

Old City Cemetery

Volume 2, Issue 3

Fall/Winter
2009/2010

401 Taylor Street, Lynchburg, Virginia 24501 ~ 434-847-1465 ~ www.gravegarden.org



Notes from the Gravegarden



I prefer winter and fall, when you feel the bone structure of the landscape—the loneliness of it, the dead feeling of winter. Something waits beneath it, the whole story doesn't show. ~ Andrew Wyeth

If you are a regular visitor to the Old City Cemetery you know that each season is special and the grounds are known for something unique during that time of year. For instance, spring definitely belongs to our antique daffodils and roses, summer is a great time to visit our Butterfly Garden and Lotus Pond, the brilliant colors of the sugar maples in the Confederate Section are a must-see during autumn, and the starkness of winter brings out a beauty here unlike any other time. In fact, we have heard from many visitors (and a staff member or two) that winter is their favorite season to be in the Cemetery, and it is easy to see why. Take a moment to walk on the grounds and run your fingers across the cold marble of a tombstone or stare at the bare branches of the many trees silhouetted against the gray sky, and you will see there is a quiet splendor here that you just can't find anywhere else in the city. Well, almost quiet.

If you happen to venture to the Cemetery between now and early February you will

(continued on back)



Monuments in the Confederate Section after the snowstorm on December 18th, 2009



An unusual animal (hawk?) print in the snow

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From the Director

By Bruce Christian, Executive Director

In the annual appeal letter we sent out in November I tried to express our sense of thankfulness through what has been a very difficult year. Old City Cemetery continues to thrive even in these perilous times of uncertainty. A large part of our success is because of all of you who love these grounds and visit, bring others, and help spread the word. We are very grateful for your continued affection and support of the Cemetery.

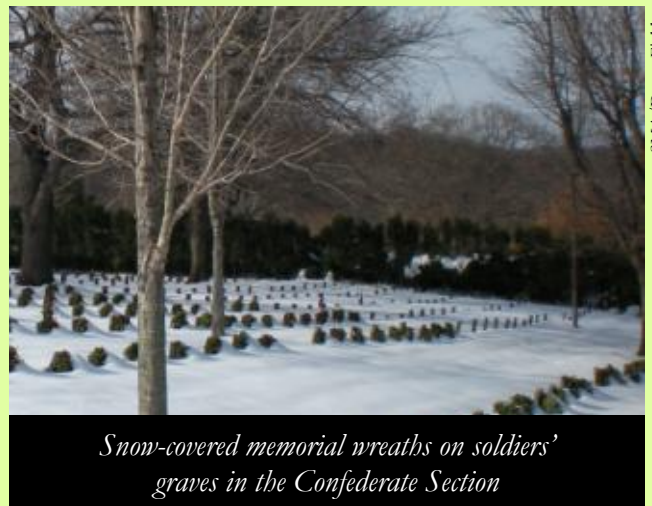


Representative Bob Goodlatte addresses the Veterans Memorial Dedication Ceremony

While we are normally supposed to be in a quieter time, this year we have lots of activity. We have had two beautifully moving events in conjunction with the Blue Ridge Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. On Veterans Day we dedicated a new permanent Veterans Memorial. We were honored to have Rep. Goodlatte and Del. Cline participate. The weather was miserable but everyone's spirits were high. In December we again were a host site for the Wreaths Across America ceremony. There were about 170 people in attendance on a cold Saturday. More than 500 red-bowed fresh green wreaths were placed and will be on the graves through the end of January.

We are also more than halfway through our major renovation/expansion to the Cemetery Center. It is very exciting to see the changes each day even if the hammering, sawing, and grinding seem to never end. When all is complete, Old City Cemetery will have a secure archival storage vault, a new reading room, an inviting vestibule, and two new upper level offices. We keep telling ourselves it is worth the noise and inconvenience.

Please take a look at our website (www.gravegarden.org) to check out the 2010 Calendar of Events. It took the front and back of the rack card to list everything we have planned. The new year is full of exciting programs and opportunities to learn something new about this old place. In lieu of our annual Garden Symposium we will have multiple events throughout the year associated with the Pollinator Series. In 2010 we will be celebrating our 15th Annual Antique Rose Festival with an expanded program.



Snow-covered memorial wreaths on soldiers' graves in the Confederate Section

As you can see, there is no moss growing on Old City Cemetery. Please make plans to come frequently during the year. Thank you for all you do to make everything possible. We could not do it without your help and continued interest as we continue to "Keep the Old City Cemetery Alive."

Horticultural Highlights

By Laurie Jamerson
Historic Grounds Supervisor

The lack of deciduous foliage gives way to new and interesting views as you travel the Cemetery road loop. The statue of Saint Francis looms above a hill covered with cream colored blades of winter orchard grass. The low winter sun changes the dried grass color to radiate hues of golden rust. The white blanket remaining from the first snow takes over the shaded Old Potter's Field behind Saint Francis and creates a different contrast from his normal presence among the hellebore.

There were still roses blooming sporadically before snow started falling in the late afternoon hours on the 18th of December. During the past eight or nine weeks there have been many nights with temperatures dipping below freezing, but these hardy antique roses weren't intimidated into dormancy. These are the ones you will want to check out at the annual Antique Rose Festival in May. Horticulturist Kaye Moomaw has worked to tidy up the unbelievable fall growth on wayward rose branches after a dry spring and summer. The last full bloom on Pink Summer Snow (how appropriately named!) is now ice-coated above the lingering remnants of the previous week's snow, defying all our gardening rules about winter.

The robins heading south had a feeding frenzy on the abundant ruby red fruit of the dogwood trees and violet beautyberry shrubs. There is still a brilliant display on the deciduous holly, red winterberry in the Shrub Garden. The dainty spider-like flowers on the winter and witch hazels should be coming into bloom soon. Glimpses of yellow jasmine blooms taunt the gray winter skies. The vista across the Cemetery picks up green hues from pine, fir and spruce along with a dash of bright red here and there. The Hicks descendants were the first to honor their family graves with poinsettias in November. The vivid display of red and green from the successful Wreaths Across America program can be seen throughout the grounds, and draws your eye to the final resting place of our many heroes within the grounds.

We hope you can make it by here to see some of the unique views the winter season offers here on the grounds. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy some of the photos I have taken over the past few weeks here at this gravegarden.



City of Lynchburg/Laurie Jamerson



City of Lynchburg/Laurie Jamerson



City of Lynchburg/Laurie Jamerson

Happenings...

As always, the latter part of 2009 was just as busy as the first. The Blessing of the Animals was held on October 4th and approximately 75 animals and their human friends attended the event. Thanks to the area Episcopal clergy and the Lynchburg Humane Society for all of their help in making it such a successful day. The Episcopal clergy also held the annual All Hallows Eve ceremony at the Chapel for the fourth year. This is always a popular alternative to other area Halloween events and, as usual, was well attended. One new program this year was the Victorian Ornaments Workshop, held on November 21st. Mary Kathryn McIntosh taught participants how to make Christmas ornaments popular during the mid-to-late 1800's. Two other events that honored the veterans buried on our grounds were also successful—the dedication of a new Veterans Memorial in the Shrub Garden and our second annual Wreaths Across America ceremony. But our biggest event of the season was the second annual Candlelight Tours, held over five nights in October. Professional actors portrayed and told stories about citizens buried in the Cemetery. Even though rain plagued most of the dates, many performances were sold-out. If you happened to miss your chance to see this amazing program, the DVD of the 2009 Candlelight Tours is now available for \$15 and can be purchased on our website or in our gift shop. It includes all seven performances, a program, and footage of the reception area.

Thanks again to all who participated and helped make the programs of 2009 such a great success!



A family waits to have their dog blessed

LHS / Sandy Boydston



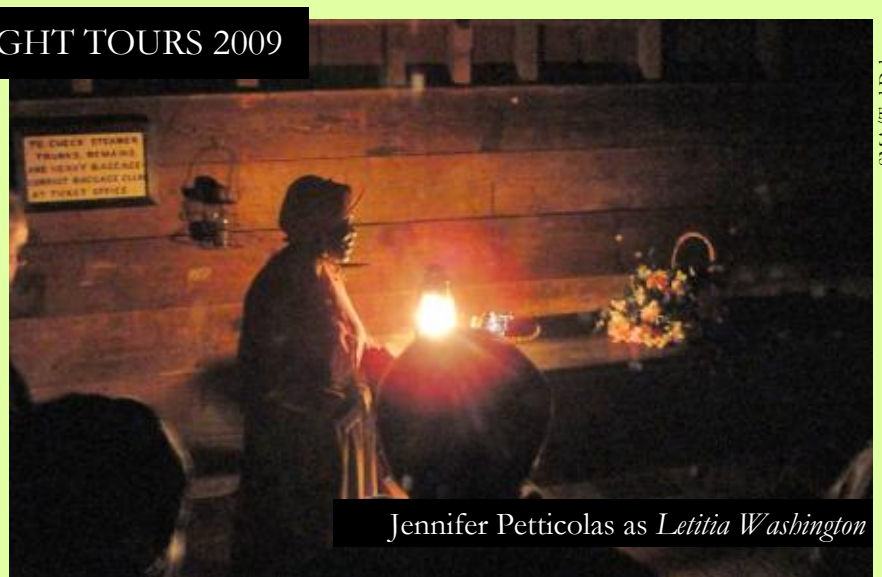
2009 Victorian Ornaments Workshop

SMA / Ted Delaney

CANDLELIGHT TOURS 2009



Leah Alfieri as Nurse



Jennifer Petticolas as Letitia Washington

SMA / Ted Delaney

SMA / Ted Delaney

A Couple of New Additions...

New Construction at the Cemetery Center

On October 7th the Southern Memorial Association (SMA) officially broke ground on a new construction and renovation project at the Old City Cemetery's main office building and visitors center (the "Cemetery Center"). The project includes construction of:

- Small (640 sq. ft. total), two-story addition to the Center to provide new office and meeting space
- Archival storage vault (145 sq. ft.) in the lower level of the existing building to provide proper security and climate control for rare books and artifacts in SMA collections
- Reading room (480 sq. ft.) in memory of the late Lynchburg educator Edith Brooks Lee (1907–2007)

The new construction and renovation work is being completed by C. L. Lewis & Company of Lynchburg and John S. Vincent Custom Building, under the direction of project manager Daniel Dixon. The project is expected to be finished in February 2010.

The majority of the project is generously funded by the Estates of Edith Brooks Lee and Dr. Robert Morrison, the late Eleanor Taylor, and the SMA.

For Our Veterans

On Veterans Day, November 11th, the Cemetery dedicated a new Veterans Memorial, located at the entrance of the Earley Memorial Shrub Garden. The cast-iron, 19th-century dye pot has been fashioned into a planter, which now holds a colorful array of pansies. The Memorial was generously paid for by the Blue Ridge Chapter, NSDAR and is inscribed "In Memory of Our Veterans." The Memorial honors the over 2,300 veterans buried in the Old City Cemetery.



Pictured above, top to bottom: Roofers endured bitterly cold temperatures while installing the standing-seam tin roof over the new addition in December; a view of the monolithic concrete ceiling of the archival storage vault on the day it was poured; the Veterans Memorial.

Curator's Corner

By Ted Delaney, Archivist & Curator

Following up on Candlelight Tours...

For those who saw our Candlelight Tours this past fall, you may remember the midwife scene in the Columbarium. It was written by visiting author Quintan Wikswo and titled "We Have a Report of the Birth of Your Child." At the time of the tours, no one knew what had happened to Beulah Mae and Robert Cheatham after receiving the infamous letter from State Registrar of Vital Statistics Walter Plecker. New research is beginning to answer our questions about what happened to the Cheathams, and an interesting postscript to the story is emerging.

Robert Cheatham's death certificate records that he died of "general paralysis of the insane" and broncho-pneumonia on 15 December 1931 at Western State Hospital in Staunton, Virginia. Perhaps ironically the Cheatham family midwife, Mary Willie Gildon, was admitted to the same institution about six months later after "gradually losing her mind" and requiring round-the-clock supervision. She died there in 1933.

Robert Cheatham's death certificate indicates he was buried in the Western State Hospital Cemetery.

Robert's widow Beulah Mae remained in Lynchburg until the 1950's. She raised their five sons alone and worked several jobs to support the family. According to city directories, her last occupation was waitress at the Trailways Bus Terminal on Fifth Street. In 1955 Beulah Mae moved to Huntsville, Alabama, to live with one of her children, where she died in 1957. One day we hope to track down the descendants of Beulah Mae and Robert. I'm sure they will have a great story to tell.

★ ★ ★

Mrs. Beulah Ross

A funeral for Mrs. Beulah Cheatham Ross, 82, of 11203 Crestfield Dr. SE, will be at 2 p. m. Sunday at Laughlin-Service Chapel.

Burial will be in Shiloh Cemetery.

Mrs. Ross died Thursday in Huntsville Hospital.

Survivors include her husband, Elbert Ross; five sons, Russell Cheatham, Frank Cheatham, James Cheatham, John Cheatham and Raymond Cheatham, three brothers, two sisters, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1 PLACE OF DEATH		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS STATE BOARD OF HEALTH		27542
COUNTY OF _____	MAJESTERIAL DISTRICT OF _____	OR	INC. TOWN OF _____	OR
CITY OF _____	REGISTRATION DISTRICT NO. 2070	REGISTERED NO. 347	(TO BE INSERTED BY REGISTRAR)	(FOR USE BY LOCAL REGISTRAR)
(If death occurred in a hospital or other institution, give the NAME instead of street and number)	(NO. _____)	(NAME OF HOSPITAL ST. _____)	(WARD _____)	
2 FULL NAME <u>Robert H. Cheatham</u>		(A) RESIDENCE, NO. _____ BY _____ WARD _____		
(Usual place of abode)		Lynchburg, Va.		
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred 0 yrs. 8 mos. 5 ds.		How long in U. S., if of foreign birth? yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds.		
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS				
3 SEX <u>Male</u>	4 COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED <u>Married</u>	16 DATE OF DEATH (MONTH, DAY, AND YEAR, WITH NAME OF MONTH) <u>December 16 1931</u>	
6A IF MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED HUSBAND OF <u>unknown</u>	6 DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH, DAY, AND YEAR, WRITE NAME OF MONTH) <u>Sept. 22, 1892</u>		17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, THAT I ATTENDED DECEASED FROM <u>April 10 1931</u> TO <u>Dec 16 1931</u> THAT I LAST SAW HIM ALIVE OR <u>Dec 16 1931</u>	
7 AGE <u>39</u> YEARS <u>2</u> MONTHS <u>23</u> DAYS	8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED (A) TRADE, PROFESSION, OR PARTICULAR KIND OF WORK <u>Carpenter</u>		AND THAT DEATH OCCURRED, ON DATE STATED ABOVE, AT <u>7:00 a.m.</u> THE CAUSE OF DEATH WAS AS FOLLOWS: <u>General Paralysis of the Insane</u>	
9 BIRTHPLACE (CITY OR TOWN) <u>Appomattox Co. Va.</u>	(STATE OR COUNTRY) <u>Va.</u>		18 WHERE WAS DISEASE CONTRACTED IF NOT AT PLACE OF DEATH? <u>unknown</u>	
10 NAME OF FATHER <u>unknown</u>	11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (CITY OR TOWN) <u>Appomattox Co. Va.</u>		(DURATION) <u>unknown</u>	
(STATE OR COUNTRY) <u>Va.</u>	12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>unknown</u>		19 DID AN OPERATION PRECEDE DEATH? <u>No</u> DATE OF _____	
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (CITY OR TOWN) <u>Appomattox Co. Va.</u>	(STATE OR COUNTRY) <u>Va.</u>		WAS THERE AN AUTOPSY? <u>No</u>	
14 INFORMANT <u>J. J. Fulton</u>	(ADDRESS) <u>Staunton, Va.</u>		WHAT TEST CONFIRMED DIAGNOSIS? <u>See 16, 18, 19 (address) J. J. Fulton, Staunton, Va.</u>	
15 FILED <u>Dec. 31, 1931</u>	REGISTRAR		18 PLACE OF BURIAL, CREMATION, OR RE: DATE OF BURIAL <u>W. S. Hospital Cemetery Dec. 17, 1931</u>	
	19 UNDERTAKER <u>W. S. Hospital</u>		ADDRESS <u>Staunton, Va.</u>	

Top: Beulah Mae's obituary in the 1957 Huntsville Times newspaper; Right: death certificate for Robert Cheatham. Note the cause of death under #17.

2010 Pollinator Series

It seems that even though most of us have heard of the impending pollinator crisis, the decline of the honeybee, and the death of hundreds of thousands of bats due to the white-nosed fungus, we still don't fully understand the vital importance of various pollinators to our survival, how we have contributed much to their decline, and that it is not too late to do something to reverse it. For most people, pollen means allergies, bees mean stings, and bats are something that are just plain scary. Actually, out of all pollinators, it seems the butterfly is the only one that gets any respect from humans. Thus, the 2010 Old City Cemetery Pollinator Series was born!

Throughout the year, the Cemetery will have informative, yet fun, programs about all sorts of pollinators and how they contribute much more to our world than just honey. The goal of this series is to show people of all ages the importance of these creatures and how we can help them in small, easy ways in our day-to-day activities.

Check out our website for a complete description of all of these events or pick up a copy of the new 2010 Old City Cemetery Pollinator Series Brochure for more information.

Pollinators

at *Old City
Cemetery:*

**A Year-Long
Garden Series**

Coming in 2010...



Upcoming Calendar of Events

February 20th

Maple Syrup Tapping

By tapping the Cemetery's great sugar maples, participants will learn how sap is made into syrup and the importance of pollinators in the process. Meet at Confederate Section. 10 a.m. Free.

April 20th

Garden Day in Lynchburg

May 2 - 8

Rose Festival Week

Celebrate the Antique Rose Festival's 15th Anniversary with week-long activities including workshops, lectures, and walking tours—all leading up to the festival on Saturday, May 8th, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

May 30

Confederate Memorial Day Service

*Sponsored by Kirkwood Otey
Chapter No. 10, UDC
Period dress encouraged
Meet at Confederate Section. 3 p.m.*

May 31

Memorial Day Bird Walk and Count

Join members of the Lynchburg Bird Club as they continue their tally of species sightings during this period of peak bird population. Bring binoculars. Meet at Gatehouse. 8:30 a.m.

(continued from front)

notice (and hear!) lots of construction activity happening at the Cemetery Center. Check out page 5 of this newsletter to see what we are adding. We invite you to drive by anytime and take a look.

While you are on the grounds, be sure to swing by the Cemetery Center and pick up our new Diuguid Burial Records brochure. This pamphlet introduces visitors to the Diuguid Digital Archive, which can be accessed through the Cemetery's website at www.gravegarden.org/diuguid. A rare intact archive of a single American mortuary—Diuguid Funeral Home of Lynchburg—the Diuguid records provide a uniquely complete demographic portrait of Lynchburg between 1820 and 1950. Access to the Archive is free.

Hope to see you here in 2010. There is so much more to come!

Date	Description	Amount
1894	Feb 5 For Cedar, Copper Casket & Burial of Self	350 00
" 21	Wreck to Spring Hill	84 00
" 24	Flowers for Bedress	6 00
"	Embalming Body	10 00
"	Decorating Grave	47 00
		<hr/>
		497 00
Apr 30 th	By Check of Leabell Early Adm	497 00

Above: A scan of General Jubal Anderson Early's burial record taken from the Diuguid Digital Archive. This record is one of 78,000 individual burial or funeral records available on the Cemetery's website.

Old City Cemetery
401 Taylor Street
Lynchburg, VA 24501

