


Heritage Gazette

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY • FALL 2010

HCC Granted National Landmark Status



On Thursday, November 4, 2010, Historic Congressional Cemetery received federal recognition for its role in American history. By a unanimous vote, the Landmarks Committee of the National Park System Advisory Board recommended designation of HCC as a National Historic Landmark. National Historic Landmarks are buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects that have been determined by the Secretary of the Interior to be nationally significant in American history and culture. Many of the most renowned historic

properties in the nation are Landmarks. Congressional Cemetery shares this designation with the Capitol, White House, Supreme Court, and Washington Monument.

For HCC, the process of achieving landmark status has been a long one. Our application, a 53-page thesis, exhaustively researched and written by Julia Sienkewicz, was first submitted in 2007. Sienkewicz, who actually lived in the gatehouse while she was conducting her research, made the formal pre-

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Stone stories — Angels

The use of angels in funerary art is as old as Christian art itself. In the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome, survives the earliest existing image of the archangel Gabriel with the Madonna, dating from the late second century. This depiction interprets Gabriel as wingless, but other examples such as the Sarigüzül Sarcophagus in Istanbul, ca. 400 CE, show two winged angels, clearly borrowed from pagan iconography

(as in the Greek Nike figures). Wings, alternative skin color, and surrounded by clouds were all attributes that grew with time in art, to signify the bodilessness and otherworldliness of these celestial beings. Wings in particular came to symbolize an aloofness of the angels' essence, and are now the one thing we most associate with what we understand to be an angel in the visual

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Letter from the Chair

LEARNING TO SEE

Historic Congressional Cemetery is a 35 acre maze that holds endless hidden surprises. Over twenty years as a volunteer and ten years on the board of directors I've come to know this place quite well. Not a week goes by that I don't discover something new about this place — even after 20 years, and I'm here all the time.

And what's amazing is that so many of its secrets are hiding in plain sight. I can't count the number of times I've stood at a spot, where I have paused many, many times over the years, and suddenly gained a new understanding of what I was looking at. Congressional Cemetery has taught me how to see. Taught me to look at what I see.

For example, a line of six four-inch rounded stones barely visible at the base of a cedar tree on Pinkney Street caught my eye about the sixteenth year of walking past that tree. It seemed an oddly uniform arrangement of rocks and so I looked again. It turned out to be the only exposed portion of a long buried extensive cobblestone storm water drainage system built in the 1850s. It's now preserved as part of our new landscape architecture plan.

Or take our grave numbering system. It has some anomalies that make no sense until you stop to observe what you see. For example, at least once a year someone asks for help finding a grave numbered in "Section C, 3". Those new to the system always have a hard time with that one. But if you know your old maps, it's a snap — just look for the old sidewalks that were removed a hundred years ago. Say what? The sidewalks may be gone but the dif-

ference in stone material, shapes, and sizes north and south of where the old sidewalk was show you the evolution of the Cemetery if you stop to look at what you see.

A more dramatic example of looking at what is, was found inside the Keyworth Vault when we undertook restoration work last year. As we opened the iron door, which hadn't been opened since Isaac Toddhunter was laid to rest on May 23, 1900, we found his casket carelessly tossed halfway down the stairway into the tomb. It seemed a shocking discovery of callous indifference by the burial party some one hundred years ago. Until I looked again. In these old tombs, coffins and caskets were laid atop each other rather than in individual receptacles. Isaac actually had been placed carefully atop four other caskets. But when the wooden casket at the bottom finally rotted away, down they all tumbled — casting Isaac across the stairway to await our discovery. The pattern of what was there told the story of what had happened. We just had to look.

Preservation work begins with observation. Before action is taken, before changes are made, observation of existing conditions and patterns is critical. Changes in patterns are important; they speak to us of new eras of development, technology, or fortune. The evidence of what happened is generally right there, hidden in plain sight: the old drainage systems, the arrangement of gravestones, the positioning of burial vaults, all tell stories about the history and evolution of the landscape. We just have to slow down and look at what we see.

~ Patrick Crowley



THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

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From the Executive Director

What a busy and exciting fall we are having. Years of planning and work are finally being completed. Road construction, started in the summer of 2008, is almost completed. A new watering system throughout the cemetery is being installed with Victorian style water spigots. And a first for the cemetery, two new drinking fountains for two-legged humans and four-legged dogs, a gift from Toni Burnham and the K9 Committee, are conveniently located at the chapel and the Matlovich corner.

The Oehme, van Sweden plan calls for planting 800-1000 trees throughout the cemetery. We certainly cannot afford to do it all at once, but thanks to generous donations from Edward S. Miller, TKF Foundation, and the DC Daughters of the American Revolution, we will begin by

replenishing the beautiful Kwanzan Cherry trees around the chapel and in the northeast section, plant shade and canopy trees at the end of the 9/11 Memorial grove and flowering trees at the three E Street gates. This will be a good start to the next decade's work to create a new arbor.

Our education and outreach programs continue to grow — standing room only for Laurie Burgess' Death Dogs and Monuments lecture; HCC Music Director, Charles Humphreys presented a concert of beautiful soprano voices and strains from our newly restored 100 year old organ; Anthony Pitch's Burning of Washington walking tour to benefit the Pleasanton family plot; our docents gave hundreds of people cemetery tours during Cultural Landscape Foundation's

What's Out There weekend and Walking Town DC, and the K9 Corps sponsorship of our booth at the Fall Festival at Barracks Row. And Ghost and Goblets was a great success financially as well as introducing the cemetery to a new group of people.

Hundreds of volunteers from the US Chamber of Commerce, 9/11 Day of Service, and the personnel from the Navy and Marines have changed the previously untouched weedy and overgrown vine fences as well as the land outside the 17th Street fence to a pleasing well-kept landscape. The dogwalkers and Navy Seabees have built a fence to hide the dirt, mulch, bricks and other items required for a large property.

We're busy and making a difference.

~ Cindy Hays

INTRODUCING CARA SPACCARELLI

The term "Rector" goes back to the late 14th century, a Latin term used to mean "ruler, governor, guide." Today, the term has retained its "guiding" sense, and is also the title given to the Reverend Cara Spaccarelli, the new Rector at Christ Church † Washington Parish.

As part of her many duties, Cara is the primary leader of worship, education, spiritual guidance and pastoral care as well as the supervisor of seminarians. She also serves as Administrator of the Parish, staff and properties, and is always on call for pastoral emergencies.

Cara was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and raised in the Episcopal Church. She first experienced her call to priesthood while ministering as a counselor at an Episcopal camp. She attended Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, majoring in American Studies, and she received her MDiv at Episcopala Seminary of the Southwest in Austin, Texas. She was ordained in 2006 and served St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis. She then began her ministry as rector of Christ Church on July 18th, 2010. On October 3rd of this year, Cara conducted a very special "Blessing of the Animals" here at Congressional Cemetery, extending her heart to the animal companions of those in the neighborhood. Cara will lead our upcoming Christmas Concerts on December 6th and 13th, with special readings and blessings, and will conduct the Easter Sunrise service here. At home, Cara and her husband, Michael Lawyer, keep active with their two young sons, Riley and Aden.

We welcome Cara Spaccarelli to the HCC family, and look forward to having her kind and calming presence be a part of our future. It's good to have a Shepherd in the fold!

Around the Gatehouse

ORGAN INAUGURATION

HCC Music Director Charles Humphries christened our newly refurbished pump organ with a September evening of music, wine and cheese. Our little chapel was filled with music lovers, and both the organ and the organists were more than up to the task. Charles played 18th century pieces from German, English, and U.S. composers. He then accompanied three sopranos, who sang numbers from *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Carousel*.

Charles has also put together a program of singers, readers, and organ music for the traditional Lessons and Carols celebration of Christmas. The program will be held twice: December 6th at 7:30pm and December 13th at 7:30 pm in the chapel. Tickets are \$35 each. See www.congressionalcemetery.org for more information.



Kim Pyle, Nicole Gerber, and Mary Ayala-Bush sing "Habanera"

NO MORE EXCUSES!

Every fall, the third-graders at Watkins elementary write down their lamest excuses ("I can't go



Letting go of the really lame ones...

to school because my hair doesn't look good" or "I can't do my homework because it's too hot outside" are typical). Then they put the excuses in a box and bury them, never to be used again. This year, the third graders buried their excuses in the cemetery! Program Director Rebecca Roberts ceremonially deposited the box in the Public Vault, slammed the clanging metal door, and locked it up with the impressively large and heavy key. No longer can any third grader say "I can't play soccer, I stink at it!"

BLESSED BEASTS

New Christ Church rector Cara Spaccarelli participated in her first Blessing of the Animals at HCC on October 3rd. Dogs are, of course, no strangers to HCC,

but on this occasion they were joined by several cats, and at least one teddy bear. See page 3 for an introduction to Rector Spaccarelli.

ONE BUSY SATURDAY!

An enthusiastic crowd thronged the cemetery in September for the Fall Edition of Walking Town DC, a semiannual event presented by Cultural Tourism DC. This year, we offered two tour options: the general introductory tour for folks who had never visited before, and a suffrage-themed tour for those eager for a new experience. At the same time, we offered a landscape tour for those directed here by the Cultural Landscape Foundation. And, did we mention it was also a huge work day, with a hundred volunteers from the Navy and Marines? They cleared brush, hauled trash, raised stones, and got good and dirty.



Sculptor Adelaide Johnson (R61/S152) is featured on the new suffrage tour

From the Ground Up

The deciduous trees in the cemetery are busy showing off for the next few weeks. But when their flashy red and orange leaves inevitably fall to the ground, the cemetery's evergreens will get their moment on the stage. Perhaps the most distinctive of these are the pointed skinny varieties of cypress, including the many arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) in the southwest corner of the cemetery, and the two hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) that stand sentinel by Belva Lockwood's stone at range 78/site 296.

Cypress trees have been associated with mourning since ancient Greece. According to Ovid, the tree was named after Kyparissos, a young boy who

accidentally killed Apollo's stag. Kyparissos was so grief-stricken, he begged Apollo to let him cry forever. Apollo turned him into a cypress tree, which weeps droplets of sap.

The ancient Egyptians often used cypress wood for their mummy cases. The ancient Etruscans believed the smell of cypress could mask the smell of death, and would ensure a smooth journey to the afterlife. This is one reason the Italian countryside is dotted



Cypress trees flank Belva Lockwood's grave at R78/S296



Apollo turns the grieving Kyparissos into a cypress tree

with the pencil-shaped variety *Cupressus sempervirens*, which is known commonly as Tuscan Cypress and Cemetery Cypress.

But even as the cypress reflects mourning and death, its evergreen color reminds us of eternal life, even in the middle of a bare, colorless winter. What a perfect tree for a cemetery. 🌿

Ghosts and Goblets October 30 2010

The very first Ghosts and Goblets Soirée was a howling success! Guests enjoyed touring the cemetery by torchlight, meeting some cemetery residents who had risen for the occasion, and delicious food and wine donated by Capitol Hill merchants. Thanks to all our sponsors, donors, and volunteers for making the night a devilishly good time.



Capitol Madam Mary Hall (HCC Program Director Rebecca Roberts) walks the streets

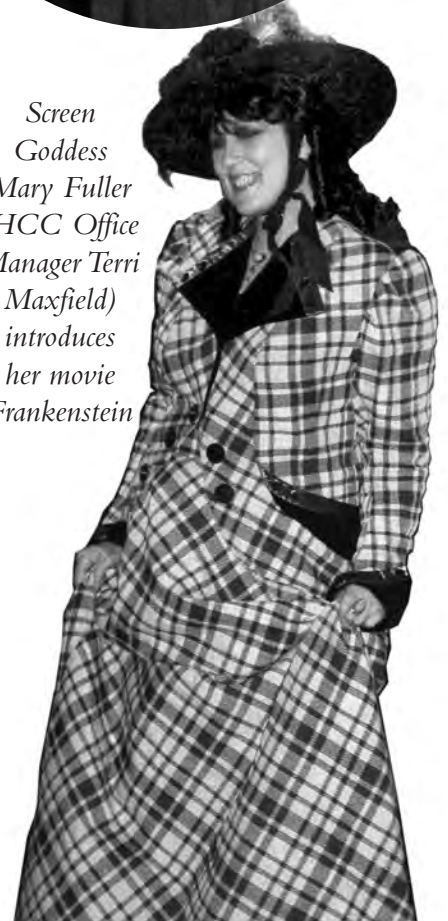
HCC music director Charles Humphries does a Dracula number on the chapel organ



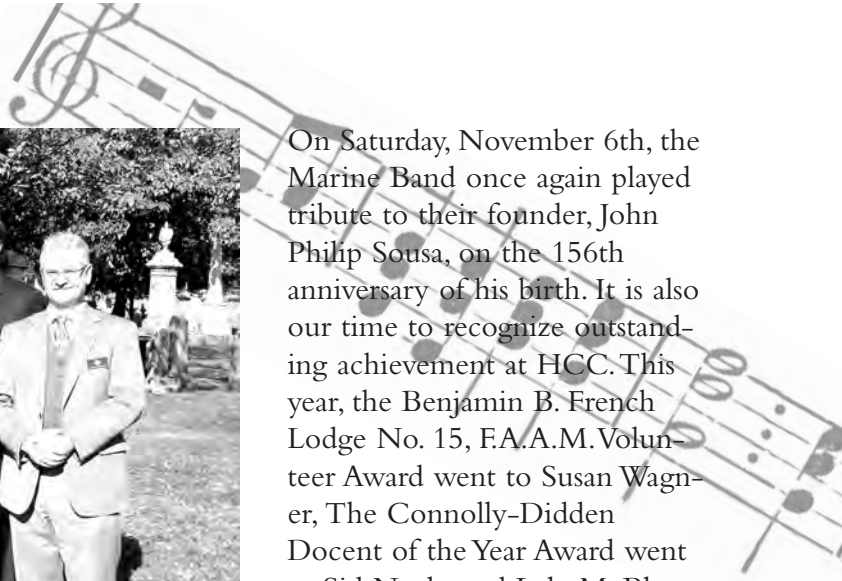
Partygoer Emily Heil purrs over sliders from Matchbox Capitol Hill



Screen Goddess Mary Fuller (HCC Office Manager Terri Maxfield) introduces her movie Frankenstein



HCC Docent Steve Hammond summons the spirit of Joseph Gales



Honorees Lyle Blanchard, Sid Neely, and Susan Wagner join Captain Michelle A. Rakers and Drum Major Master Gunnery Sergeant William L. Browne from the Marine Corps band, John Philip Sousa, Roman Volsky, and Patrick Crowley.

On Saturday, November 6th, the Marine Band once again played tribute to their founder, John Philip Sousa, on the 156th anniversary of his birth. It is also our time to recognize outstanding achievement at HCC. This year, the Benjamin B. French Lodge No. 15, F.A.A.M. Volunteer Award went to Susan Wagner, The Connolly-Didden Docent of the Year Award went to Sid Neely, and Lyle M. Blanchard was awarded the The John Philip Sousa Distinguished Service Award for his five years of pro bono service in the effort to secure ownership of the G Street right-of-way by the jail.



A sousaphone player among the trees



The French horn section stands at attention



John Philip Sousa (Ron Anzalone) introduces the band

Conservation Restoration

From its earliest days, the design of Congressional Cemetery was organized around a system of family plots and individual sites. The family vaults, mausoleums and family plots each have their own distinctive organization, markers, and territory-defining boundaries most frequently coping stones, stone boundary markers or fences.

As the landscape-lawn concept for cemetery design was adopted by Congressional in the late 1840's, plantings around family plots were discouraged and plot appearance was dominated by monuments, the occasional tree, and lawn. Between 1950 and 1970, Christ Church's funds were greatly reduced, and cost-saving measures were into place. Families were asked to remove enclosing fences and complex plantings from family plots in order to

reduce the cost of maintaining the cemetery.

In the third century of Congressional, we will have over 14,000 stones, monuments, tables and markers and 32 family vaults and mausoleums. Time and environment are not friendly to old marble, limestone or sandstone. When the old graves cave in, the bases of the markers are often unseated causing them to lean or fall. The irons pin that were used to hold upright stones on their bases have corroded and in many instances have caused the stone to break or split when it leans or falls.

When a stone is leaning badly, and can safely be removed from its base, it is laid on the ground to pro-



Broken stones can be found throughout the cemetery.

tect it from breaking and possible injury to two and four-legged visitors. The cemetery embarked on a new inventory of stones and their condition last summer. We know that there are over 1000 stones leaning, removed from their bases, or broken.

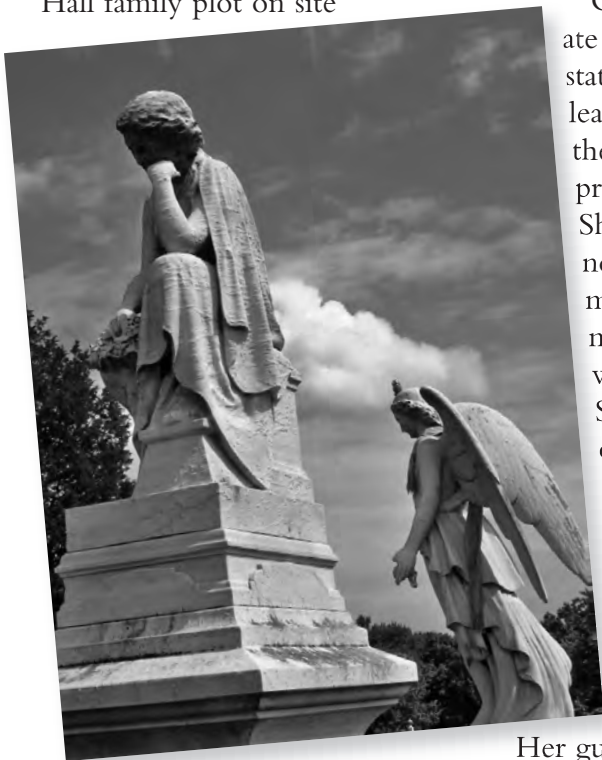
Professional stone conservationists are expensive and generally give us a per stone contract price. We have made very beneficial arrangement with a master stone mason for six hundred dollars a day: he will reset stones, drill new pin holes and install stainless steel pins to keep the stones upright for another hundred years, and make other adjustments as possible to get these stones standing back up.

We are inviting any friend who is interested in seeing their favorite stone saved to buy a day from the stonemason, (or even a couple of hours!) with a tax-deductible contribution to APHCC. Visit www.congressionalcemetery.org for details. ~

Madam on the Mall

BY FRANK J. PIETRUCHA

At the end of the brick path that parallels E Street SE, not far from the DC prison fence, two of Congressional Cemetery's most visited monuments rise over the Hall family plot on site



Mary Hall's monument contemplates eternity

R11/92. Four 19th-century women, a mother and her three daughters, lay to rest in a site that whispers tranquility, yet at the same time exemplifies Victorian prosperity. Under a dignified marble gravestone depicting a woman mourning over an urn, Mary Ann Hall, who died in 1886, is buried with one of her

sisters. Adjacent to that statue, beneath a majestic angel, are the graves of Mary's mother and another sister, both of whom died in the 1860s.

Cemetery visitors appreciate the beauty of the two statues, but mostly they enjoy learning how Mary amassed the money to afford such prime cemetery real estate. She didn't inherit a fortune, nor did she marry into money. Mary earned her money working in the world's oldest profession. She built and managed one of Washington's finest 19th Century bordellos.

Located on the site of the new National Museum of the American Indian, Mary's brothel was no flop house for ruffians or degenerates.

Her guests included many of Washington's most upstanding gentlemen. Conveniently located near the Capitol, the nation's power elite enjoyed Mary's hospitality in an era when "lawmakers lived more of the bachelor's life and the lobbying arts included the services of prostitutes." Prostitution was considered morally repugnant, at least in public, during this socially conservative era. The social morays, however, did not impede Miss

Hall. She paid her taxes on time and gave generously to charities.

Furnished with expensive Brussels carpets, oil paintings, china vases, marble-topped tables, a marble clock and other fine accoutrements her place was reflective of upper class households of the Victorian era. The Smithsonian unearthed over 100 champagne corks, Piper-Heidsieck was the preferred quaff, as well as shards of expensive gilt-edged porcelain. Her house was unique by brothel standards. Not far from her 349 Maryland Avenue place of business, numerous seedier whorehouses were abundant. Washington was home to 500 registered brothels in the years following the Civil War.

In 1862 Washington was teeming with around 5,000 prostitutes. Most would have been pleased to work under the direction of Mary Hall. Some women chose this line of work as an alternative to destitution and starvation. The working conditions and wages were not favorable in most other professions open to women at the time such as domestic help or factory worker. While seamstresses earned less than a dollar a week, prostitutes could take in \$20 to \$50 in the same period. ~

When Frank Pietrucha isn't walking his Irish Terrier Auggie around the cemetery, he spends his time demystifying technical jargon for lawmakers and senior execs as an independent writer and communicator. Auggie is his Vice President of Security.

LANDMARK STATUS

Continued from page 1

sentation and was in the audience when the final vote was taken. “It is so nice to see the cemetery get the recognition it deserves,” she said. “Anyone who spends any time at Congressional knows it’s a national treasure.”

Landmark status means more

than just a bronze plaque. The National Park Service provides technical preservation advice to owners of National Historic Landmarks. NPS also provides a wealth of information on preservation issues. And of course, HCC will be added to the prestigious list of National Landmarks at www.nps.gov, joining historic sites as diverse as

Boston’s Old North Church, New Mexico’s Los Alamos Laboratory, and William Faulkner’s house in Oxford, Mississippi.

Which is not to say we won’t proudly display the plaque when we get one! That should be some time next Spring, after the final NPS procedures are completed and the Secretary of the Interior signs off. ~

STONE STORIES — ANGELS

Continued from page 1

arts. Robes, clouds, halos, all have their place, but by today’s standards, if it doesn’t have wings, then we perceive it as a saint or exalted Christian.

Here at Congressional Cemetery, we have many beautiful examples of angelic statuary from the 19th and 20th centuries; some towering and inspiring, others small and heartwarming. The smaller version, sometimes referred to as a cherub, tends to watch over children who passed away. Angels that stand eternally above resting places serve as pro-

tection and comfort for lost children. Adults however, especially powerful and/or wealthy ones, would have their earthly remains and soul protected by a full grown angel, emanating strength and perpetuity. These sentinels protect their charges for time everlasting, radiating their God-given power, holding a writing implement in the case of the seraph that stands over the tomb of Colonel, Choctaw Ex-Chief and esteemed Mason, Peter Pitchlynn (R87/294) —

alluding that perhaps the pen is

indeed

mightier

than the sword, or as in the case of the archangel that watches over the mother of Madame Mary Hall, holding a torch aloft, leading the deceased toward their eternal reward and redemption.



Mary Hall’s mother’s angel and her ghostly accessories



A cemetery cherub looks out for birds

And we even have proof of the otherworldliness of Mrs. Hall’s angel in particular. Looking closely, you will see a faded scarf wrapped around her neck, protecting her from the night air. Legend has it that if the scarf is removed, it will reappear within 24 hours by the spirit of the benevolent Mary, forever watching out for her mother. ~

The Fear of His Displeasure

Throughout the 1840's and 1850's, the boundaries of the cemetery expanded. Christ Church appointed an agent, John P. Ingle (son of cemetery founder Henry Ingle) to buy adjacent property on the church's behalf. Recently, HCC archivist Dayle Dooley found the documentation of these property transfers among the archives of Christ Church.

The documents are a treat for any archivist – hundred-year-old language written in Victorian script, detailing how the cemetery grew to its current size. Perhaps the most fascinating artifact is a peculiar document signed by the married women who sold their property to John Ingle.

Here is an example of the statement signed by Sarah

Deneale (R7/S56) in 1849, who was selling property in what is now the northwest corner of the cemetery.

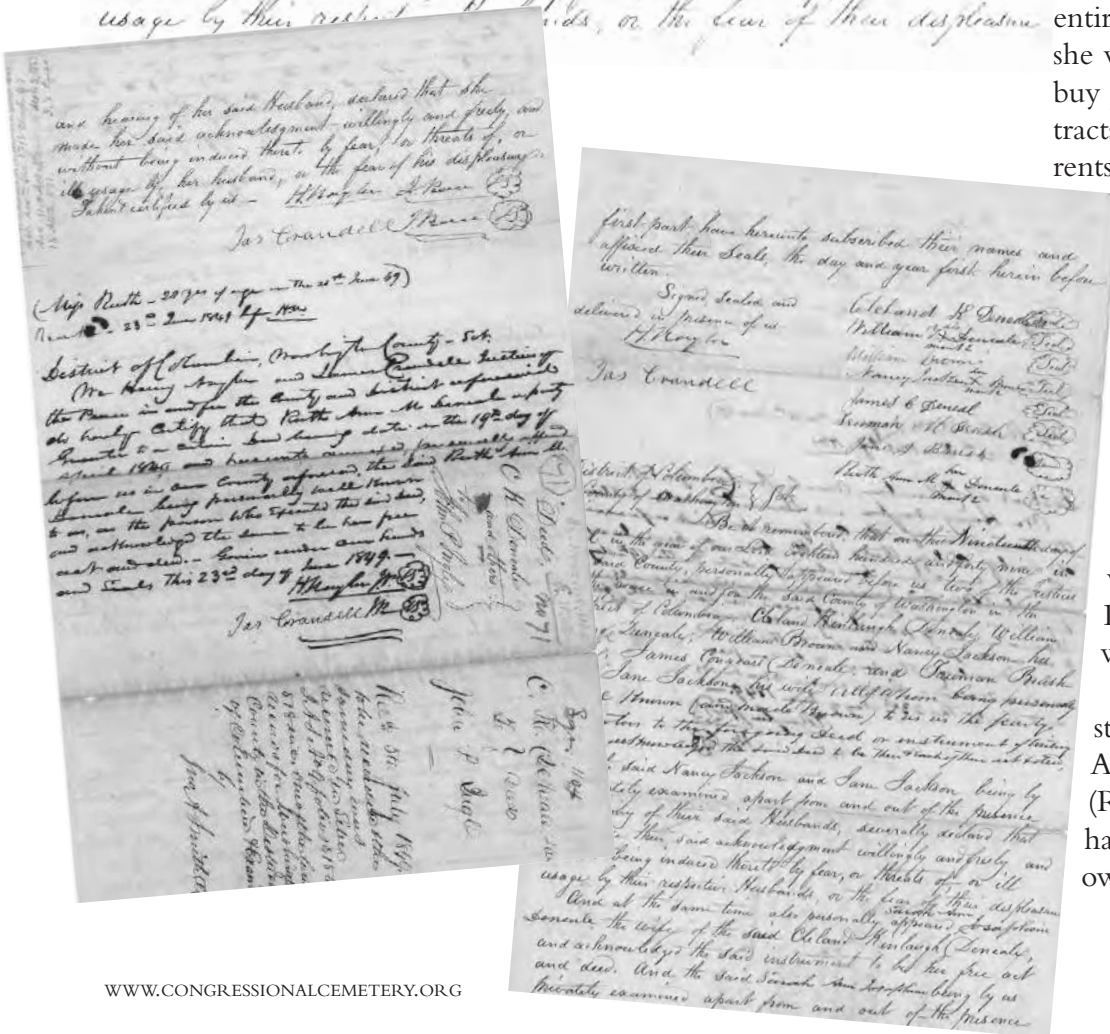
And at the same time also personally appeared Sarah Ann Josephine Deneale, the wife of the said Cleland Kinlaugh Deneale, and acknowledged the said instrument to be her free act and deed. And the said Sarah Ann Josephine being by us privately examined apart from and out of the presence of and hearing of her said Husband, declared that she made her said acknowledgment willingly and freely, and without being induced thereto by fear, or threats of, or ill usage by her husband, or the fear of his displeasure.

This cryptic wording is a relic of a certain time in American history. Before the mid- 1800's when a woman married, any property she owned was granted entirely to her husband. While she was married, she could not buy property, enter into contracts, keep her own wages or rents, or bring a lawsuit. Married

women's property laws (with varying language and scope) were passed in a few states in first half of the 19th century. But in 1848, New York State passed a comprehensive law, which served as a model for other states. It is a little unclear what the legal status was for married women in DC in 1849, but clearly, it was a sensitive issue.

Interestingly, a similar statement was not signed by Anna Maria Thornton (R33/S41), who, as a widow, had total control over her own property.

and the said Nancy Jackson and Sam Jackson being by us privately examined apart from and out of the presence and hearing of their said Husbands, severally declared that they made their said acknowledgment willingly and freely and without being induced thereto by fear, or threats of, or ill usage by their respective Husbands, or the fear of their displeasure.



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DECEMBER 6

7:30 pm Chapel

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\$35 per ticket

DECEMBER 13

7:30 pm Chapel

An evening of lessons and carols for Christmas
\$35 per ticket

DECEMBER 15

K-9 Corps membership renewal begins

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