



# Monuments & milestones

VOL 4 NO 2 FALL 2008

## Living History Tour 2008

by Clara Wood, Nashville City Cemetery Board member



You are invited to join us for a journey back in time. Visit the early days of Nashville on Saturday, September 27, as this year's Living History Tour brings our past to abundant life at

Nashville City Cemetery. Walking tours will begin every few minutes from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at a cost of \$5.00 for adults or \$10.00 for families. Children under the age of 12 are admitted free.

The theme of this year's Living History Tour is **"Mayors, Musicians, the Military, and More!"** The cemetery is the final resting place for 22 mayors of Nashville, some of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers, and numerous veterans of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War of 1848, and the Civil War. Actors dressed in period costumes will be stationed at selected gravesites along the tour to tell the stories of individuals buried at those sites.



The Nashville City Cemetery is the oldest existing public cemetery in Middle Tennessee. It opened on January 1, 1822, and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. As one of the earliest racially integrated cemeteries in the United States, it was truly a public cemetery where people of any race, religion, or economic status could be buried. It became the final resting place of much of the citizenry of Nashville from the city's earliest days through 1870.



If you have not visited the cemetery lately, you will be delighted to find, thanks to a generous appropriation from Metro Nashville City Council, that the tombstones, box and table tombs, markers, and vaults have been cleaned, repaired, and/or restored. In addition, the landscaping has been updated, roads repaved, and new lighting and fencing installed.

Remind your friends of this year's Living History Tour at Nashville City Cemetery on September 27, 2008, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. If you would like to volunteer to be part of the event, or are interested in joining the Nashville City Cemetery Association, visit the Nashville City Cemetery web site, [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org), and go to "Contact us."

The Nashville City Cemetery is located at 1001 Fourth Avenue South, with the entrance at the corner of Fourth Avenue South and Oak Street. It is open to visitors daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**"Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer." *Author Unknown***

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE any community organization can have. The ability of people to work willingly together for the betterment of their community and themselves is a valuable gift that can benefit both present and future generations.

The image of the volunteer has changed over time. Gone is the stereotype of the middle-aged housewife with time on her hands. Now volunteers come from all walks of life: they may include a Scout learning to manage responsibility by picking up decaying markers and cataloging them, an actor sharing his talents at the Living History Tour, or a retiree using her computer skills to compile data for the website.

Ideally, volunteers find the donation of their time and energy to be a meaningful experience for themselves as well as for the organization – a true win-win situation!

The Nashville City Cemetery benefits greatly from the work of our many volunteers. From board members to the Master Gardeners to the lovers of historic preservation, each one contributes to the well-being of the City Cemetery. The federal government has valued a volunteer's work at \$19.51 per hour – so the hours you donate become a significant investment in our community. Thank you to each and every Nashville City Cemetery volunteer! Your work touches many, many lives.



**Lynn Maddox McDonald**  
NCCA President

## Memorial Day Dash Gains Popularity

Nearly 300 runners and walkers participated in this year's Memorial Day Dash, making it one of the most successful ever. The event was sponsored by **WPLN 90.3 FM** and the Nashville Striders. Participants were treated to a beautiful day and a look at the many recent improvements to the



Memorial Day Dash participants make their way from Greer Stadium toward the cemetery. (Photo by Kathy Lauder)

cemetery. The race was efficiently managed by the Nashville Striders and a host of volunteers. A moving testimonial was given by one lone runner who completed the 5K run and gave details on his recent successful recovery from cancer surgery. Make your plans to participate or volunteer at next year's Dash which is scheduled for **May 25, 2009**.

### Winners:

**Overall female ..... Emily Peters**

**Overall male ..... Tristan Reece**

**Masters female ..... Helen Jackson**

**Masters male ..... Lee Piccirillo**

A list of all winners and most other participants is on the Striders' website **[www.nashvillestriders.com](http://www.nashvillestriders.com)**.

**Monuments & milestones**

P.O. Box 150733  
Nashville, TN. 37215-0733

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The Nashville City Cemetery Association is a not-for-profit organization founded to preserve and protect the history and memory of those who are laid to rest there.

Newsletter Editor: Kathy Lauder  
Graphic Design: Jeff Thomeycraft

visit us at: [thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://thenashvillecitycemetery.org)

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**NASHVILLE  
City Cemetery**  
1001 FOURTH AVENUE SOUTH

## Women To The Rescue

by Carol Kaplan, NCCA Board Member

At the end of the 19th century, City Cemetery was in crisis. Once a burial place for all Nashvillians, it had been supplanted by the newer and more beautiful Mt. Olivet, Mt. Ararat, and Calvary cemeteries. The Union Civil War dead had been transported to National, the Confederates to Mt. Olivet. Neglected and ignored, City was described by the *Banner* on June 21, 1868, as a ruin: "robbery, murder and lust have held their horrid orgies in it and even now nightly desecrated by being the rendezvous of lascivious love." No wonder the cemetery was promptly declared a "public nuisance" and burials were suspended the following month! A plan quickly came together within city government to remove all the graves and make the land a public park.

"Not so fast! Absolutely not!" Nashville's women spoke out forcefully against such an idea. This was "sacred ground and should never be called a park," protested Felicia Steger, a granddaughter of Felix Grundy. Women had found a new freedom of expression with the advent of the 20th century. In 1897 their Woman's Building at the Tennessee Centennial had been a triumph. Now they found that, although not yet allowed to vote, they could nonetheless organize and engage in "civic housekeeping" with positive results. "We shall never have clean cities until the women undertake the job" was the credo of these busy ladies. Their noble efforts notwithstanding, a *Banner* reporter of 1900 expressed indignation that "women were boldly wearing ankle-length skirts on clear days because they were helpful in getting on and off streetcars."

Saving and caring for City Cemetery became the focus of several groups. In 1903 the Tennessee Women's Historical Association was organized, its specific purpose to preserve the cemetery. Sumner A. Cunningham, editor of the

Confederate Veteran, claimed credit for suggesting its formation. He was the only male member of an industrious group that included Louise Lindsley and Carnegie librarian Mary Hannah Johnson. Other civic and patriotic organizations were asked to join them "to assist in improving and preserving the old city cemetery, to dispel the spirit of vandalism and promote civic pride." The Ladies Hermitage Association, DAR, UDC, and Colonial Dames all cooperated under this umbrella. One of their successful projects was the construction of a Memorial Gate at the 5th Avenue entrance. Dedicated in 1909, the gate exists only in pictures now, having been destroyed in an automobile accident during the 1930s. Wishing to do their part, Cumberland Chapter, DAR, erected a sundial to mark the path leading to the James Robertson family plot.

The South Nashville Federation of Women was another group that worked to care for the City Cemetery grounds. The guidebook *All About Nashville* reported in 1912 that "with the cooperation of 400 members, they have cleared away the rubbish, pruned trees, graveled the walks and planted a line of memorial elms and lastly, are in the process of erecting a handsome memorial gateway to the heroes of another day." These gateposts, on 4th Avenue, still stand. May Winston Caldwell, whose parents and siblings are buried at City, remembered the pre-Civil War days when her mother and Peter, the gardener, came to care for the family plot. Now May, as a member of the South Nashville Women, was proudly carrying on that tradition.

These hard-working women began a program of stewardship and restoration which has resumed in recent years after a period of neglect. Today the Nashville City Cemetery Association (composed of both men and women!) is ten years old, making it the longest-lived and most professional volunteer organization ever to protect and renovate the grounds and markers: an endowment established at the Community Foundation will support the continuing restoration of the City Cemetery in the years to come. Thanks to the \$3 million allocated by the Metro Council, and with the cooperation of the Metro Historical Commission and such citizen organizations as Master Gardeners of Davidson County, the cemetery is once again prepared to maintain its status as an historically valuable resting place of our pioneer heritage.

## THEN & NOW

From the Nashville Room photo archives at the Nashville Public Library, a glimpse of the City Cemetery from the past and how it appears today.



This photo from 1955 shows the markers for Captain William Driver and his family. (Photo courtesy of the Nashville Public Library, The Nashville Room.)

The Driver markers remain virtually unchanged from the way they appeared more than fifty years ago. (Photo by Jeff Thomeycraft)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**The Nashville City Cemetery is open to visitors every day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**General information:** The free tours begin at 10:00 a.m. on the dates listed below and last about 45 minutes. In case of unfavorable weather (i.e., tornado, drenching rain, hail, or piles of snow!), a cancelled tour will take place the following Saturday.

**September 27, 2008, 4:00-7:00 p.m.**

## THE ANNUAL LIVING HISTORY TOUR

This is one of our few events that does involve a small cost: **\$5 for adults; \$10 for families.** Come and meet some of Nashville's earliest settlers; uniformed soldiers; mayors, musicians, and other prominent citizens, as well as simple folk of all eras. This is a wonderful event for the whole family!

**Saturday Tour Series, October 18, 2008, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## 19TH CENTURY CEMETERIES

**Kathy Lauder**, teacher, archivist, and NCCA board member, will answer some of the questions our visitors ask us about 19th century cemeteries – the leading causes of death, the costs and customs of burials, the types of clothing people wore to a funeral, and much more – even death and funeral superstitions! An enlightening look at matters of life and death a century ago.

**Saturday Tour Series, November 8, 2008, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

The last tour of the calendar year is on the second Saturday to avoid conflicts with the Thanksgiving holiday and colder weather. **John Allyn**, battlefield preservationist and NCCA board member, will tell us about the lives of Civil War soldiers buried in this cemetery. Some of the individuals featured will be Confederates **Henry Fogg** and **White Turpin**, Union Lieutenant **John R. Henry**, and others. Not to be missed!

**Saturday Tour Series, April 18, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## MASTER GARDENERS

We start our NCCA Tour Season with a treat! The Master Gardeners have been active at the cemetery during the entire ten years since the City Cemetery Association was organized. Their dedicated efforts have helped to restore the grounds to an authentic 19th century appearance. Master Gardeners, some of whom are also NCCA Board members, will explain projects and techniques for working in an historical setting. Come and be delightfully inspired!

**Saturday Tour Series, May 16, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## SALLY THOMAS MARKER UNVEILING

The unveiling of the Sally Thomas marker. **Sally Thomas**, a Nashville slave permitted to live as if she were free, built up a successful business as a highly respected laundress. She managed to buy herself and all three of her sons free from slavery. The subject of distinguished Fisk University graduate **John Hope Franklin's** book *In Search of the Promised Land*, Thomas died in the cholera epidemic of 1850. Her sons erected a marker for her, but time has faded it. The Association will dedicate a new marker as a tribute to this brave and hard-working Nashvillean.

**May 25, 2009, 8:00 a.m. (beginning at Greer Stadium)**

## THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY DASH

5K Run/Walk will begin at Greer Stadium at 8:00 a.m. The Nashville Striders website will have registration forms and information. [www.nashvillestriders.com](http://www.nashvillestriders.com).

**June 13, 2009**

## A CELEBRATION OF FLAG DAY

A Celebration of Flag Day, led by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Check our website for time and other details.

**Saturday Tour Series, June 20, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## "THE LITTLE ONES"

**Stephanie Logan**, NCCA Board Member, will talk about the lives of children in the 1800s – clothing, education, games and activities, and more about some of the little ones whose brief journey ended at the City Cemetery.

**July and August: NO TOURS SCHEDULED.**

**September 26, 2009, 3:00-6:00 p.m.**

## THE ANNUAL LIVING HISTORY TOUR

Mark your calendars now for the 2009 Living History Tour.

**Saturday Tour Series, October 18, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## RESTORATION TOUR

A guided tour of the magnificent restoration.

**Have you seen our website lately?**



View colorful photos of the Memorial Day Dash & the Restoration in Progress.

**READ ABOUT THE REMARKABLE  
186-YEAR HISTORY OF CITY CEMETERY**

**\* Buy a Book or a T-shirt. \* Find out about exciting upcoming events and tours.**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER BURIED AT CITY CEMETERY BY STUDYING  
THE RESOURCE MAPS, OBITUARIES, AND TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS.**

**Connect to the 19,745 Interments on the Nashville Public Library website.**

**share your family history**

**...AND BE SURE TO JOIN THE NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION!**

# Tannehill, Cooper Honored at City Cemetery

by Fletch Coke, Nashville City Cemetery Board member



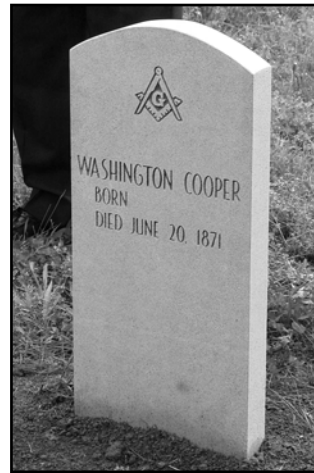
Duncan Callicott, spoke about his ancestor, Masonic Grand Master Wilkins Tannehill. (Photo by Kathy Laidler)

On June 22, 1871, following a Called Meeting, the Cumberland Masonic Lodge of Nashville adjourned so members could attend the funeral of Washington Cooper, who was, according to a local newspaper, "one of the oldest Masons in the city and one of the original members of the Cumberland Lodge." Lodge Minutes reported that "the brothers proceeded to the late residence of Bro. Cooper and then to the Cemetery" for the burial "with the usual ceremonies of the order."

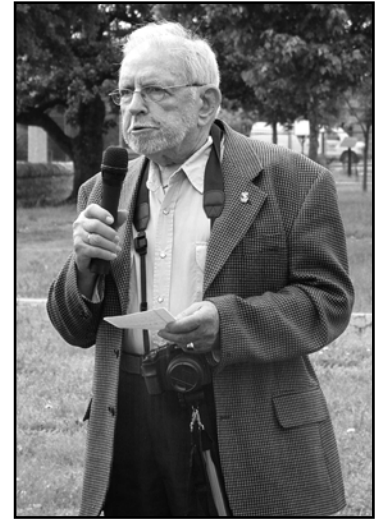
On a Second-Saturday Tour 137 years later – May 10, 2008 – fifty people gathered at the City Cemetery for two special events. The first was a talk by **Duncan Callicott**, who spoke to the group about his ancestor, Grand Master Wilkins Tannehill. The second event was a ceremony at the Cumberland Lodge No. 8 burial lot. **William R. Cooper** of Union, Ohio, great-grandson of Washington Cooper, was welcomed by Worshipful Master **W. M. Byrd** and Secretary **Jason Felts** of Cumberland Lodge No. 8. After introductions and a few preliminary remarks, current Lodge members dedicated a

new tombstone for Washington Cooper, replacing one long lost.

In 1845 Cumberland Lodge No. 8 purchased a burial lot and six years later bought the adjoining lot at the City Cemetery. Between 1846 and 1922, twenty-nine interments took place on this Lot. With the addition of Washington Cooper's marker, eight



The newly dedicated Cooper marker. (Photo by Kathy Laidler)



William Cooper speaks about his great grandfather, Washington Cooper. (Photo by Kathy Laidler)

Masons now have tombstones there. To learn the names of the 29 Masons buried on the Cumberland Lodge Lot, visit [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org). Anyone with additional information about these Masons is urged to contact the Association.

## Master Gardeners Tour

by Robert Mather, Nashville City Cemetery Board member

The Nashville City Cemetery's Second Saturday Tour on April 12 featured the work of the Davidson County Master Gardeners at the cemetery. Project co-chairs **Lou Anne Sandlin** and **Robert Mather** conducted the first tour of the

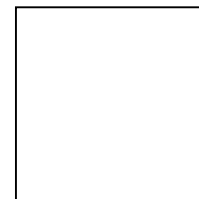


Project co-chairs Lou Anne Sandlin (above) and Robert Mather conducted the Master Gardeners Tour on April 12.

year with a gathering of about 30 people. The tour started at the four gardens in front of the Keeble Building, where volunteer Master Gardeners were busy weeding the beds of blue bearded iris, rose campion, lamb's ear, and budding yellow daylilies. Flowers planted in the cemetery are limited to those that would have grown there in the 1860s.

In the early days of the cemetery, many families would come to the cemetery once a month and tend to the graves in their family plots. They often brought flowers from their homes to plant there. Seventeen of the tombstones in the cemetery are called "bed tombs," having been designed in the shape of a bed, with a head and a foot. Flowers are planted in these "beds" to bloom all summer.

Tour members also visited the James Robertson plot, the oldest grave site, where the founders of Nashville were laid to rest. Boxwoods were planted along the path to the grave site during the 1940s. For the past three years Master Gardeners have been shaping those Boxwoods along with the boxwoods around the Keeble building. The most recent project of the Master Gardeners, who work at the cemetery during the spring and fall, is the "Garden Plot" at the McCrory gravesite, where the bridal veil spirea was just beginning to bloom on tour day.



**Address Correction Requested**

## 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 **Descendant's Day**, 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 (circle 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:  
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