



OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation
Foundation

OAK HILL CEMETERY

3001 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007
Telephone: 202-337-2835
Fax: 202-337-6481
www.oakhillcemeterydc.org
Email: info@oakhillcemeterydc.org

Cemetery Hours

Office and Grounds:
M - F 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
Saturday 11:00 am - 4:00 pm
Sunday 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
(Weekends and holidays walk-in gate only,
no drive-in access. Gates will close, weather
permitting. Please observe visiting tips at
front entrance)

Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation Board of Directors

George G. Hill, President
L. Richard Fischer, Vice President
Judi Cochran, Treasurer
Darla Jackson, Secretary
Thomas E. Crocker
Clift A. Seferlis
Michael R. Weaver
David W. Jackson, Executive Director
Laura Hackfeld, Office Host and
Social Media Director

Oak Hill Cemetery Board of Managers

George G. Hill, President
David C. de Vicq, Vice President
Loretta Castaldi, Treasurer
Patricia Berl, Secretary
David W. Jackson, Superintendent



From the President

Dear Friends of Oak Hill,

The Oak Hill Cemetery has continued its positive progress. Our prayers go to all who have been injured or suffered losses during the pandemic. We have remained available as a community resource, both as an operating cemetery and as an historic garden landscape for everyone to visit. Two of our outdoor employees experienced Covid illness, fortunately not with severe symptoms, and have recovered completely, we believe.

We made several office staffing changes in January and have worked to incorporate new cloud based tools to modernize and protect our recordkeeping systems. We are grateful to those who have helped our efforts.

In January we were given nine months' notice by Superintendent Dave Jackson of his intention to retire after almost ten years of service. Dave and Darla were kind enough to give ample time for us to find worthy replacements. After a thorough process of resume gathering and interviews, we are pleased to announce that the Fourteenth Superintendent of Oak Hill will be Paul Williams. Paul is currently the President at the Congressional Cemetery on Capitol Hill. He is eminently qualified. Dave brought a greater level of management sophistication to us, and we improved our governance on many fronts. We are extraordinarily grateful for his service. Although we are very sorry to see Dave and Darla depart, we look forward to Paul's fresh examination of our practices and his wealth of experience. Please say thank you to Dave and Darla and welcome Paul and Greg.

Over the past few months, Rico and Ernesto have continued to work on reconstruction in many areas of Oak Hill, particularly in the Chapel Valley area. Last year they rebuilt the path parallel to and closest to R Street and reset the nearby monuments. In January they repaired a lovely Celtic cross below Reno Hill. In conjunction with their work Jorge, Abraham, Jose and Scott also seeded and sodded, laid irrigation line, repaired multiple hydrants, and planned and plotted their improvements for Oak Hill. The grounds have been consistently beautiful this year, cicadas notwithstanding! Major drainage and irrigation work has been finished in Chapel Valley that will enable path and step reconstruction projects for years to come. All tasks were accompanied while pruning, leafing and mowing as usual. In addition, these gentlemen are supporting the ongoing construction of a new mausoleum near the base of Reno Hill. The latest work has rebuilt a set of steps descending from the R Street path, while resetting adjacent monuments. Gutter has been laid from a new plaza below the Renwick Chapel sloping north and westwards towards the Bodisco Monument, and soon further towards the main intersection. Seven new cremation niches will be available at the plaza. Four new double deep casket burial sites will be available nearby. Dozens of cremation burial plots will be made available on the long path near R Street. Many monuments have been reset along the new gutter, and more will be done, including the once stunning Baldachin Memorial to Dolley Madison Cutts. We believe we are demonstrating a sustainable pattern of maintenance and improvement.

continues on page 2

From the President *continued*

We have now finished the repair and installation of seven sections of the historic Bigelow Iron Fence along "R" Street. In June we visited Krug and Sons in Baltimore to coordinate with our general contractor Lorton Stone to see progress on the next five sections. Each section will cost about \$25,000. Please help! We hope the next five or six sections will soon be finished and installed.

We have undertaken major tree maintenance and fallen branch and tree removal. Some minor damage has occurred, but much healthy pruning has been achieved. Thank You, Mark Meher!

Our finances continue to improve. We benefited from a strong investment portfolio, generous donors and demand for burial and cremation spaces. It is probable that Oak Hill had one of its most positive financial years ever despite the terrible pandemic and not because of it. We thank all of you who share our vision of this cemetery as an eternal home for our friends and relatives and as a resource for our community.

Please come visit and see all that has been achieved.

Dog Day will be held September 25. Please come visit Vinnie on his last day as reigning mascot.

Thank you,



George G. Hill, President
Oak Hill Cemetery Historic Preservation Foundation

2021 Treasurer's Report by Loretta Castaldi

Oak Hill Cemetery finished the fiscal year ending April 30, 2021 in stable financial condition with a positive bottom line from operations. On the last day of FY 2020, the Federal Government loaned funds to us through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to subsidize payroll in the early part of FY 2021. Although the PPP funds were loaned to us, the government will forgive the loan if we meet certain employee retention criteria. Oak Hill met the criteria and the loan administrator advised that our application for loan forgiveness will be accepted in August 2021. In addition, Oak Hill Cemetery borrowed funds through the Federal government's Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program at very favorable terms. The EIDL funds were used for two "shovel-ready" projects: the on-going fence restoration project and tree trimming. Also in FY 2021, Oak Hill Cemetery received a small Covid-relief grant from the District of Columbia.

Our employees continued revamping and resetting stone walkways, most notably in the Chapel Valley and Reno Hill sections. Because the engineering and labor were done by in-house personnel, the out-of-pocket cost was minimal. Revamping the walkways afforded the opportunity to develop approximately 100 new burial sites to add to our inventory.

Finally, Oak Hill continued to contribute the regularly scheduled, inflation adjusted installment to the reserve fund. The goal of the reserve fund is to create an endowment that will allow the cemetery to operate for at least a century after sales cease.

OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter



Superintendent's Message by Dave Jackson

To me, this year's hot weather has been extraordinary. Although there is some damage in the cemetery, the grounds staff has restored some long abandoned irrigation lines that enable us to put water in places that for many years have gone without supplemental hydration. Scott Staples has set up a pattern of high efficiency hose and sprinkler stations that are distributing the water in places like North Hill, the Corcoran Section, and Reno Hill. In the past year we have planted a significant amount of grass seed in those areas and the added water is really helping the newer grass to survive. A few more weeks and we will be out of this difficult time of year, but in the meantime, there are more sprinklers than we have had in many years. We have had some tree damage in the heat. Several fallen limbs and an entire old Hickory tree on North Hill recently have come down. It seems that all of this is due to deterioration of older trees exacerbated by the very high temps. Oh, the dog days of summer!

Speaking of Dog Day, we have scheduled a Dog Day event for Saturday, September 25th from 8AM to Noon. I hope our neighbors will bring their furry friends to Oak Hill for that day. We will have plenty of water bowls set in strategic places around the cemetery. This is the first time in over a year we've had a Dog Day so please plan to come. It is great fun for all!

As you may know, Lois Brown has left to accept a job with the Montgomery County Parks Department in their Development Department. Lois is a Montgomery County resident and is a true development professional. She will do well in her new post. We wish her well. I made two changes to fill the void, one is that Laura Hackfeld has moved from working just weekends to being in the office Tuesday through Sunday as our Office Host, to maintain our donor software and assist with some of the data entry and clerical work. She has a great attitude and loves the cemetery. If you haven't met

her, stop by and say hello! I also engaged Andrea McCants for accounting work in our QuickBooks system. Andrea is a CPA with a number of clients in the area. She will come in once a week or so to keep us up to speed on accounting records.

An attractive mausoleum has been constructed by the Biddle family on Reno Hill near Central Avenue and the Middleton Circle. It can be seen from Central Avenue as you drive either east or west. One of the monument dealers that work regularly in Oak Hill, Kline Memorials, worked with Rock of Ages, a national mausoleum and quarry company, to design and build the structure. It is an attractive addition to the cemetery. Another mausoleum is in the final stages of design for a Cross Avenue site. Another on Cross Avenue is in the very preliminary design stage. And yet one more additional structure on Cross Avenue is being considered. As you can see, families are choosing Oak Hill as a final resting place with regularity. With a variety of spaces for cremation interments, casket interments, and even mausoleum sites, the cemetery is well positioned to execute its "Continuing to Serve" mantra in the future.

Now speaking of the future, I am retiring from Oak Hill as its Superintendent. My last day will be Friday, October 1, 2021. A friend and fellow cemeterian (he has managed Congressional Cemetery for the past nine years), Paul Williams, will succeed me as the fourteenth Superintendent. He and his husband Greg will move into the Gatehouse shortly after Darla and I leave. Please welcome Paul Williams into his new position.

It has been a pleasure to serve at Oak Hill for nine years. I thank the Board of Managers for allowing me to be here and for working with me to create so many positive things during my tenure. Secretaries Marisa Bourgojn, and Patricia Berl, her successor, added experience and perspective to our discussions;



OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter

Treasurer Loretta Castaldi lent a steady hand on our finances and has acted as a personal confidant on many important issues. Vice President David de Vicq has provided unmatched and very necessary guidance throughout my tenure. I learned more about civil engineering and construction than I ever thought I would. His contributions to the cemetery are immeasurable. I have been especially fortunate to have had the benefit of his friendship and I thank him immensely. Finally, President George Hill took office just as I came aboard. He has been terrific! George has proved to be an extraordinary leader, jumping in on a matter from time to time when necessary, but for the most part, allowing me to make my way through the day to day operations of the cemetery. Thank you, George, so very much. I thank them all for their support!

Not to be left out, I want to recognize the staff. The Grounds Manager, Scott Staples has added a great perspective on the horticultural needs of Oak Hill. The Groundsmen, Jorge Robles, Abraham Mejia, and Jose Guzman (Jose has been here 29 years!) have all been great to work with. The Construction Arm of the crew, Rico Araujo and Ernesto Torres, do incredible work throughout our property. David de Vicq has trained them to a point where they are handling tasks like remounting memorial stones, restoring drainage systems, repairing erosion damage to our hills, paths, and terraces with professional skill and on their own initiative. David says he really hasn't done any engineering for them for some time. They do it themselves, solving drainage and construction

issues on their own. I am proud to say our already great staff has progressed all to the benefit of Oak Hill.

Finally, I must recognize my wife, Darla Pozell Jackson, for her part in this journey at Oak Hill. Her Aunt and Uncle, Ella and Joe Pozell, both served Oak Hill. I was introduced to Oak Hill through our visits to them in the early 2000s when we lived in Northern Virginia. It was Darla who urged me to consider coming to Oak Hill when Ella was retiring. Darla has acted as the face of Oak Hill in many community activities, and it is Darla who has provided continuing counsel and support over these past nine years. I would not have been here without her and I would not have had whatever accomplishment I may claim absent her presence. I am blessed to have her as my wife.

So there you have it. This has been a great nine-year ride that was so much fun and so rewarding. Darla and I will move to Florence, Alabama in October where we have family and a pleasant little cottage in which to reside. Fishing, golf and whatever are in my future and I am looking forward to it. But I look fondly back at Oak Hill and always will. Oh yes, this will be our last "forwarding address" (to steal some words from Paul Williams) so we will be seeing all of you again, someday.

Come visit Oak Hill!!

Biddle Mausoleum Nearing Completion

A private family mausoleum is being constructed by the Biddle family on the north side of Reno Hill near Central Avenue and the Middleton Circle area. The mausoleum, crafted by Rock of Ages under the direction of Rick Burroughs at Kline Memorials, is a classically designed eight crypt structure made of Barre Vermont Grey Granite with columns and pilasters. The structure features custom bronze doors, a stained glass window and custom bas relief design at the front. When complete, this mausoleum will be an attractive addition to Oak Hill Cemetery.



Rick Burroughs at the bronze doors of the Biddle Mausoleum.



Biddle Mausoleum front.



Biddle Mausoleum side and rear.



Biddle Mausoleum from the side.



OAK HILL CEMETERY Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter

Bigelow Iron Fence Update

Our fence project, like everything else, has been affected by the pandemic. Five sections of the fence removed last Spring have yet to be reinstalled to their original position. Krug & Sons has run into a three problems, two of them materials issues and the third is a labor issue. Turns out that Tinemic paint for the restored fence panels has not been available for some time. It is just now being made available so that it can be put on the restored pieces of the fence. There is also an issue regarding

the bottom rails of some fence sections being unrepairable without significant effort. A solution has been worked out to replace the broken rails with a modern steel rail that will be modified to appear in the same shape as the old rail. Each of the steel rails will have to be drilled to accept the bottom of the pickets that fit into them, not an easy task. Krug has been working on the fence pieces for some time as the pictures show. Now that the materials seem to be more available, the work



Holly Wendler filling pits and holes at Krug Shop in Baltimore.



Pits and holes in finials.

OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter



should begin to progress in a more timely manner. Everyone received a letter earlier this year regarding a matching gift from the Kaempfer family that will be used to restore the Bigelow Iron Fence. The Kaempfer gift is an annual gift each year for five years that we will use to solicit matching funds. The letter was a success and the matching gifts oversubscribed the match amount of the Kaempfers' \$25,000. In other words that single effort generated \$50,000 towards the restoration of the Bigelow Iron

Fence! Thank you to the Kaempfer family and all those who jumped in to make the match! We will recognize each individual gift in our annual donor issue shortly after the first of next year.

If you get the chance, come by the cemetery at the main gate at 30th and R Street to look at the five fence sections that have been restored. They are evident by their green color, the green that will be used on the rest of the fence at it is restored. The new sections are beautiful!



Bottom of pickets ready for sandblasting.



Bottom of a post that has been sandblasted. Welding repairs to come!



FALL DOG DAY 2021



Vinny the Wonder Dog

Saturday, September 25 8:00am - 12Noon
Bring your pups to mascot Vinny the Wonder Dog's last
opportunity to host Dog Day! All dogs welcome, lots of
water dishes all around! Donations are welcome!





OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter

The Superintendents by Dave Jackson

Friday, August 27th was a historic day at Oak Hill Cemetery. Ella Pozell was here that week working in the office with me on a redesign of the cemetery map that hangs in the office. The redesign was a very much needed project to record all the burial spaces added in the cemetery over the past few years. We have records of the new spaces, and the burials within them. We just needed to mark them on a map of the cemetery so that visitors can find them. This is the first time the map has been updated since 1998 so the number of newly shown spaces numbers in the hundreds. Ella has worked hard using her extensive knowledge of Oak Hill to accurately show the changes on the updated map.

I asked Paul Williams to come over on August 27th so we could make of picture of all of us together. So here is the picture, "The Superintendents" showing the three of us at the grave site of Joseph Pozell, who served as Superintendent from 1984 until his untimely death in 2005. Ella Pozell served as Superintendent from 2005 until 2012. I have served as Superintendent from 2012 to 2021. Paul Williams will take over as Superintendent in October 2021 and will be here for many years to come!





OAK HILL CEMETERY Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter

The Remaining Blaines by Laura Hackfeld

An antique stereoview recently acquired by Oak Hill Cemetery shows the cemetery filled with mourners for the funeral service of James G. Blaine on January 30, 1893. This thrilling new view of our historic cemetery makes an excellent addition to our growing collection of stereoviews, and gives us the chance to introduce some current 'residents' of Oak Hill, along with some deserters!

James Gillespie Blaine was a famous Mainer who served in a variety of political appointments here in DC: first elected to Maine's House of Representatives in 1858, and then elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1863. Blaine served as Speaker of the House from 1869-1875. He was appointed by Maine's Governor Connor to fill a vacant Senate seat in 1876, and upon the election of President Garfield in 1880 was appointed to Secretary of State in 1881. Blaine was strolling with President Garfield at the time of his assassination, and resigned his position as Secretary following Garfield's death and President Chester Arthur's inauguration. During the 1884 Republican National Convention, James Blaine won the nomination to run for president against

Democrat Grover Cleveland, and lost by one-quarter of a percent of the votes. Taking some time off, Blaine reappeared in political life after endorsing Benjamin Harrison for president. Following his election, Harrison offered Blaine the seat he held once before: Secretary of State. Blaine returned to this office in 1889. This made James G. Blaine the first man to serve as Secretary of State under three different presidents, and was an extremely recognizable figure at the time.

Upon Blaine's reappointment as Secretary of State, President Harrison appointed Blaine's oldest son, Walker Blaine, as Solicitor of the Department of State. Educated at Yale and Columbia Law School, Walker had previously worked alongside his father under Garfield's administration as Third Assistant Secretary of State in 1881. Following a special diplomatic mission to Chile, and his father's resignation following Garfield's assassination, new President Chester Arthur appointed Walker Blaine to be the assistant counsel of the United States for the Court of Commissioners of Alabama Claims. Walker Blaine held this office until the court dissolved in 1886, and

practiced law in Chicago until his father's reappointment to Secretary of State, and his own subsequent appointment as Solicitor.

Walker Blaine suddenly fell ill with the flu after attending a reception in honor of Mrs. Gen. Grant on a Thursday evening in early 1890. A doctor was called, and his loving family expected him to recover quickly. Walker even sat up to greet a group of friends who visited the following Monday evening



Blaine Historic

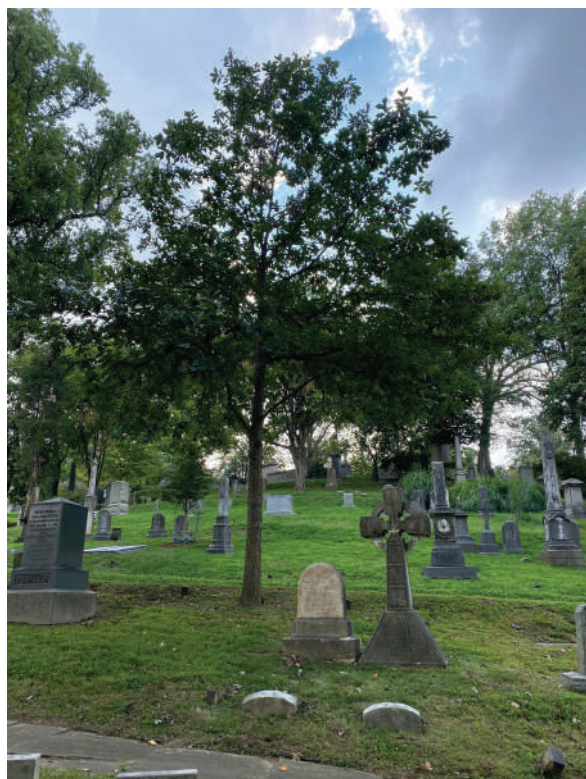
OAK HILL CEMETERY

Historic Preservation Foundation Newsletter



with laughter and conversation, promising to be better soon. However, the very next day (Tuesday), doctors discovered that young Blaine had also contracted pneumonia, which tragically caused him to experience delirium and high fever. The Blaine family, now realizing the seriousness of his condition, called for their family to come and say their goodbyes. Walker unfortunately passed away the next day, January 15, 1890, with his sisters at his bedside, at the age of 34.

The Blaine family was entirely devastated and completely shocked at the loss of their beloved son and brother. James G. Blaine was especially hurt by the loss of his son and right-hand man. Word of Walker's death spread quickly around town, and that very night, President and Mrs. Harrison called to pay their condolences to the family, along with Vice President Morton and his wife, members of the Maine delegation, two Justices of the Supreme Court and many others. The next day, January 16 1890,



Blaine Today

James G. Blaine visited Oak Hill Cemetery, and picked out a peaceful resting place for his son, overlooking Rock Creek. The funeral for Walker took place on January 18, 1890, in Oak Hill Lot 513 East.

Another unthinkable tragedy struck the Blaine family less than a month after the death of Walker. Blaine's oldest daughter, Alice Stanwood Blaine Coppinger, who had joined her family in DC from New York for Walker's funeral was taken horribly ill just two weeks after Walker was buried. Her quick decline seemingly stemmed from an illness she had overcome the previous December that had laid dormant and caused 'brain trouble' that eventually claimed her whole body. Alice Stanwood Blaine Coppinger, aged 29 years, passed away on February 2, 1890, leaving behind not only her parents and siblings, but her husband, Col. J.J. Coppinger and their two young sons, Blaine and Connor.

The day following Alice's death, on February 3 1890, James G. Blaine paid another visit to Oak Hill Cemetery, purchasing another plot, 512 East, right next to the plot where Walker was interred. While Alice was interred in 513 East, next to her brother Walker, James Blaine made his intentions clear: When he died, he was to be buried next to his son in the adjoining lot, under a large hickory tree. Mr. Blaine would continue living for three more years, until his passing on January 27, 1893. His wishes were honored on January 30, 1893, and his funeral at Oak Hill was documented within this amazing stereoview.

James G. Blaine and his wife, Harriet Stanwood Blaine lay resting in Oak Hill Cemetery for a while: until June 18, 1920, when their bodies were disinterred and reburied in Augusta, Maine. Brother and sister Walker Blaine and Alice Stanwood Blaine Coppinger still remain here: resting side by side overlooking Rock Creek, along with Alice's son Connor, who joined them in peace in 1975.



OAK HILL CEMETERY
Historic Preservation Foundation

3001 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20007-2923
Telephone: 202-337-2835
Fax: 202-337-6481
www.oakhillcemeterydc.org
Email: info@oakhillcemeterydc.org

Moving? Please email us a change of
address: info@oakhillcemeterydc.org

Keep Current Online
Facebook - @OakHillCemeteryDC
Twitter - @OakHill_DC
Instagram - @oak_hill_cemetery

Celebrating Over 170 Years!

Pre-Sort
First Class
US Postage
PAID
Suburban MD 208
Permit #1

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Ampitheater and Van Ness area circa 1872

