, giving Lincoln an opportunity to return to the cemetery. Black's body was thereafter taken to Columbia, SC, but his cenotaph is at range 55, site 105.

Less than two weeks after Black's funeral, Representative Wentworth awoke in his room at the National Hotel and discovered that not only were his boots missing, but so was the bootblack whose job it was to keep them looking their best. The young man was, along with 76 other enslaved men, women, and children, attempting to flee slavery on board the ship *Pearl*, captained by Daniel Drayton.

Wentworth was hardly the only one thus inconvenienced, and soon another boat was sent to retrieve the *Pearl* and its human cargo. The winds were not with Captain Drayton that day, and so, in short order, the *Pearl* was back in DC and its unfortunate passengers incarcerated.

On April 18, Representative Giddings, Lincoln's messmate, arose in the House to offer a resolution. After some back and forth, the clerk read the resolution, which requested that a select committee should look into the men, women, and children who were "now confined in



The Public Vault. Kitty Linton

the prison of the District of Columbia without being charged with a crime, or of any impropriety other than an attempt to enjoy that liberty for which our fathers encountered toil, suffering, and death itself.”

The resolution was not brought up for a vote, so Lincoln had no opportunity to voice his opinion on the matter; in fact, no votes were held that day so his presence is uncertain. The subject continued to roil the city, inspiring a number of riots, which were quelled by the local police after President Polk requested their

assistance. In Congress the event—or issues around the event—were debated. In the end, a resolution related to this was voted down. Voting against it was none other than Representative Lincoln.

Nonetheless, the impact of the *Pearl* incident cannot be overstated, especially in that it most likely inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe to write *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The *Pearl* incident had begun as an attempt by Washington Navy Yard blacksmith Daniel Bell to free his wife and children from slavery. Bell's mother, Lucy, and sister, Ann, are both buried in Congressional Cemetery in range 24, site 113.

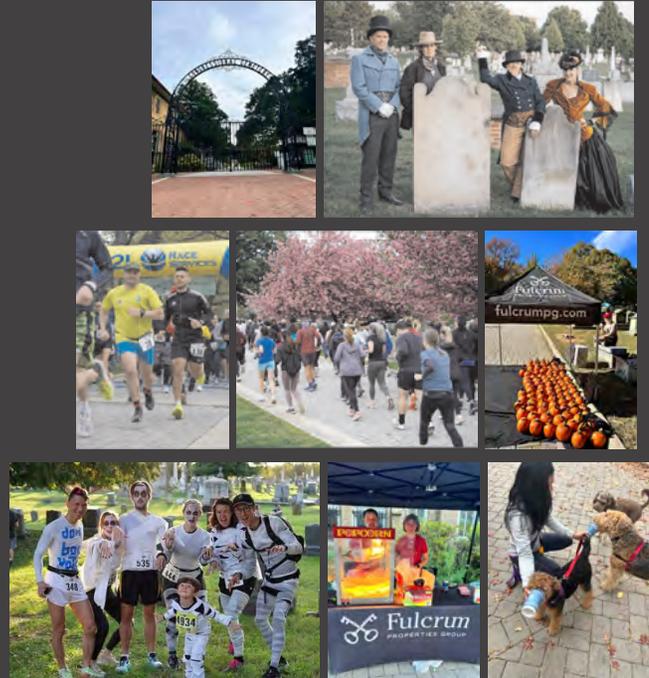
Lincoln's final opportunity to visit Congressional Cemetery as a congressman came on May 3, 1848, after Senator Chester Ashley, Democrat from Arkansas, died in DC. His funeral was held in the Senate chamber and once again there was a large procession—including members of the House of Representatives—to Congressional Cemetery. Ashley's cenotaph is located in range 60, site 144.

Lincoln would return to Congressional Cemetery over a decade later, but as the occupant of a higher office.

Works Cited

- Basler, Roy P. Ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln VII*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953.
- Busey, Samuel C. *Personal Reminiscences and Recollections*. Washington, DC. 1895.
- Congressional Globe*. April 21, 1848.
- Daily National Whig*. “Concert at Carusi's Saloon.” Ad. Washington, DC. January 6, 1848.
- Hunter, Alfred. *The Washington and Georgetown Directory*. Washington, DC: Kirkwood & McGill, 1853.
- Nicolay, Helen. *The Boys' Life of Abraham Lincoln*. New York: Century Company, 1922.

FULCRUM RESIDENTIAL'S MISSION IS TO CREATE COMMUNITY THROUGH REAL ESTATE.



A LOVE LETTER TO DC, ♥ FULCRUM RESIDENTIAL

We call Washington, DC, home for all the reasons you do.

For the leafy streets where history and modern life meet.

For neighborhood markets and local businesses that make Hill East feel like a small town inside a big city.

For parks and green spaces, sanctuaries like Congressional Cemetery, a sacred burial ground and gathering place that reminds us how lucky we are to live here.

We love this city because it's powered by people who serve. We live alongside federal workers, educators, health care heroes, restaurateurs, and neighbors who keep DC moving and shape the everyday rhythm that makes our city such an extraordinary place to call home.

At Fulcrum, we're proud to be the Keynote Sponsor of Congressional Cemetery—supporting its incredible events, honoring the history and heritage of those who came before us, and helping preserve this space for future generations. Together, we're dedicated to building community, supporting our schools, and ensuring DC remains a place we're all proud to call home. **It's an honor to live in DC. It's an honor to serve our community. We love you, DC.**

Fulcrum is **Your Home Team for Real Estate Results.** We look forward to helping with all of your real estate needs and creating more meaningful moments in the years to come.

HAVE REAL ESTATE PLANS IN OUR COMMUNITY? LET'S CONNECT.



(202) 573-8552

www.fulcrum-residential.com

FOLLOW US





Association for the Preservation of
Historic Congressional Cemetery

1801 E St. SE
Washington, DC 20003
www.congressionalcemetery.org

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 821
TBD



Cover photos by Kitty Linton