



SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Spring 2015 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

Beth Pickett, President
Sally Victor, Vice President
Barbara Surles, Secretary
Leslie Wolfenden, Treasurer
Danny Camacho
Dale Flatt
Megan Spencer
Bob Ward
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Mother's Day in Oakwood by Megan Spencer

Oakwood was the place to be on Saturday, May 9th for the Mother's Day tour. After days of rain, we were lucky when the weather cooperated and we saw a little sun and enjoyed some very pleasant temperatures. Six illustrious Texas women were portrayed by costumed actors. Four of the women were teachers, who became very successful in other careers, such as ranching and real estate. Annie Webb Blanton was appointed Superintendent of Education by Governor Hobby, making her the first woman to hold a statewide position. Lizzie Williams, a former teacher and bookkeeper, became the first woman to register her own cattle brand and drive cattle up the Chisholm Trail. Another Texan, Mary Rabb, lost a two-month-old son during the Runaway Scrape. She later lived with her husband and children in a log cabin on Barton Springs where they raised a sizeable number of cattle. Mary was not a teacher but she did give advice to the likes of Sam Houston! It is no wonder these Texas women will always be remembered.

We are very grateful for our wonderful actors. They brought these stories to life. Our sincere thanks go to

Karen Eshliman, Cat McGrath-Farmer, Beth Pickett, Amy Smith, Katia Peacher, and Marsha Roose. We will highlight other Texas women in future tours.



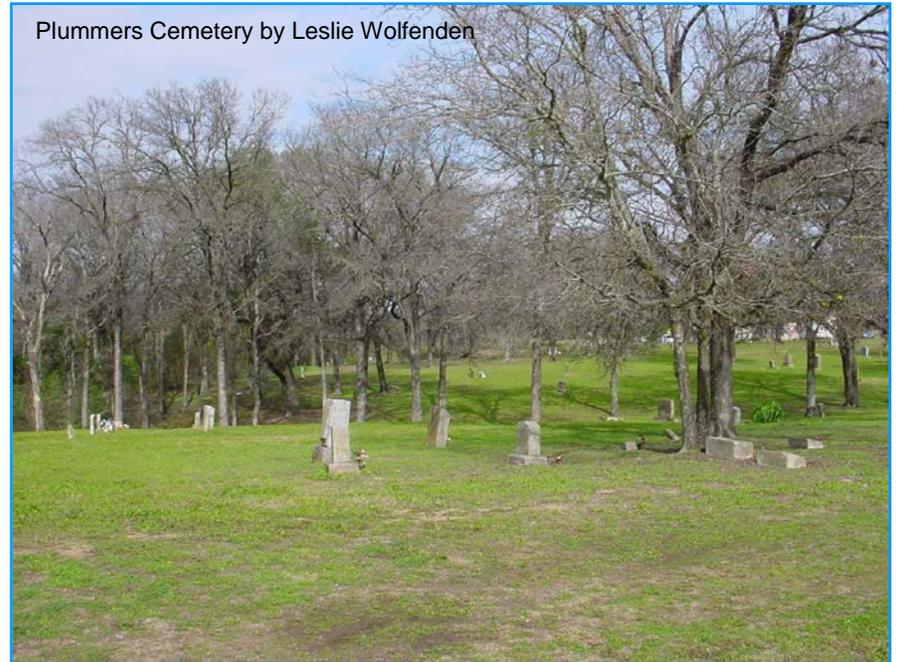
Mary Raab portrayed by Beth Pickett (by the Mohrlöks)

African American Cultural District link to Oakwood by Bob Ward

Save Austin's Cemeteries has been asked to provide assistance to the African-American Cultural Heritage District in their new project to increase awareness of local African-American cemeteries. These include not only the city owned cemeteries, but also private and/or historic cemeteries in the Austin/Travis County area. Dale Flatt and Bob Ward have attended two meetings at the district headquarters on San Bernard, meeting with Lisa Byrd, the executive director, Deone Wilhite and Sue Spears of Travis County Commissioner Ron Davis's office, and Creola Burns, a local historian/genealogist.

The first meeting introduced the participants and set up a rough outline for future meetings. The second meeting provided a more structural framework with a stated goal: To protect the cultural assets of African-Americans including the historic burial grounds. Oakwood, Evergreen, and Plummers cemeteries are all city-owned and are in the process of being under the auspices of the new city master-plan.

Bethany is a private cemetery founded by William Tears and John Holland in 1893 as an African-American cemetery. Not being part of the city system, it will not be affected by the city master-plan and is in need of care and protection. Sue Spears and Lisa Byrd are hoping to establish a cemetery association or use the cultural district's non-profit status to help secure the property. At present, participants in the Travis County Sheriff's office non-violent offenders program help maintain the site, but a more permanent arrangement is needed. Dale Flatt has shared with the team his extensive knowledge of the area's history and criteria for cemetery organization.



Plummers Cemetery by Leslie Wolfenden

One of the biggest obstacles to the African-American cemetery team agenda is the insufficient amount of information available to the community. This educational input is needed to inspire interest in the history and preservation of the African-American cemeteries in the area. In future meetings, we hope to develop a working plan to identify African-American cemeteries in the Austin area, address the needs of Bethany, and create educational programs focused on Oakwood and Evergreen cemeteries.

City of Austin's Cemetery Master Plan Update by Kim McKnight

Cemetery Master Plan featured in National Online Journal

All across the country, cities are evaluating how best to care for their historic municipal cemeteries. PARD is proud to be on the forefront of tackling the challenges inherently found in historic cemeteries and crafting new initiatives to help us better connect the Austin community to these beloved and important sites. The result of these efforts is a Historic Cemeteries Master Plan that will provide our city with an innovative approach to restoration and programming for these historic and sacred landscapes. The planning process has been featured prominently in local publications and most recently in the national online journal, Next City. To link to the story, please visit: <http://nextcity.org/features/view/how-to-live-in-the-city-of-the-dead>

Bringing our Cemeteries into the Digital Age

As part of the Historic Cemetery Master Plan, the master plan team conducted extensive mapping and completed a collection, analysis, and integration of geospatial data. In addition to the tree survey, features such as irrigation, hydrants, storm sewer entry points, structures, mausoleums and roads were integrated into the city's GIS system. The team also gathered, scanned, georeferenced, and digitized relevant information from historic maps and drawings of the historic cemeteries. This digitization process has provided the Cemetery Management team and Urban Forestry team with new tool for managing the cemeteries.

To better understand these processes, we invite you to view this interactive webmap, which can also be found through our website: <http://goo.gl/13tWnc>

Final Draft of Master Plan Complete

PARD is very pleased to share the final draft of Historic Cemeteries Master Plan with our community. Following a public review period, the Historic Cemeteries Master Plan was revised to incorporate a great deal of community input. PARD appreciates the community taking time to review the draft plan and share feedback, concerns and ideas. The revised plan will now be presented to Boards, Commissions, and City Council.

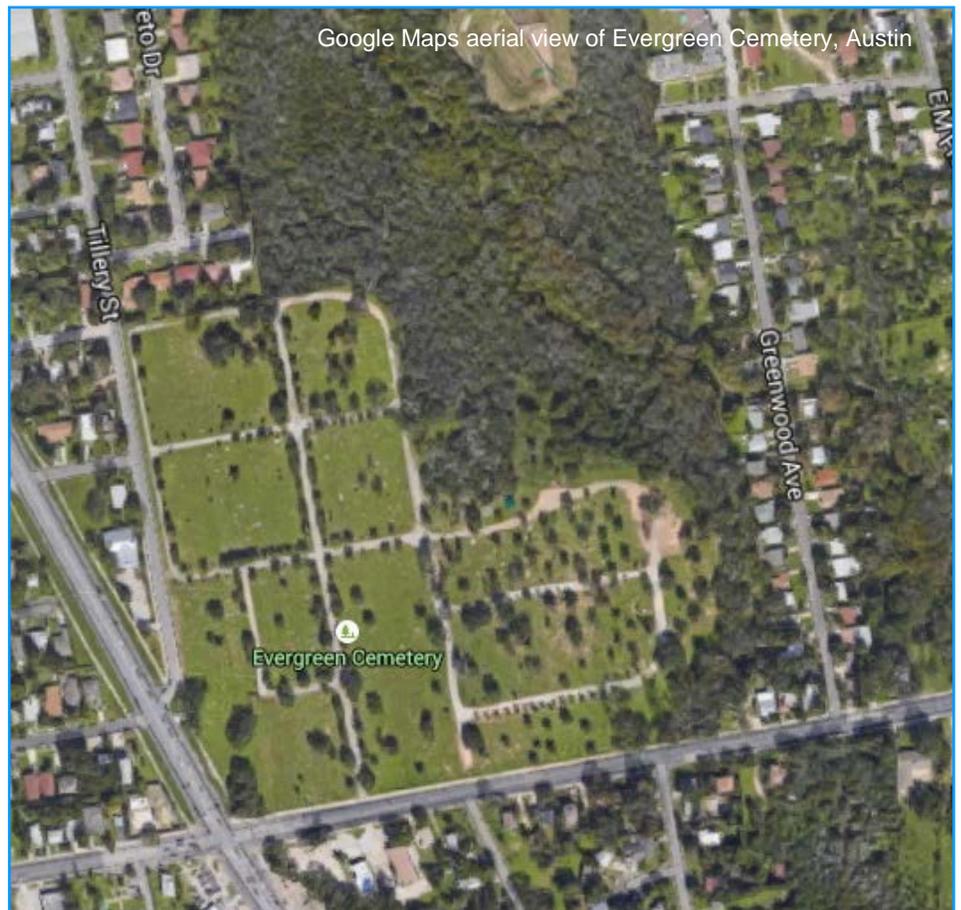
To view the revised master plan and to learn more information about the project history and process, you may go directly to the website: <http://www.austintexas.gov/cmp>

As active participants in the process, SAC is very pleased with the master plan and looks forward to its approval and implementation.

Saving Travis County Cemeteries One at a Time by Dale Flatt

The word cemetery means “a place that is used or intended to be used for interment and includes a graveyard, burial park, mausoleum, or any other area containing one or more graves.” There are over 230 cemeteries in Travis County! For many years now, the Travis County Historical Commission, Austin Genealogy Society, Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), and many individuals have been recording the locations of these sites. Many cemetery lists have been combined into one master list that will be platted on an updated county wide map. A computer folder is generated for each site where photos and scanned documents are placed. We are over 80% finished with this phase.

With the internet and tools like Google Earth, we can fly to a cemetery using a computer, rotate the view, get images from past years, and save these photos. We can search deeds and death certificates from the comfort of a chair. When we are done, we will end up with some nice history and solid documentation placed in several locations that will help historians and families for many years to come.



SAC Elections Coming in October by Megan Spencer

Mark your calendar for October 10. It is an odd numbered year! What does that mean? It means that is time to elect officers for Save Austin's Cemeteries. The present Board will offer a slate for officers: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.

You need to be a current member of Save Austin's Cemeteries in order to vote and to run for office. If you are not sure you are up to date on your dues, please contact SAC at info@sachome.org. If you have friends and family who are interested in the history of Austin and in preserving Austin's wonderful city cemeteries, please ask them to join...or give them a membership as a special gift!

Submit an Article to the SAC E-newsletter

If you would like to submit an article to the SAC e-newsletter, please send your article or idea to info@sachome.org.

SAC Board Meetings

SAC Board Meetings are the second Saturday of each month, typically at Oakwood Cemetery at 10:00am. If you are interested the city's cemeteries, please join us. Contact info@sachome.org to confirm the time and place.

Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events!

June 7	SAC Board Retreat
July 11	Speaker; Board Meeting
August	SAC 6 th annual Photo Contest
Oct. 3	Photo Documentation and One Grave at a Time starts again
Oct. 10	Board meeting and Officer Elections
Oct. 31	Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Halloween Walking Tours at Oakwood Cemetery
Nov. 7	Photo Documentation and One Grave at a Time

If you would like to stop receiving SAC emails, or if you have updated contact information, please send an email to info@sachome.org.