



# Monuments & milestones

VOL 3 NO 2 FALL 2007

## LIVING HISTORY TOUR

by Terry Jackson, NCCA Board Member



HAT A RELIEF to be distracted from this August heat by planning for the 2007 Living History Tour, part of my summer for the last four years.

How pleasant to imagine an early autumn day with a cool breeze moving among the monuments and tombstones. The colorful leaves have not yet fallen. Ladies walk the lane in long dresses and bonnets, gentlemen stroll past in top hats, sporting well-manicured mustaches and beards. Stopping at family plots, they share memories of their lives in early Nashville or direct visitors through the lanes. The bell tolls in the background, a long-forgotten message of sadness and loss as a soul passes from this world to the next — just now it's only a late summer daydream.



However, on October 6 my daydream comes alive. There are soldiers in uniform, representing those buried here after the

War of 1812 or the Civil War. Felix Zollicoffer and Beshrod Johnson sometimes appear. Fans and petticoats rustle as wives and mothers tell of early times in Nashville. The children talk about school, work, and terrible diseases we no longer fear in 2007.

Last year we met coroner W. R. Cornelius, one of the first in the United States to embalm his clients, he buried many in the Nashville City



Terry Jackson's husband, Kirby, portraying General Zollicoffer.

Cemetery. Ann Robertson Cockrill, sister to James Robertson, told stones about teaching children their lessons during the Donelson journey and at Fort Nashborough. Of course, James came too, with his wife Charlotte and one of their young sons.

William Strickland discussed his work on the State Capitol and pointed out monuments he designed for this cemetery.

This year we hope to meet some of the Jubilee Singers. Someone may recount stirring legends about the escape tunnels from Fort Negley, or a forsaken lover's suicide.

Please join us on Saturday, October 6, from 3:00 - 6:00 p.m. The cost is \$5 per adult or \$10 for families. Children under 12 are free. If you would like to help by dressing up and talking about your ancestors, or by volunteering in other ways, send me an e-mail at [Jackson@aaslh.org](mailto:Jackson@aaslh.org).

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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HIS HAS BEEN A BUSY YEAR for the Nashville City Cemetery Association. As you read this edition of the NCCA Newsletter, you will see how much work has been done on behalf of the Cemetery. The Metro Historical Commission staff is doing a fine job of implementing the Master Plan for the restoration of the grounds and monuments. Stop by and see the many improvements so far. Be sure to mark these two dates on your calendars: **Saturday, October 6**, you can participate in our annual **Living History Tour** (see page 1); a month later, on **Saturday, November 10**, John Allyn will lead a tour entitled "**Four Cold Winters: City Cemetery and the Civil War**," described in detail on page 4.

If you have not yet joined our Association, please consider doing so - you will be helping to continue the good work of preserving the City Cemetery. Our active and hard-working Board of Directors welcome your involvement in our projects to raise awareness of this very important piece of Nashville history. This newsletter lists many special events and volunteer opportunities.

Finally, take time to visit our website, [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org), which continues to grow with new and interesting information. If you haven't looked at it for a while, you will be amazed at the changes.

— Nick Bailey, NCCA President

## MASTER PLAN MOVING AHEAD



Scaffolding surrounds the McHenry Monument as it receives a major restoration.

JUST A YEAR AGO the Metro Council approved the Mayor's Capital Budget request for a \$3 million project to restore the Nashville City Cemetery. What has happened since the spring of 2007 should surprise you. Over 75 small tombstones that had broken or fallen over have already been repaired and re-set. Major monuments — McNairy, Duncan Robertson, and Gen. Sam G. Smith — have undergone significant restoration. Many box tombs are still to be renovated.

Restoration staff have examined the mausoleums for structural integrity and are planning a number of improvements. Workers are busy cleaning tombstones using approved conservation techniques, and the new protective fencing along the railroad tracks will soon be in place.

In the coming year we can anticipate new walkways and signage, as well as improved lighting and security. Fred Zahn of the Metro Historical Commission is the on-site historic preservation supervisor for all these vital and challenging projects. The Nashville City Cemetery Association applauds these great efforts to restore our historic City Cemetery.

# AFRICAN AMERICANS OF CITY CEMETERY

by Carol Koplan, NCCA Board Member

These prominent obelisks mark the graves of philanthropist Lucinda Bedford, her husband and son.



THE CITY CEMETERY WAS CREATED as a burial place for all Nashvillians in 1822. Until private cemeteries began to appear during the mid-19th century, black and white people alike found their final resting place here. Although the private Mt. Ararat Cemetery for blacks opened after the Civil War, many prominent African Americans, including Jubilee Singers Ella Sheppard Moore and Mabel Lewis Innes, politician Elias Polk, and philanthropist Lucinda Bedford, chose to be buried in City Cemetery. Perhaps one-third of the interments here are those of African Americans but, until now, very little research has focused on their lives and their contributions to Nashville.

Prior to the Civil War, the city's black population included both slaves and free people. Many slaves are buried here. For a researcher seeking an enslaved ancestor, the cemetery's interment records can be a great help. The record includes the slave's first name, age, name of owner, and burial location. Interment records of free black persons list much of the same information, as well as a last name, an occupation, and sometimes a useful note. For example, when Jack Macon died in 1860, his record included the notation, "known as Dr. Jack." Macon

had an office on Water Street and advertised in the City Directory.

Jeffrey Lockeler may have been Nashville's most beloved African American citizen when he died in 1830. Born free in North Carolina, he came to Nashville, joined the militia, and fought in all Jackson's campaigns, including New Orleans. "His service ended only when his country ceased to have enemies." His admiring obituary praised his life of "active benevolence." Locklayer Street is named for him.

Slave Sally Thomas, permitted by her owner to operate her own business, gained freedom for her three sons and then for herself. Her life is the subject of John Hope Franklin's book, *In Search of the Promised Land*. She died in the cholera epidemic of 1850.

The graves of these people and many others were once marked by carved tombstones, now faded and illegible. Luckily, several early 20th century transcribers copied the inscriptions and noted the locations on a map, so this information is not lost to us. Part of the Association's long-range plan includes the creation of a walking tour brochure featuring African Americans who lie in the City Cemetery, and the placement of a marker honoring their lives.



This obelisk marks the final resting place of Cynthia Porter, a beloved nurse.



The newly carved tombstone of Frank Jubilee Singer Ella Sheppard Moore.



Jubilee Singers Mabel Lewis Innes' marker includes the Frank University name.

Watch the NCCA Website for an Announcement:

**19,745 New Transcripts of City Cemetery Interments are coming.**

A Project of the Metro Archives, Nashville Colored Dames (NSCDA-TM) and the Nashville Public Library

# CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Volunteers Have Fun! Volunteers Make a Difference! If you love local history, gardens, art, nature, or photography, you may find that volunteering at the City Cemetery can be a fulfilling and rewarding experience. Here are three new volunteer opportunities.

- Metro Parks does a remarkable job of mowing the summer grass and mulching the autumn leaves, but we always need a FALL CLEAN-UP DAY to complete the leaf raking within the small family plots. We'd love your help.
- Many school, church and civic groups request tours of the cemetery. We need VOLUNTEER TOUR GUIDES. Training will be offered during the winter.
- After professional cleaning, some tombstones will need to be re-photographed, and we will need DIGITAL CAMERA VOLUNTEERS.

If you are interested in helping with any of these projects, please contact  
Lynn McDonald, NCCA Board Member, at [lynnmcdonald2004@yahoo.com](mailto:lynnmcdonald2004@yahoo.com)

## DESCENDANTS' DAY A SUCCESS

Nashville history came to life on Saturday, September 8, as descendants of some of the early Nashvillians buried at the City Cemetery arrived to celebrate this special event. Many guests shared family stories, re-enactors strolled the paths entertaining visitors, and a number of people enjoyed picnic lunches amid the beauty of the sprawling cemetery grounds. Mayor Bill Purcell graciously accepted the NCCA 2007 Preservation Award. Three 2006 Metro Council members also received NCCA Certificates of Appreciation for their support of The Master Plan to restore the City Cemetery.

Are you a descendant of someone buried in the City Cemetery? Send an e-mail to: [info@thenashvillecitycemetery.org](mailto:info@thenashvillecitycemetery.org)



NCCA President Nick Bailey presents Mayor Bill Purcell with the NCCA Preservation Award at a ceremony during the Descendants' Day celebration at the Nashville City Cemetery.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Second Saturday Tour, October 13, 2007, 10:00-10:45 a.m. "ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES"

Terry Jackson, NCCA Board member, will lead this interesting tour. "Arrivals" will feature the re-interments of James Robertson, John and Ann Robertson Cockrill, and the 211 people whose graves were moved from land appropriated for the 1957 Nashville Airport expansion. "Departures" will include the relocation of many prominent graves, including those of the McCavocks and Lindsleys, to Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

SECOND SATURDAY TOURS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

Note: For these tours, parking is permitted on-site. A restroom is available. Wear comfortable walking shoes since many roadways are uneven.

### Walking Tour, Saturday, November 10, 2007, 10:00 -11:00 a.m. "FOUR COLD WINTERS DURING THE CIVIL WAR"

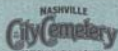
John B. Allyn will host a fascinating tour, entitled "Four Cold Winters during the Civil War." He will tell a gripping tale of the city's panic as terrified citizens evacuated Nashville in February 1862 prior to the Federal troops' arrival; he will share accounts of winter battles in and near Nashville and tell stories of the soldiers from both sides who were buried at the City Cemetery. Many of these fallen soldiers were later re-interred in other cemeteries. The tour will visit the gravesites and monuments of some of the Civil War veterans still buried at City Cemetery. John Allyn is an NCCA Board Member and an enthusiastic volunteer with the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society. A Nashville attorney, he received his B.A. in history from Vanderbilt University.







Address Correction Requested



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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  
☐ Tax Letters  
☐ Volunteer Opportunities

**NCCA Membership Levels (include one)**

Individual	\$20	Preserver	\$150
Family	\$35	Conservator	\$500
Protector	\$75	Restorer	\$1000

(All members receive the newsletter and invitations to special events.)

Name

Address  City  State  Zip Code

E-mail  Phone Number (  )

Names of ancestors buried at Nashville City Cemetery (if applicable):



Fill out this form, clip out and mail to:  
 P.O. Box 150733, Nashville, TN 37215-0733.