

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Winter 2015 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

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Guest Speaker Event: Finally! A Good Life in Texas: The Story of Susannah Dickinson Hannig and Joseph Wilhelm Hannig by Megan Spencer

Joyce Spivey Aldridge and Warren Freidrich gave a performance fully costumed as Susanna Dickinson and Joseph Hannig at the Yarbrough Library on Saturday, January 17th. Joyce gave a touching expression of what Susannah witnessed during the siege and fall of the Alamo and she shed light on her important role as Santa Anna's messenger to Sam Houston at San Jacinto. Susannah's livelier side showed itself when she talked about running her boarding house in Lockhart, where she was well known for her fine cooking. This is how Joseph became acquainted with Susanna. Joseph, who came from Germany, was portrayed as he was in life: a devoted husband, a fine craftsman, and a progressive thinker when it came to business. After her first husband Almaron was killed at the Alamo, Susanna married two more times but both men were abusive and she divorced them. Joseph and Susannah were very happy together and had a prosperous marriage. Their gravesite is one of the most frequently visited in Oakwood.

Following the presentation, the audience had lots of great questions. Warren and Joyce told us about their ongoing research and how they continue to discover new facts, which help them to authentically portray these characters. They did an excellent job of bringing these two very interesting people to life. What a fine example of first-person storytelling!



Cemetery Master Plan Update by Leslie Wolfenden

As we have indicated in past newsletters, the City of Austin is working on a Cemetery Master Plan for its five historic cemeteries. The draft report is now available online for community review and comment.

Per the Austin Parks and Recreation Department media release, the Cemetery Master Plan *Draft* is available for community review. The Austin Parks and Recreation Department welcomes the community's feedback and comments about the draft plan, which addresses issues related to historic preservation, tree care, management and policy as well as heritage tourism and educational programming. Austin's historic municipal cemeteries include Austin Memorial Park Cemetery, Evergreen Cemetery, Oakwood Cemetery, Oakwood Cemetery Annex, and Plummers Cemetery.

In order for comments and suggestions to be incorporated into the final draft, community feedback is requested by **March 6, 2015**. The full Cemetery Master Plan *Draft* can be viewed on the project website at <http://www.austintexas.gov/cmp>. Once comments are received, the draft plan will be finalized and brought forward to several city boards and commissions before a final presentation to City Council in early summer, 2015.

The Cemetery Master Plan process began in early 2014 and is the first planning effort for Austin's historic municipal cemeteries. The City of Austin selected AmaTerra Environmental, Inc. to develop the master plan. For more information about the Cemetery Master Plan process, please visit or contact Kim McKnight, Project Coordinator and Cultural Resource Specialist, at kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-9478.

Support for Historic Cemeteries Master Plan by Beth Pickett

At the February SAC board meeting, Kim McKnight, the project coordinator for the City of Austin Historic Cemeteries Master Plan, presented the draft Cemetery Master Plan to us in an SAC context. She began the presentation by graciously acknowledging SAC's role, which began several years ago and continues today, in identifying the need for a Cemetery Master Plan and helping guide the City of Austin toward developing one.

Kim and her team remind us that the Cemetery Master Plan is still a draft. Comments are welcome and encouraged, because they are what will bring the Cemetery Master Plan to a final form that balances, as well as it can, concerns and needs of the community, funding and resources, and needs of the cemeteries themselves as physical environments in our city. I encourage you to review the draft Cemetery Master Plan, wholly or in parts, and submit your thoughts. You can find it online at <http://austintexas.gov/cmp>. Or, if it is more convenient, Kim is glad to provide a printed copy for your review in her office. The current draft may not be exactly what you would hope for yet, but the fact is that a Cemetery Master Plan, at least in draft, exists now for the first time in Austin's history. That's significant in itself. If nothing else, the process of developing the draft has initiated a huge collection of valuable data about our cemeteries that did not exist in one location before.

We hope you can take time to look over the draft Cemetery Master Plan. Even if you don't, if you are comfortable doing so, would you please consider sending a letter or comment, either in hard copy or by email, to your district's City Council Member and to Kim McKnight expressing your support for this ambitious project and for the current draft? SAC's Board of Directors will be sending a letter of support on behalf of the organization, and we hope that you, as a cemetery stakeholder or enthusiast, will do so as well.

Contact information for Mayor Adler and the City Council Members is listed at <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/new-city-council-members>. The word "Email" under each member's entry is a link to an online form you can use to submit your comments. (Four of the five city cemeteries are located in

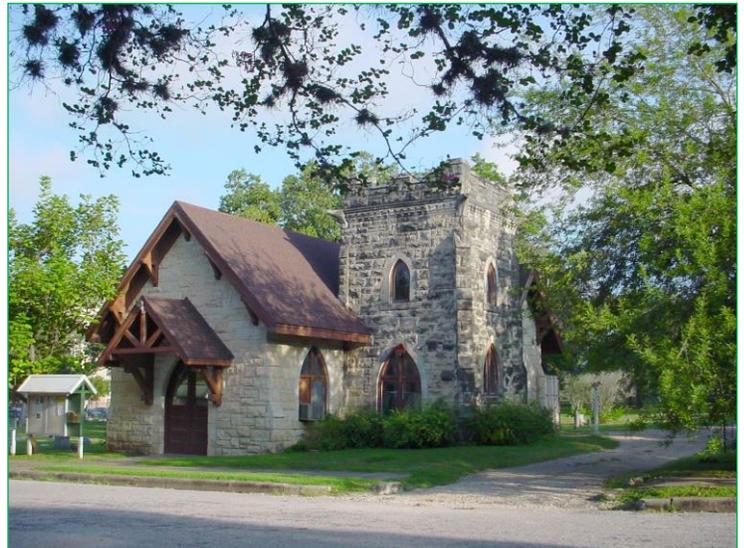
Council Member Ora Houston's district, District 1: Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen, and Plummers. Austin Memorial Park is located in Council Member Leslie Pool's district, District 7.) Kim's contact information appears below.

Kim McKnight, MSHP
Project Coordinator & Cultural Resource Specialist
Planning and Development Division
Parks and Recreation Department
City of Austin
512/974-9478
kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov

Thank you!

Oakwood Cemetery Chapel Update by Kim McKnight

The City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department is restoring the Oakwood Chapel with funding provided through the 2012 bond program for capital improvements. The project is currently in the design phase, with local architecture firm Hatch, Ulland + Owen preparing construction documents expected for bidding in early summer 2015. The construction phase will be competitively bid, and is estimated to take approximately 9 months. The 1914 mortuary chapel was designed by prominent local architect, Charles Page, in the Gothic Revival style.



The primary components of the restoration will include stabilizing the building foundation and completely restoring its architectural character, including a new cedar shake roof, restored windows, doors, flooring, plaster and masonry. Additionally, modern mechanical and electrical systems will be installed so the building can be programmed by the Parks Department for uses consistent with the Cemetery Master Plan recommendations.

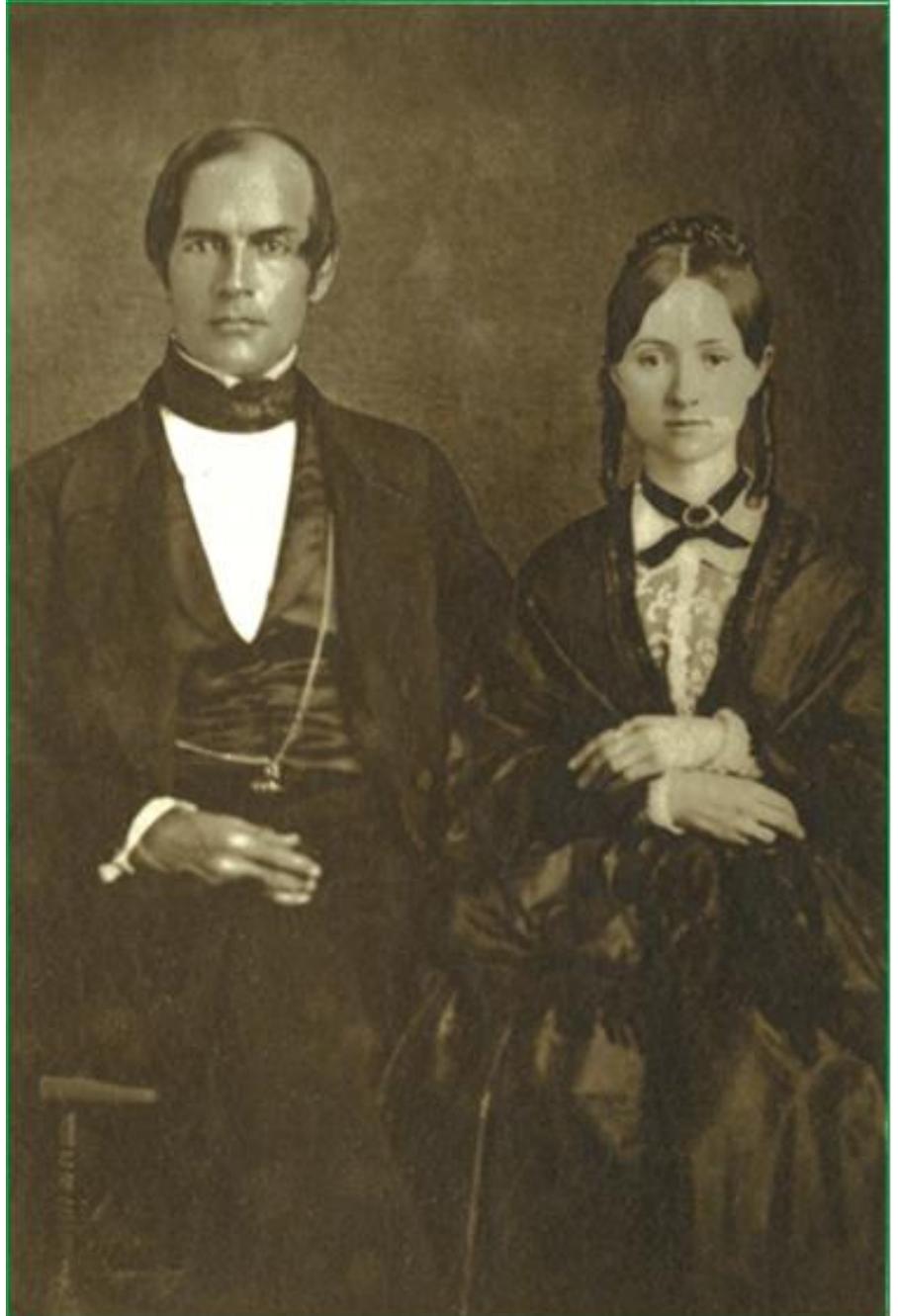
Generations in Oakwood: The Townsends by Megan Spencer

My great great grandmother, Angeline Louise Townsend (1821-1889), is buried in what is referred to as the Townsend Lot, located near Oakwood's main street in one of the oldest sections of Oakwood – Section One. Angeline is buried there along with several of her Robertson descendants. Her marker says simply: Mother. Angeline was born in Evansville, Indiana. Her father died when she was very young and she was sent to western Massachusetts, where she lived with her uncle and his family. She grew up and attended school there.

Angeline's husband, Nathaniel Townsend (1804-1864), was born in New York, but he left as a young man to seek a better climate for his poor health. His brother Halsey was already located in Natchez, Mississippi, so Nathaniel moved to Natchez, where he married Maria Roach in 1829. (Maria was the sister of his brother Halsey's wife). Nathaniel and Maria had four children. During this time, Nathaniel traveled extensively for business. In 1834, on a trip to St. Louis, Missouri, he met Stephen F. Austin. Not long after that meeting, the

family moved to San Felipe de Austin and he opened a general store. His business was burned by the Mexican army in March, 1836. After Texas became an independent Republic, Sam Houston appointed him consul at New Orleans where he served from 1837-1838. He moved back to Austin in 1839 and built another store on Congress Avenue selling everything from groceries to plows. Sadly, Maria died in 1843 in New Orleans and Nathaniel had to send his children to live in the East with relatives.

While visiting relatives in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Nathaniel met Angeline Louise Townsend, his second cousin, and they married in 1847. After their marriage, they lived in New Orleans for three years and then returned to Austin in 1850, where Nathaniel worked in merchandising and became prosperous. Austin was now the family's permanent home. Nathaniel and Angeline had six children, but their first son died in infancy. Nathaniel built a very fine home in an area west of downtown called Judges' Hill. Unfortunately, the house was demolished in the 1970s. When the Civil War began, Nathaniel, Angeline, and their children returned to New York State because they were Union supporters. During this time, Nathaniel was ill and he died in June, 1864. He was buried in the Holland Patent Cemetery near Utica, New York. After the war ended, Angeline learned that all of the family's property had been confiscated by the Confederacy and they had been declared enemy aliens. Angeline returned to Austin with her children and she managed to recover all of the family's property. She died June 5, 1889.



Members of two branches of Angeline's family are buried in Oakwood: Blackburn and Robertson. Her daughter, Susie Marsh Robertson, and several of her descendants are buried in the Townsend Lot. Her daughter, Angeline (Anna) Louise Blackburn, and several of her descendants are buried in Section Two of Oakwood. Since the days when people traveled horseback across Texas with a rifle over the shoulder, Townsend descendants have scattered far and wide, but their stories of early life in Austin remain in Oakwood Cemetery waiting to be told.

2015 Membership Drive by Leslie Wolfenden

SAC's 2015 membership drive will wrap up soon, so if you have not sent in your annual dues, please do so now. Membership runs from January to December. We offer several levels of membership:

- Individual \$35,
- Student \$25,
- Senior \$25,
- Family \$50, and
- Lifetime \$500.

Membership fees go toward cemetery preservation projects, such as the new wood shake roof with new windows and door on the Oakwood Cemetery Annex building (see image below left), the Fannie Harris brick box tomb reconstruction, the Thomas McKinney headstone repair (see image below right), and the ongoing Oakwood Cemetery Chapel restoration project. SAC also acts as an advocate for descendants while working with the City of Austin. Members receive our quarterly e-newsletter, may vote in officer elections, and may hold office.

Please show your support of SAC's preservation projects and mission goals by sending in your membership dues today!



Out and About in Travis County by Dale Flatt

With the City Cemetery Master Plan taking on its final form, some of us have started to revisit some of Travis County cemeteries, as we continue to gather information. Volunteering with SAC helps students in the preservation field get much needed experiences as well as allowing the membership and the public to learn more about those who paved the way for this city we call home. Three of the projects that we are working on are:

- The Stanley-Nolen Cemetery located in Garrison Park
- The Longview Cemetery located in Longview Park
- The Slaughter Family Cemetery located off Slaughter Lane near Mary Moore Searight Park.

The Stanley Nolen cemetery offers a unique challenge because its exact location has been lost. There are two monuments left, but the historic data differs from what is left today. One of the monuments is for a Mr. William T. Nolen 9/7/1849 – 7/28/1889, but oddly enough there is another monument for the same man in the Oliver cemetery! There is no doubt that a cemetery exists and we are gathering any piece of documentation that we can find supporting or in contrast to what is believed to be fact. The next big push is to put out a media

story and news blast about the need to locate park staff who worked at the site in the 1970s. Hopefully, we can get interviews with these folks to find out what they remember about the cemetery.

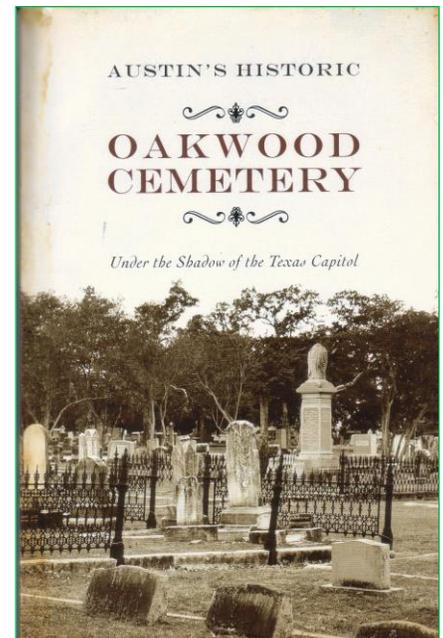
The Longview Cemetery. This one has lots of bread crumbs to follow. Volunteers from SAC, Parks and Recreation Department, Travis County Historical Commission, Texas Historical Commission, and local archeology clubs were brought together by Bob Ward and they cleared a large area of underbrush from a second (unknown to PARD) burial ground at the site. Volunteers also uncovered the foundation of the old stone school/church building that was destroyed in a 1922 tornado. We will continue to document and preserve the site. Our next work day is scheduled for March.

Captain A.B. Slaughter Family Cemetery. This site was designated as a historical Texas Cemetery in 1998 by Sue Ann Meyer - the great, great granddaughter of Captain Slaughter. In 2014, the surrounding property owners started development for single family home sites. I kept a close eye on this site to make sure the historic cemetery remained intact. We connected the developer and the descendant, Sue Ann Meyer. We would like to see a “mini” master plan created so the adjacent home owners know how to care for the site. We plan to install a nice plaque that will tell the story of Capt. Slaughter’s family and their cemetery.

If you would like to assist in any of these projects, please contact Dale at 512-917-1666.

Oakwood Cemetery: The Book by Kay Boyd

Copies of our book, *Austin’s Historic Oakwood Cemetery: Under the Shadow of the Texas Capitol*, are still available. This little book is a treasure chest of stories of early life in Austin – of the pioneers, immigrants, businessmen, and extraordinary women who helped make Austin the exciting city it is today. *Austin’s Historic Oakwood Cemetery* will be on sale during the spring tours. If you would like more information, visit our website: www.sachome.org. We will make arrangements to mail or deliver your books to you. They make great gifts!



Randalls Good Neighbor Program by Leslie Wolfenden

Save Austin's Cemeteries is a member of Randalls Good Neighbor Program. The SAC Good Neighbor number is **12790**. Randalls is committed to assisting non-profit organizations that are important to its customers and their families. Randalls offers its customers a way to direct its donation dollars to their favorite church, school or other nonprofit organization. Since the program began in the fall of 1996, Randalls/Tom Thumb has donated nearly \$35 million to over 8,000 participating organizations. Through its Good Neighbor Program, organizations sign up to have an exclusive account number. Members of an organization can then link the account number to their Remarkable card. You can link your favorite participating charity to your Remarkable card by completing a Good Neighbor Charity Addition/Deletion Form. You will find the guidelines for organizations participating in the Good Neighbor Program outlined in a link at the top of this Web page. Detailed brochures with applications are available at www.randalls.com – Community Caring button at the bottom of the page – Good Neighbor Program link. The more people who link their card to the organization's account number, the more money the organization will raise. Thank you for partnering with Randalls in helping the organizations that make our communities such wonderful places to live.

Spring Oakwood Tours by Kay Boyd

Save Austin's Cemeteries is excited to announce two upcoming tours at Oakwood Cemetery. The first tour, Descendants' Day, is April 11. Eight to ten descendants will tell stories about their families as visitors make stops along the route. There will only be two tours offered: one at 10:00am and another at 11:00am. Make your reservation early so that you can enjoy the tales of the families as only their descendants can tell them!

The next tour is a special Mother's Day tour on May 9. Several years ago, we offered a tour that focused on women only that was met with a great reception. So once again we will focus on some of the women of Oakwood. This tour will focus on some of the women highlighted in our book as well as others who led extraordinary lives and survived the rough days of early Texas. These tours will be offered at 10:00am and 11:00am also, so let us know if you plan to attend.

Contact Kay Boyd at mkdb1405@gmail.com or info@sachome.org if you want to be a storyteller or reserve a place on either tour.

These tours are limited to the first 25 people for each time slot. To make your reservation, please email your request to info@sachome.org.

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!

Mar 7	It's My Park Day at Oakwood
Mar 14	Board Meeting at Denny's Café near Oakwood
April 11	Descendants' Day Tours at Oakwood at 10:00 and 11:00
May 9	Mother's Day Tours at Oakwood at 10:00 and 11:00
July 11	Guest Speaker Session: TBA
Oct. 31	9 th Annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Halloween walking tours

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



SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES Membership Form (January to December)

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership contribution to Save Austin's Cemeteries.

- \$ 35 Individual
 - \$ 25 Student (with copy of ID)
 - \$ 25 Senior (60+ years of age)
 - \$ 50 Family
 - \$500 Lifetime Membership
 - \$ ____ Other (_____)
- My check is enclosed (please make payable to Save Austin's Cemeteries and mail to PO Box 16411, Austin TX 78761)
- I prefer to charge my contribution (go to <http://www.sachome.org/join/member.html> to use your credit card or PayPal)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone (optional; check preferred number)

Cell: _____

Home: _____

Work: _____

- Yes No Do you have ancestors buried at any of the city cemeteries?
If yes, which ones?
- AMP Annex Evergreen Oakwood Plummers

- Yes No Are you interested in volunteering for SAC projects or events?

My primary interest(s) in cemeteries is: _____

Save Austin's Cemeteries is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.