

HERITAGE GAZETTE

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

2016 NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AND REMEMBRANCE

BY PAUL WILLIAMS

The annual event at Congressional Cemetery officially known as the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance took place on Saturday, September 10th this year, with nearly 250 military and governmental employees and their families lending a hand for myriad projects throughout our 35 acres. And as we've learned from years past, when you provide a 9 am start time and provide a young military person

with a shovel and a task, they begin at 9:01 and don't stop until the task is completed. And when it is, they find something else to accomplish! It was an honor to have the very recently appointed Rear Admiral Charles W. Rock, Commandant of the Naval District of Washington join the work crew first hand as his first community service project in Washington, DC.

It is truly incredible what can be completed by 250 people in three hours — that's a total of 750 hours of work, or what would take an individual nearly five months! And it shows. The entire stretch of our circa 1856 wrought iron fence — which stands about 8 feet tall and 500 feet long — between the gatehouse and 17th Street was scraped, primed, and painted, as was another 500 foot section from the 19th Street gate westward. Along with the 17th Street gate, this was the first time the fence has been painted in many, many decades, and its shiny new black sheen can be seen from all the way across the cemetery.

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Rear Admiral and Commandant of the Naval District Washington Charles W. Rock lends an enthusiastic hand to the National Day of Remembrance service day at Congressional Cemetery.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

I recently had the pleasure of visiting historic Highgate Cemetery in London. It was stunning and should be on every history buff's bucket list in London. Although Highgate has a very different look and feel from Historic Congressional Cemetery, there are many notable similarities: while HCC is 32 years older, both cemeteries share a rich Victorian history, they are about the same size (in acres), both have many notable and colorful people buried within, and both experienced decades of decline and neglect in the mid-20th century before enjoying revivals sparked by volunteers, history-lovers, and the generosity of donors.



One of the other commonalities both cemeteries face is the delicate balance in being an historic landmark, an active burial ground, and a community destination, against the need to continuously preserve, restore, conserve, and repair the monuments, buildings, and grounds. Not surprisingly, whether it's in American dollars or British pounds, both cemeteries are constantly fund-raising and seeking out patron donors to support our respective long term missions.

Unlike Highgate, HCC is so fortunate to have two \$1 million endowments that support our budget by funding much of our buildings, grounds and monuments work. But it's never enough! By now you probably know (as I mention it quite often in this column) one of our endowments is completely matched and we are close to launching a big campaign to match the second endowment in full. We have a little less than \$800,000 to raise and we are so excited to engage all of our readers, site-owners, K9 members, and extended community in this campaign. Two of HCC's board members, David Jones and Ed Miller, recently each contributed \$25,000 (spread over two years) to be the cornerstone contributions to this campaign. We hope their generosity will inspire you to remember HCC in your year-end giving (and don't forget to designate your contribution to go towards the "Endowment Match"). Remember, any amount you give will be doubled by the "match" terms of the endowment and will help ensure HCC remains a vibrant destination for generations to come!

—Kelly Crowe

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

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

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the aspects I enjoy about this job is that every day is completely different from the day before. Activities, tours, large and small events, new stone installations and old stone restorations, visiting relatives from close by and from far away, funerals big, small, intimate, and even fun; and there always seems to be a bit of history that is unintentionally revealed.

I've noticed a single, simple stone on my walk to and from work every day not far from the 17th Street gate, and somewhat close to our beloved John Philip Sousa, the march king and longtime leader of the Marine Corps Band. And, after a bit of investigation, I discovered that this simple stone, like all others, has a fascinating individual buried beneath it. Thomas Powell Knox (1938-2004). Many musicians seek to have their final resting place near Sousa, and Knox was no exception, except that he was exceptional indeed.

If you have watched a Presidential inauguration anytime since Ronald Reagan first in 1981, you've heard his music. A composer for the Marine Corps Band for 16 years, he wrote "God of Our Fathers," which has been played at every inauguration since it was especially commissioned for that event.

According to his obituary in the *Washington Post*, "Mr. Knox was one of the best known contemporary arrangers of music for concert band and wind ensembles...he was really responsible for creating a lot of the sound of the Marine Band."

Col. Timothy Foley, the band's director at the time of Knox's death in 2004 stated "he had a very profound influence on band music in the latter part of the 20th century."

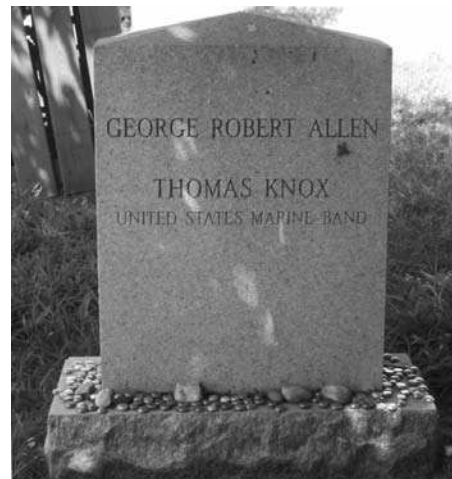
Many other bands have played his more than 300 compositions housed at the Marine Corps Band. They



Thomas Powell Knox

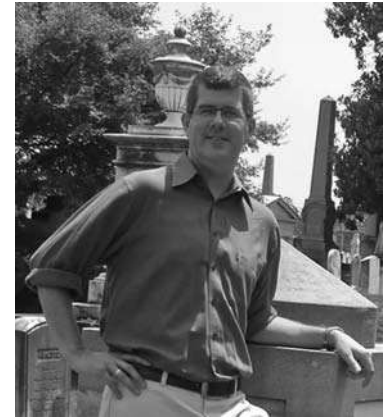
include "Sea Songs" that commemorated the 350 anniversary of the founding of Boston, and American Pageant commissioned for President Nixon's first inauguration. Even a final scene of the popular movie "All the President's Men" had an original piece by Knox.

Born in Danville, Illinois, he had heard the Marine Corps Band when he was a boy, and decided he wanted to study trumpet. After graduating from the University of Illinois, he joined the Marines in 1961. He lived on Capitol Hill across the street from the Commandant's house until his retirement in 1985, when he



moved to Florida. He is buried with his partner in life, George Robert Allen III (1927-2003) who preceded him in death by just a year.

It is with this story that I look forward to our October events that keep the staff and me exceedingly busy throughout the week and on weekends, and onto the Sousa birthday celebration this year on November 6th. And I think Knox himself might get a kick out of the concert as the Marine band marches within four feet of his gravesite.



—Paul K. Williams, President

LITTLE LIBRARY



If you have strolled by the Chapel recently, you may have noticed a new addition to the grounds. Congressional Cemetery is the proud owner of a free book exchange site called a Little Library. The “take a book, leave a book” philosophy ensures that there is always an eclectic selection of reads

nestled on the shelves to enhance a visit to the cemetery. HCC’s addition was constructed by Bob Arnold, and the Cemetery’s Little Library is officially registered as one of the nearly 40,000 libraries located worldwide.

DEAD MAN’S RUN

Dead Man’s Run, now in its sixth year, was yet another success. From killer bunnies to full inflatable dinosaur suits, runners put their best foot forward in the race and with their costumes. The race itself boasted over 400 runners, and the post-race party was nothing to sneeze at, either. Fulcrum Properties provided every runner with a free Port City craft brew, and local favorite The Pretzel Bakery greeted finishers with tasty pretzels.



MARKING THE GRAVE OF CHARLES SIEGERT



Kelly Carnes portraying Siegert at 2015 Soul Strolls.

Thanks to the perseverance and dedication of Guy Palace, Congressional Cemetery’s hapless circus worker will finally get a headstone. Due to an unfortunate habit of sleeping on top of the tiger cage, Charles Siegert was killed by “Old Ben” in Washington, D.C. in 1899 at the age of 21. The Wallace Circus left Siegert behind, and a local insurance man took pity on the situation and buried Siegert at his own expense. Now, after two failed fundraising campaigns (one sponsored by the Cemetery, another by Guy), Guy Palace has successfully funded Siegert’s marker through

a GoFundMe campaign. The campaign received great press, eliciting attention from the Washingtonian, NBC4, and WTOP, among others. Please keep an eye on Congressional Cemetery's social media accounts for news of the grave marking ceremony and to view pictures of the headstone. Nearly 117 years later, Charles Siegert's untimely death will now be properly marked.

COMING SOON!

For years now, we've had an on-again, off-again relationship with Congressional Cemetery memberships. Our K9 Corps is an organized and regulated membership for dog walkers, yet there is no similar system in place for those who want to contribute to HCC but don't have pups to bring to the cemetery. In spring 2017, we'll debut our new membership system and levels that will allow everyone to assist and be a part of our beloved nonprofit. Stay tuned!

ATTESTATION

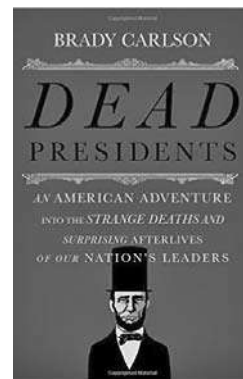
If you have family buried at Congressional, please consider transferring ownership to a living heir. Think the plot is full? We allow cremation burials to be placed with full burials, and in the process, you may even discover a completely unused family site that can be used in the future. When we find unused sites owned by a family that has not made any contact with us in 75 years, the cemetery has authority to reclaim the plot under the Reclamation of Interment Rights Policy. If you are interested in transferring family burial sites to your name, please contact mpuglisi@congressional-cemetery.org for more details.

PRE-SALE OF COLUMBARIUM NICHES

Another columbarium is on the way! Similar in structure to the obelisk at the southern tip of the cemetery, this columbarium will be installed near the corner of Ingle Street and Henderson Street. Pre-sale of niche spaces is available. Please contact mpuglisi@congressionalcemetery.org for more information.

HCC BOOK REVIEW

Hannah Miller, our HCC "summer" intern, came up with the great idea of doing a book review in the newsletter. Dead Presidents was the May Tombs and Tomes book club and we were lucky enough to be joined via Skype by the author himself, who proved to be just as interesting and full of trivia as his book. In addition, there are multiple pages dedicated to Congressional Cemetery, so we carry Carlson's book in the gift shop. Need more convincing? See Hannah's review for more presidential tidbits.



A review of Dead Presidents: An American Adventure into the Strange Deaths and Surprising Afterlives of our Nation's Leaders by Brady Carlson

If you're someone who enjoys learning about the lesser-known stories of American history, Brady Carlson's *Dead Presidents: An American Adventure into the Strange Deaths And Surprising Afterlives of our Nation's Leaders*, which can be found in the cemetery's gift shop, is an incredibly entertaining personal narrative given by Carlson himself as he travels all over America to visit the graves and monuments that have come to memorialize such leaders as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy. What is most impressive about this book, however, is the amount of intimate detail that Carlson is able to recount of each leader's life and death, making some of our long-idolized American heroes seem a little more human, a little strange sometimes, a little like us. For instance, were you aware that President Andrew Jackson's eulogy was given by his profane pet parrot, Poll? Or that President Herbert Hoover has two asteroids named after him? Whether you're interested in learning more about the history of American presidents or are simply intrigued by the skeletons in their closets, *Dead Presidents* will leave you wondering, "What else didn't they teach me in school?"

CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY'S GIANT

BY LAUREN MALOY

At Congressional Cemetery, we have a giant in our midst. Varying accounts place resident John Turner at different heights: a *Washington Post* article claims that he was 7 foot 7 inches, while a contemporary surgeon inflated his height considerably to 8 feet 3 inches. Other studies of his bones mark Turner at 7 feet 1 inch. Regardless of the discrepancies in measurements, he was tall. Not the tallest ever by any standard, but tall enough to distinguish him at the time as someone who stood out as unusual, freakish, and difficult to understand.

Turner was born in 1875 and died at the young age of 36 years old. The rest of his family was “normal sized,” although similarly beset by tragic circumstances. Both of Turner’s parents died young, and his brother perished in an accident at the Navy Yard a few years before John’s death. Sadly, but not unexpectedly, John Turner’s life was defined by his giantism. Few other personal details exist about his short and tragic life other than descriptions of his medical abnormalities.

When puzzling over how to frame this article, the dilemma quickly became evident: what is there to say about John Turner other than that he is tall? He piqued the staff’s interest because of that very aspect, initially brought to our attention by historian Sandy Schmidt, who sent along a 1908 *Washington Post* article “Washington’s Seven Foot Seven Inch Giant.” There are many seemingly anonymous graves here that are brought to life through the attention of their descendants. Still others are known to us because of their life achievements, their unusual or grisly deaths, or their notable headstones. And in John Turner’s case, the surviving documentation includes a relative wealth of information when compared to many of the other residents buried here. There are multiple newspaper articles, medical descriptions, and obituaries, but all ultimately reach the same conclusion: John Turner was

very tall. He lived a very sad life, and was granted no reprieve in death, as his body was dissected against the wishes of his family by Dr. Harvey Cushing.

What does stick out, however, is the manner in which the press treated Turner in life and death. If you’ve made a habit of reading old newspaper articles and obituaries (because who hasn’t), you may have noticed that they lack a certain delicacy in descriptions of deaths, crimes, or in Turner’s case, medical afflictions. Writers described murder scenes with an unnerving attention to every salacious detail, which is a boon for the curious but not necessarily for the faint of heart. The *Post* article describing Turner’s life, however, is simply astounding in its lack of sensitivity.

Two passages in particular highlight the journalist’s ineffective attempts to describe and understand John Turner’s life.

“He does not live: he merely exists. Such a thing as an emotion is utterly beyond him. During his 31 years of life he has merely vegetated. He cannot read or

Image of John Turner from the *Washington Post*.



write, and seems to have no desire to do either. His idea of happiness, if, indeed, he is capable of appreciating what that word means, is to sit and doze calmly in the sun. The hibernating bear is his idea of Paradise.”

The article goes on to describe Turner’s difficulty finding clothes for his large frame, his overall lethargy, and his numerous medical complications. Overall, the author of the article seems to be at once disgusted and insatiably curious about the existence of John Turner. His inability to wrap his head around the situation can be best summarized with the closing paragraph:

“As it is, he cares nothing for anything; he has no human interest because he is outside the human race, and death to him would not be the shutting out of hopes and ambitions, but simply a going to sleep, a resting quiet and easy, which now is his chief object in life – if, indeed, such an existence can be called a life.”

Turner’s death was treated with similar sentiments.

Inevitably, each obituary described his height and other measurements, the size of his coffin (eight feet), and often his languorous existence. The *Sheboygan Daily Press*, stunningly, ended his obituary with the line: “He was hideously ugly and seemed

abnormal in every respect.” John Turner was survived by two sisters, and one would hope that they never read his numerous obituaries.

Lest we judge the press of old too quickly, keep in mind that even in a more politically-correct press era, the oft-repeated “warning, what you are about to see is disturbing and not appropriate for young viewers” is merely a thinly-guised attention tactic to get you to pay attention. In addition, this article is being written solely because John Turner is a giant, and likely you are reading it for

that very reason as well. Congressional Cemetery’s giant was misunderstood, and it’s especially sad that the windows into his life are simultaneously descriptive and obtuse. But, we can note the tragedy of a life and death defined by a malady that cannot be helped, especially in a time when so little was understood about John Turner’s condition. ~

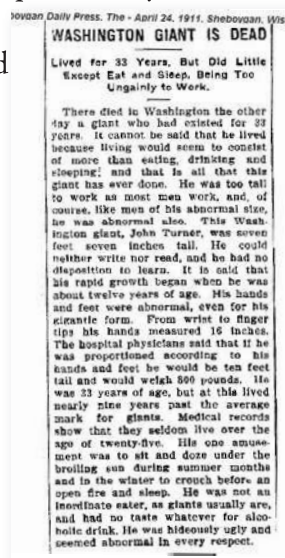
National Day of Service and Remembrance

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Other projects included the removal of about three acres — yes acres — of invasive species and thick underbrush that was killing trees to the south of our property. A crew was also tasked with removing weed trees, stump and all, located along our 17th Street hill, which quickly spread into removing all the weeds on the hill. Trees were mulched, and the historic swales or cobblestone road gutters were weeded, and the amount of brush piles that resulted extended ten feet high by 700 feet long!

The National Day of Remembrance is the culmination of efforts originally launched in 2002 by the non-profit 9/11 Day with wide support by the 9/11 community and leading national service organizations. This effort first established the inspiring tradition of engaging in charitable service on 9/11 as an annual and forward-looking tribute to the 9/11 victims, survivors, and those who rose up in service in response to the attacks.

In 2009, Congress designated September 11th as a National Day of Service and Remembrance under bipartisan federal law, and charged the Corporation for National and Community Service with helping to support this effort across the country. On the anniversary of the September 11th attacks, Americans will unite in service in the same remarkable way that so many came together following the attacks. As in years past, service and remembrance activities took place in all 50 states, at which there was opportunities for hundreds of thousands of volunteers to paint and refurbish homes, run food drives, spruce up schools, reclaim neighborhoods, and support and honor veterans, soldiers, military families, and first responders. ~



JOEL SAMUELS

The tale of Joel Samuels' arrival on the board of Historic Congressional Cemetery this March is a quintessential Washington one. In 2001, after nearly a decade away from his city of his birth, Joel returned to Washington. Having grown up in Woodley Park, Joel bought a house on Capitol Hill, near Lincoln Park on his return. In the same city he had known so well as a child and young adult, he now found himself in an entirely new community — one in which he felt at home immediately. Joel settled in to his new home and career with a major downtown law firm.

But there was a catch. His then-two-year-old bearded collie Cosmo needed a place where he could run. After an unfortunate experience in Lincoln Park (where Cosmo ran from one end to the other chasing an ambulance as it sped down Massachusetts Avenue), Joel came upon Congressional. These were the good old days — before dog walkers had a waiting list to join. So Joel and Cosmo joined the Congressional family.

They met new friends (of the four- and two-legged variety) and expanded their Capitol Hill community. But within two years, professional obligations had pulled the pair away from Washington altogether. Joel left private practice and joined the law school faculty at the University of Michigan — and later the University of South Carolina. The house was sold. Ties to the Hill were severed as their lives moved on.

But, as Joel describes it, “Congressional has a pull that is hard to define. There is a sense of place that is unique in a city that often feels transient.” It took nearly a decade, but that pull brought Joel back to Congressional in August 2013 — in a very different way from before.


His mother Susan Samuels, a lifelong resident of the DC area, had just passed away. She had wanted to be

buried in Washington, but had not been sure where. As an only child, Joel and his father Michael were left to decide where her final resting place would be. They explored a variety of options but only one felt like home — Congressional.



Fast forward another two years. Having found a stone mason in Connecticut (Adam Heller) to craft a headstone that would capture the essence of his mother (more on that headstone in our next issue), Joel joined Adam and three of Joel's lifelong friends to lay the headstone.

On that sunny November Saturday in 2015, as they poured concrete and placed the headstone, HCC President Paul Williams came out to talk to the group. He learned about Joel's connection to the cemetery — as both dog walker and site owner — and encouraged him to reach out to Board chair Kelly Crowe to discuss joining the HCC Board.

And so it came to be that Joel Samuels joined the board of HCC. Every board member has a different and important connection to this place. Joel's connection straddles the worlds of the cemetery and offers a valuable perspective to the sometimes-competing interests at play at HCC. And while he is the only non-local resident on the Board, he travels from South Carolina for Board meetings. Like his colleagues on the HCC Board, Joel's commitment runs deep, and it shows the powerful and intimate connection that HCC can generate. 

OPERATION CONSERVATION WITH JONATHAN APPELL AUGUST 27 – 28, 2016

BY MARGARET PUGLISI

Congressional Cemetery hosts a conservation workshop on a biennial basis in order to provide educational outreach for those in our area who are interested in cemetery conservation. Fifteen attendees were present for the two-day conservation workshop hosted by the cemetery, partnering with the DC Metro Chapter of the Association for Gravestone Studies. Jonathan Appell, a professional gravestone conservator, was hired to instruct the demonstrations.

The workshop began with a conservation tour around the cemetery to illustrate common preservation issues with sandstone, marble, and granite. After explaining the process of cleaning and discussing the conflicting arguments regarding the cleaning of headstones, Appell demonstrated conservation techniques for resetting a small multi-piece headstone without heavy equipment. The group was eager to practice with these methods, and it was a great opportunity to get hands-on experience. They were also given the chance to repair a broken marble tablet using a two-part epoxy and wooden bracing. The group worked together to reset and repair five stones with guidance on the first day of the workshop.

The second day focused on resetting larger stones without heavy equipment and filling voids from stone loss. The group received in-depth instruction on the




McDonald monument before repair.

process of choosing the correct strength of mortar and preparing the mortar. Working together, they were able to repair six stones on the second day of the workshop.

The workshop proved to be very beneficial, as the attendees reported they are equipped to return to their own cemetery projects with their newly attained knowledge and skills.



Workshop attendees with the McDonald monument after repair.

We hope to be able to start providing this workshop as an annual event. In the future, we would like to incorporate more complex repairs such as removing corroded pins, constructing new bases for tablets, and using a mechanical lift. Congressional Cemetery certainly has enough stones in need of conservation to keep these workshops going for many years to come, and we hope to see you at the next one. 



McCaffrey tablet before repair.



McCaffrey tablet after repair.

THROWBACK PHOTO: 1994 K9 CORPS



From time to time we write about the K9 Corps in this newsletter, so most of you are acquainted with how important this organization is to Congressional Cemetery. Over the years the K9 Corps has swelled to 770

dogs, with a waitlist that, depending on the time of year, can include over 400 individuals. The revenue from the K9 Corps now accounts for over a quarter of our operating income, and the volunteer hours from its members help maintain the beauty and integrity of the cemetery.

This throwback photo comes to us courtesy of Christine Romero, and the original photograph was snapped by Rob Howe. It shows one of the earliest iterations of the K9 Corps in 1994. Many of the members photographed are still members over 20 years later, with different pups than those pictured here. One of these days, the HCC staff is going to try to wrangle the remaining members into a photo so we can put these images side by side. But until we get to it, we thought you would enjoy a little K9 Corps history.

HIDDEN TREASURE IN CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

BY MARGARET PUGLISI

Are you aware that there is hidden treasure within the gates of Congressional Cemetery? Four hidden treasures to be exact. But wait! Don't grab your shovels. We are talking about geocaches.

A geocache is typically a container or a location that has been mapped with GPS coordinates. A person can use the given coordinates to access the container or location. In most cases, the containers have trinkets or Trackables (coins or figures that have a tracking code), but in some cases, the coordinates may take you to a remarkable geologic feature.

All of the geocaches at Congressional Cemetery have containers, varying in size from a small pill holder to a peanut butter jar. While SSB, Doug's and Bonaparte's are traditional caches, The Silent City is a multi-cache and takes you to multiple locations throughout the cemetery before you end at your final destination. (Ominous laugh.)

So let's cover a few basic ground rules when it comes to geocaching in a cemetery.

- Do not dig. Geocaches do not require digging. Plus, that is Doug Graves's job.
- Do not disturb any headstones or disrespect any burials.
- Be stealthy, but don't act suspicious around Muggles (the non-geocaching sort). This is a cemetery after all, and looking suspicious may get you in trouble.
- Don't move the containers from their location. If you find something wrong, contact the creator of the cache to let them know.

Ready to play? Download the Geocaching® app by Groundspeak Inc. or go to www.geocaching.com/play to learn more!



The Silent City – hidden in 2005
Star Spangled Banner - hidden in 2010
Doug's Cache – hidden in 2016
Bonaparte's Cache – hidden in 2016

THE GATEHOUSE VAULT

BY DANIEL HOLCOMBE

Throughout the restoration of the Congressional Cemetery, we have become better stewards of our history. When our archivist Dayle Dooley first started working at the cemetery, our archives were kept in a basement closet, packed in boxes and stacked against an exterior wall. She recognized that the wetness in the basement was not good, and moved them to our walk-in safe, which is a much better location for them, but hardly perfect. The books were later digitally scanned, so that even if the books were lost, the information would not be.

Our modern, digital, records contain the names of the thousands of people that own plots and those that are interred here, but they leave out some of the information contained in our historic record books. For instance, the removal of seventy eight Union soldiers to Arlington National Cemetery is not included in our modern records. Since they were removed from the cemetery, it is not information pertinent to the operation of the cemetery. The temporary placement of three Presidents, a First Lady, and others in our Public Vault is also not relevant to the operation of the cemetery in modern times; however, it is all important information to many people and to the history of the cemetery.


Our oldest books date to 1820, when the cemetery was very new and much smaller than it is today. Although each of our historic books was scanned, this merely saves the information contained within, not the books themselves, nor the nuances of handwritten records. The storage of our historic books has always been problematic. The gatehouse dates to 1923, long before thermostats and modern heating and air conditioning, which means

temperatures in the gatehouse can fluctuate from too hot in the summer to too cold in the winters. Issues with plumbing, roofing, flooding, and probably many other household problems have threatened our historic books over their lifetime.

These paper records need much more stable conditions in regard to temperature and humidity, to ensure that they continue to be an exceptional historic resource. The addition of an HVAC system to the gatehouse would be an expense that is not justifiable at this time, and could not be done without irreversible damage to the structure, which is historic in its own right. So the storage of our books was a problem without an easy answer. Oddly enough, being stored for the past few years in the safe actually led to an interesting solution. With the advance of modern HVAC systems, units are now smaller and more precise than ever before. The installation of a small HVAC unit dedicated solely to keeping the safe temperature controlled could now be feasible, though certainly not cheap.

This spring two future residents of the cemetery, Rosi and Patrick Rahe, offered to donate the cost of the project. This allowed us to convert the safe to a room dedicated to the proper storage of our historic records. The archival storage room will be dedicated to



Joseph P. Sbuttoni, Sr., Rosi's father, who was born in Italy and later spent the majority of his life in Nashville, developing a love of history along the way. We at the cemetery greatly appreciate being able to store our records properly so that we can better share them with the public — thank you Rosi and Patrick for giving us this ability. 



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS


November 15 Tombs and Tomes Book Club

November 20 Notes from the Crypt


December 3 Photos with Santa

December 11 Notes from the Crypt Holiday Concert

January 2 K9 Renewals Begin


18th and E Streets, SE.

**IT'S BEST TO KEEP AT LEAST SIX
PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE WHO WILL
ALWAYS HELP YOU MOVE.**



**You don't have to be rich and famous to be buried in
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