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Monuments & milestones

VOL 2 NO 1 FALL 2006

PUTTING A FACE ON THE PAST

by Jim Hoobler
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The old City Cemetery has a colorful sampling of important figures from our past. The Tennessee State Museum can bring them almost to life with portraits of many of these famous citizens, putting a face on the past. Among them are James and Charlotte Robertson, founders of the Nashville settlement. Their son, Felix, was a mayor of Nashville (1818-1819), the first white male child born here, and a prominent doctor. He looked so much like Andrew Jackson that people would confuse them for each other on the streets of Nashville (see inset at right).

Associates of Andrew Jackson are also found in both the City Cemetery and the Tennessee State Museum. Thomas Claiborne served as a Major with Jackson in the Creek War, and he served Tennessee in the U. S. House of Representatives from 1817 to 1819. William Carroll served as a General in the War of 1812, under Jackson, and also in the Creek War. He was Governor of Tennessee from 1821-1827, and again from 1829-1835. He owned the first steamboat to travel on the Cumberland River, and he named it the General Jackson for his friend. Wilkins

Tannehill was mayor of Nashville (1825-1826), a journalist, Grand Master of the Tennessee Lodge of Masons, and an author. His image is at the museum, as is a portrait of his wife, Eliza Dewees Tannehill.

Civil War Confederate General Felix Zollicoffer, a Whig newspaper editor and the first Confederate General to be killed in the

West, has a place in both the City Cemetery and the State Museum. Captain William Driver, the man who named his ship's flag Old Glory, and was the head of the War Claims Commission here during the Civil War, is also in both places.

Cultural leaders are also found at both locations.

Francis Fogg, a Nashville lawyer and one of the founders of the University of the South, is in both places. William Edward West, a portrait artist, is buried at the City Cemetery and there is a portrait by him of the great nineteenth century American historian William Hickling Prescott at the museum.

The City Cemetery is an outdoor history of this city. Walk around its precincts, and think about how the people buried there made us who we are today.



Felix Robertson, first white male child born in Nashville and early mayor of Nashville.

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JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NCCA MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Please take the time to become a member of the Nashville City Cemetery Association this year. Your membership is valuable to us and helps the NCCA offer such programs as *Tombstone Days*, the *Memorial Day Dash*, and the *Living History Tour*. So sign up today and help support our effort to restore and preserve this invaluable historic resource.

I would like information about: (check all that apply)	NCCA Membership Levels (circle one)			
<input type="checkbox"/> NCCA Membership	Individual	\$20	Preserver	\$150
<input type="checkbox"/> Tax Letters	Family	\$35	Conservator	\$500
	Protector	\$75	Restorer	\$1000

All members receive the newsletter and invitations to special events. Protectors and higher are offered tickets to the *Living History Tour*. Preserver and higher receive all the above plus one copy of the book *The Nashville City Cemetery: History Carved in Stone*.

Name _____
 Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
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Fill out this form, clip out and mail to: P.O. Box 150733, Nashville, TN. 37215-0733.
 The Association Coordinator will respond within 2 weeks of receipt.



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EAGLE SCOUT COMPLETES RENOVATION

T Tyler Felder of Boy Scout Troop # 285 has nearly completed the renovation of the c. 1947 Edwin Keeble designed Administration building. Over the past two months Tyler and his scout troop have spent over 100 man hours toward renovating the once derelict building into an office and storage space for the Nashville City Cemetery Association and the Metro Historical Commission.

The building was built to house records and as an office for the on-site cemetery superintendent and caretaker, but since 1970 the building has been vacant. In 2000 the building condition had greatly deteriorated with severe water damage due to a failed roof system. Due to the early efforts of the NCCA and former board member Larry Brown, repairs by Lowe's, Dale's Insulation, the Davidson County Sheriff's Office, Metro Parks and others were coordinated and accomplished. Those repairs have included installing a new copper and slate roof, a new electrical system, new bathroom fixtures, a new vinyl floor, new drywall and new windows.

Tyler's work will complete the renovation, so that the building can be used again. His project includes installing wood trim around doors and windows, wood baseboard, a bathroom door, painting, proper locks for all exterior doors, a new exterior breezeway light fixture, an exterior door threshold and the painting of the drywall and woodwork. His work will be complete in time for this year's Annual Living History Tour.



The Keeble building at the center of the Nashville City Cemetery received a new roof and new windows, among other improvements.

TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTION PROJECT

Major recordings of the Nashville City Cemetery tombstone inscriptions were conducted in 1908 and again in the 1960s.

During 2005-2006, 135 volunteers participated in a NCCA project to once again record the inscriptions. Volunteers visited each tombstone to determine if an inscription could be read. Today many inscriptions have worn away from weathering and aging. Other tombstones have fallen face down or been broken. During this project, 1,950 tombstones and 15 historical markers were recorded, but 1,000 tombstones did not have legible inscriptions.



To verify and to add to the inscription data, research sources were consulted. With research, many missing words or dates could be added to the inscription data.

All the recorded inscriptions will be posted on the NCCA web site. In time a photograph of each tombstone will be exhibited next to its inscription. To read more about the research sources used in the documentation and the resource maps, please visit our web site and click-on "Inscriptions." Descendants are invited to submit historical information, including obituaries, by emailing to the NCCA email address.

SECOND SATURDAY TOURS

Nashville City Cemetery, the city's oldest continuously operated public cemetery located at **1001 Fourth Avenue South**, invites you to meet Nashville's ancestors on the 2nd Saturday of every month. All tours are free. General information tours begin at 10:00 a.m., special emphasis tours begin at 10:15 a.m. On Saturday, November 11, Carol S. Bucy, professor of history at

Volunteer State College, and co-author of *The Nashville City Cemetery, History Carved in Stone* presents "Veterans, Volunteers & Heroes from the American Revolution through the Vietnam War." Join us for this special Veteran's Day Second Saturday Tour. For more information about past and future topics, please visit our website at www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org.

2006 LIVING HISTORY TOUR

Though the thermometer still reads 80 degrees outside, summer is gone and autumn is here. And with autumn, comes the Nashville City Cemetery Association's Living History Tour. Mark your calendars for **October 21 from 5 to 8 p.m.** when the Nashville City Cemetery comes alive with stories from the past. As you stroll the grounds at twilight, you will encounter familiar and unfamiliar, famous and ordinary characters from 19th century Nashville, as costumed actors portray residents of Nashville's most historic cemetery.

Through the characters you meet, you will learn about Nashville's rich history and why the Nashville City Cemetery is as important to our city's future as it was to its past.

New to the Living History Tour this year, the recently renovated Keeble Building will be open with displays of what the Nashville City Cemetery Association has accomplished this past year with funds raised from events such as the Living History Tour. Information about the Nashville City Cemetery Association's new website, the Tombstone Transcription Project, and monument restorations funded by the NCCA will also be available.

It is not too late to become involved. If you have always wanted to act, write, learn about period clothing, or just volunteer for a worthy cause, now is your chance.

For more information, visit our website, www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org or send an e-mail to terryberry@comcast.net.



IF YOU ARE READING THIS LETTER, you may be one of many volunteers who spent hours (which turned into days) at the Nashville City Cemetery raking and cleaning around tombstones, or transcribing or photographing those tombstones, over the past year. You may be one of the ardent supporters who attended the wonderful Patron's Party or the annual Christmas get-together last winter. You probably helped, just recently, in persuading the Metro Council's approval of three million dollars funding to support Nashville City Cemetery restoration. Perhaps you attended the recent Second Saturday Tour led by Carol Kaplan, or are planning to attend the October tour to be led by Jim Hoobler. Perhaps you visited our new website and sent an inquiry or comment. You might be a descendant eager to do your part to see your ancestor's tombstone restored. You may even think you are a member of this great organization, but you might be wrong about that last item.

In fact, it is precisely because of so much activity, that the Nashville City Cemetery Association has not had an official membership drive since early 2005 when current members were contacted for renewal. As a result, despite great activity and great accomplishments, many active and interested volunteers, enthusiastic supporters, and an incredible board of directors we have few actual bona fide, card-carrying members at this time. But because we are not just a loosely formed group of enthusiastic volunteers with a common goal, your membership is critical. It is the only way we have accomplished all the things you read about in this newsletter, and more. Consider your membership as an act of celebration!

It is time now to celebrate the positive action taken by the Metro Council. It is time to unveil the restored Keeble Building. It is time to take one of the regularly scheduled Second Saturday Tours, and to definitely attend the annual Living History Tour. It is time to say "Well done! And I'm proud to be a member." by joining anew, if you have not done so since January of this year. It is time to celebrate years of effort with your membership.

If you have never been a member of the Nashville City Cemetery Association, you may have received this newsletter because you are someone with deep ties to the Nashville community; someone who is known to care about Nashville and its place in the future. The Nashville City Cemetery Association is made up of supporters who know that great cities remember their past. It is in large part the rich cultural history of Nashville that has kept it poised for the future that is now unfolding. Founders of Nashville, Mayors of Nashville, pioneers from the original colonies, and indeed slaves and former slaves are buried at City Cemetery. These are the people who laid the foundation for this city of which we are so proud today. You are invited to join us as we continue our efforts to protect, preserve, restore and raise public awareness of the Nashville City Cemetery in collaboration with the Historical Commission and the Board of Parks and Recreation of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County.

Because of the funding made available by Metro Davidson County government to address Master Plan issues and concerns, the Nashville City Cemetery Association is able to concentrate its focus on education, tombstone restoration, and public awareness of the need for cemetery protection and preservation the purposes for which we were established. Join us as we do good work. Reap the reward of satisfaction for an important cause considered, acted upon, and made attainable because you made it possible.

Nick Bailey, President