

# Monuments & milestones

VOL 5 NO 1 SPRING/SUMMER 2009

## Sally Thomas (1787-1850)

by Jim Hoobler, Nashville City Cemetery Board member

Born into slavery in Charlottesville, Virginia, Sally Thomas, the slave of Charles Thomas, bore two sons to John, her owner's brother – John, born in 1808, and Henry, born a year later. Around 1817 Sally and her children were sent over 550 miles to Thomas family land near Nashville. Here her owner allowed her to take in laundry if she gave him some of the profits. Ceding control over her, he made her a "quasi-slave," who could rent her own house, move about freely, buy, sell, and negotiate her own business contracts. Although in time her owner even stopped requiring her to share her earnings with him, Sally was still legally considered his property.

In 1827 attorney John C. Catron fathered Sally's third son, James P. Thomas. Sally and her children lived then at the corner of Cherry (4th) and Deaderick Streets, a block from the Davidson County

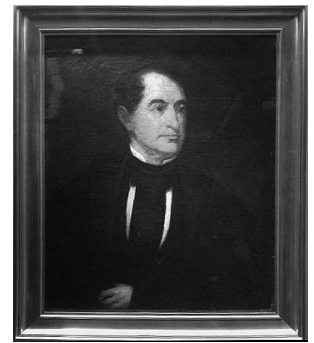
Courthouse. There she ran her laundry business, saving money to purchase the freedom of her children. Sally's oldest son, John, worked for a Nashville barge captain, even taking his last name. Captain Rapier, who had taught the young man to read and write, saved his own money to free John, and in 1829 his executors obtained permission from the Alabama General Assembly to use estate funds to purchase John's freedom.

In 1834 Sally learned that she, Henry, and James were being returned to Virginia to settle her owner's estate. Fearing they would be sold separately, she urged Henry to escape. Hiding by day, avoiding farms where he might

be spotted, Henry fled north to Louisville, Kentucky, only to be caught and jailed. Still chained, he miraculously escaped the first night in a stolen boat. Surviving a plunge over the Falls of The Ohio, he crossed into Indiana, where a sympathetic individual removed his chains. Henry eventually arrived in Buffalo, New York, where he worked as a barber; he later moved to Canada.

Meanwhile, to keep James from being sold away from her, Sally persuaded attorney Ephraim Hubbard Foster to help her buy the child from John Martin, the Thomas relative who owned him. Martin wanted \$400 for the seven-year-old, but Sally had saved only \$350. Foster agreed to lend her the other \$50 and arranged the sale with Martin. Although Sally soon paid off her debt to Ephraim Foster and held James's bill of sale and "free papers," under Tennessee law James was still considered Foster's slave. Since the 1834 state Constitution required free blacks to leave Tennessee immediately or return to slavery, James had to appear to be someone's property in order to remain in Nashville.

Sally purchased her own freedom with the assistance of Godfrey M. Fogg (nephew of educator Francis B. Fogg, and law partner of Ephraim Foster), who loaned her part of the money. Deeds in the Davidson County Courthouse list Sally as the property of G. M. Fogg, and James as the property of Ephraim Foster — legally Sally and James would remain slaves until the courts ruled them free and permitted them



Ephraim Hubbard Foster by Washington Cooper, Tennessee State Museum Collection



John C. Catron by Chester Harding, Tennessee State Museum Collection

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

THE NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION (NCCA) is off to an exciting start this year, having just been notified that our organization has been chosen by the Metro Historical Commission as the recipient of the annual Commissioners' Award. This honor is bestowed upon one Davidson County resident or organization each year in recognition of a commitment to the preservation, education, and/or advocacy of Nashville history. The NCCA's award comes at a moment when we have made great progress, not only on physical improvements to the grounds themselves, but also in the quality and abundance of programs connected to the cemetery, including the increased availability of online burial data and other historic information. The NCCA will be receiving its award at a ceremony and reception on May 21st at 4:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Downtown Public Library at 615 Church Street. All of our friends in the community are invited to join the NCCA Board on this auspicious occasion.

Our events calendar is once again filled with our annual offerings, such as the Memorial Day 5K Dash, Flag Day, Special Saturday Tours, and the Living History Tour. The Living History Tour should be particularly interesting this year, as it comes at a time when our city has the honor of hosting the annual conference of the National Preservation Trust. The NCCA board and conference organizers are coordinating our efforts in preparation for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to show off one of our city's finest historic resources to preservationists from across the nation. In addition to our usual events, we are also planning a special evening reception in the cemetery in August to showcase the implementation of the Master Plan that was adopted in 2007. It will be an opportunity for descendants, NCCA members, and others with an interest in preserving the past to see all of the restoration work that has been completed on the site.

Finally, while we are a thriving organization, we certainly have room to grow – in both our financial capabilities and our volunteer base. Please visit our website: [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org). There you will find more information about volunteer opportunities within our organization, you can renew your membership contributions, and you can access a remarkable amount of online information about the cemetery. See you this year at the Nashville City Cemetery!



**Jason Holleman**  
NCCA President

## Metro Historical Commission Honors NCCA

Each spring the Historical Commission of Nashville and Davidson County presents its **Commissioners' Award**, which was established to recognize individuals, groups, and/or projects that are dedicated to the preservation, education, and/or advocacy of Nashville history.

This year the Commission will recognize the Nashville City Cemetery Association (NCCA) with its Commissioners' Award for the organization's dedication to the preservation, restoration, and protection of the Nashville City Cemetery, which is considered by many to be the outstanding outdoor museum in the middle Tennessee area. By undertaking diligent

research, conducting tours and lectures, campaigning for continued capital funding, and planning for the cemetery's perpetual care, the Nashville City Cemetery Association has helped to return the cemetery to a place worthy of respect and enjoyment for residents and visitors alike.

The award will be officially presented at a ceremony and reception on **May 21st at 4:30 pm** in the auditorium of the **Nashville Public Library at 615 Church Street**. Descendants of those buried in the cemetery as well as interested friends are invited to join the NCCA Board at this event.

**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  
Newsletter Design: Jeff Thomeycroft

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

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**NASHVILLE**  
**City Cemetery**  
1001 FOURTH AVENUE SOUTH

## Angeline Brady: Step-by-Step Discovery

by Fletch Coke, NCCA Board Member

(Introduction: As this issue's calendar and cover story indicate, the NCCA Board of Directors will soon dedicate a new tombstone for former slave Sally Thomas. But Sally's City Cemetery neighbor, Angeline Brady, has her own interesting story. By following the steps outlined in this article, you can discover more about this fascinating woman while learning how the NCCA website can become an indispensable aid to your own research. Keep reading — there is a surprise at the end of the article. — Ed.)

In February 2009, by using the 1908 Plat Map of tombstones at City Cemetery along with on-site investigation, Fred Zahn of the Metro Historical Commission reported that he had located, in Section 31, the gravesites of both Sally Thomas and Angeline Brady. To learn more about Angeline Brady, follow these steps to sources on the NCCA website and print or copy carefully what you find there. You can use the same steps to study anyone buried at City Cemetery.

**1st Step:** Go to the NCCA Home Page: [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/index.htm](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org/index.htm) Click on the link for Inscriptions and then on the first letter of the person's last name. (You will frequently be able to start with this step, but you can skip it for now — Angeline Brady did not have a tombstone in 2005.)

**2nd Step:** At the top of any page, click on the link to Resource Maps. Two map images will appear. Click on the 1908 map to enlarge it. Now locate Section 31 (near the bottom of the map) and click on that section. Section 31 will appear in a PDF file — enlarge it until you can read it, and look carefully for "Angeline Brady 1827-1853," near Cherry Avenue. Notice that Sally Thomas is in the adjacent plot.

**3rd Step:** At the top of any page, click Inscriptions. Scroll about halfway down the page, and click on Smith 1908. Look for "Brady, Angeline." (Note that names are not always listed in perfect order, and that parts of the website may still be under construction.) You should find "Brady, Angeline, 1827-1853."

**4th Step:** At the top of any page, click Interments, then on Interment Records 1846-present. This will take you to a Nashville Public Library search page — type "Brady" in the search engine and click on "Search." Two Brady records will appear, but neither one is for Angeline.

**5th Step:** Return to the Interments page. At the bottom of the page, type in "Angeline" and click "Search." The page that opens will list African American interments. The list showing all of the burials between 1846 and 1979



*On To Liberty, 1867, Theodor Kaufman, Metropolitan Museum of Art*

contains 6,000 names! Scroll down until you find "Angeline, slave to Alx Allison, June 30, 1853, age 30."

**6th Step:** Now go back to the Interments page and click once again on Interment records 1846-present. On the NPL page, this time type "Angeline" in the search engine and click on "Search." You will get a list that includes seven women and an infant. You know now (from 2nd Step) that Angeline died in 1853, so you can find her easily at the top of the list, with her complete record, including cause of death. Do not be surprised to see slight differences in ages, spelling of names, and other details between the tombstones and Interment records — 19th century records are littered with such errors. And remember that the date in the Interment book is the date of burial, not of death.

**7th Step:** In 1971 Jill Garrett finished many years of recording City Cemetery inscriptions, but her findings were never published. Sometimes she provided an epitaph or a family connection that was not listed by Smith 1908. On the Inscriptions page, scroll down until you find the entry for "Garrett," and then look for "Brady, Angeline." Garrett's record looks like this: "Angeline Brady Wife of Montreville 1827-1853." (Although this site may still be under construction, you should be able to find Angeline Brady's name. Come back later for additional names.)

We promised you a surprise, and here it is: on **Saturday, May 16, 2009**, you are invited to the Nashville City Cemetery at **2:00 p.m.** for a special ceremony in which we will dedicate replacement tombstones for both Sally Thomas and Angeline Brady! Please join us to honor these two important women from Nashville's history.

To learn more about Alexander Allison, or to find out where Angeline Brady lived and worked in Nashville, visit "Links" on our home page. If you are connected to Angeline Brady and can provide additional history, please contact NCCA.

And last, but definitely not least, if you haven't yet discovered our obituary collection, be sure to click on the Obituaries link. You won't find Angeline Brady there, but you will find a wealth of interesting and useful information about many other individuals buried in the City Cemetery. This incredible database was created by the dedicated and generous Sarah Armistead and is presently under the care of Judy Matter of the NCCA Board of Directors.

# 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.

**Special Saturday Tour Series, May 16, 2009, 2:00-2:45 p.m.**

## **DEDICATION OF SALLY THOMAS MARKER**

Sally Thomas, a Nashville slave permitted to live as though she were free, built up a successful business as a highly respected laundress, saving her money to buy herself and her children their freedom. 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 destroyed it. The Association will dedicate a new marker as a tribute to this brave and hard-working Nashvillian.

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

## **THE ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY DASH**

Our annual 5K Run/Walk will begin at Greer Stadium, 534 Chestnut Street, at 8:00 a.m. Visit the Nashville Striders website for registration forms and information. <http://www.nashvillestriders.com> or <http://www.active.com>

**Saturday, June 13, 2009**

## **CELEBRATION OF FLAG DAY**

This celebration is sponsored annually by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Check our website for time and other details.

**Special Saturday Tour Series, June 27, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## **"THE LITTLE ONES"**

Stephanie Logan, NCCA Board member, will talk about the lives of children in the 19th century – their clothing, education, games and activities, and more as she introduces you to some of the little ones whose brief journey ended at the City Cemetery.

**No scheduled events in July, August, or September – Stay cool!**

**October 13-17, 2009,**

## **THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION 2009 CONFERENCE**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has chosen Nashville as the site of its 2009 Conference. Its theme this year is "Sustaining the Future in Harmony with Our Pasts." One highlight of the week is expected to be the NCCA's Annual Living History Tour.

**Saturday, October 17, 2009**

## **THE ANNUAL LIVING HISTORY TOUR**

This is one of our few events that 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 popular event makes a delightful outing for the whole family.

**October 19-21, 2009**

## **NATIONAL CEMETERY PRESERVATION SUMMIT**

The National Center for Preservation and Technology Training (NCPTT) will hold its Nationwide Cemetery Preservation Summit in Music City this year, starring the Nashville City Cemetery!

**Special Saturday Tour Series, November 14, 2009, 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## **CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS**

Civil War Soldiers, a tour of some of the military burial sites in the City Cemetery, has been led for the past several years by John Allyn, battlefield preservationist and NCCA Board member. No matter how much you know about the Civil War, you will always learn something new on these tours. Not to be missed!

**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!**



## Sally Thomas (continued from Page 1)

to remain in Tennessee as free persons. Regrettably, Sally died in 1850, before such a ruling was made. James, now running a barbershop in the house Sally had rented at Deaderick and Cherry, purchased a grave site for her in City Cemetery, erecting a tombstone inscribed, "Sally Thomas 1787-1850." On March 6, 1851, Ephraim Foster petitioned the Davidson County Court to allow him to free James. The court found in favor of the petition, Foster posted a bond, and James was free. James's own petition to be permitted

to remain in Nashville was also approved, with the posting of a good character bond.

Ironically, James was the natural son of Tennessee's Chief Justice, John C. Catron, whom Andrew Jackson had appointed to the U. S. Supreme Court during his last days in office, when the court was expanded to nine members. Thus Catron's Dred Scott ruling that African Americans were property and had no citizenship rights applied to his own son.

### 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.



The early 19th century markers for Mary Mackenzie (left) and Hester Jefferson (right). (Photo courtesy of the Nashville Public Library, The Nashville Room.)

The same markers fifty-three years later. An example of how quickly history can be lost to the elements. (Photo by Jeff Thomeycroft)

## Master Gardeners Demonstration

by Robert Mather, Nashville City Cemetery Board member

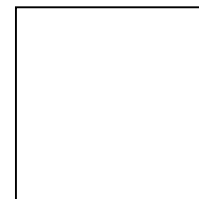
The Davidson County Master Gardeners held their fourth annual BOXWOOD TRIMMING demonstration at the Nashville City Cemetery on Saturday, February 14, 2009. Over twenty Master Gardeners and "Interns" shared

a hands-on lesson in the proper way to trim boxwood. **LouAnne Sandlin** and **Robert Mather**, project co-chairs for the City Cemetery Project, provided instructions for "clouding," a method of pruning up to five inches from a limb on the outside of the plant in order to allow light to get to the center. Following this process with the entire plant allows the gardener to trim and shape the boxwood. Since only a little trimming is done each year (in February and March), it may take several years to get and keep boxwood in the desired shape and size.

The day of the demonstration was sunny and cool but just right for working outside. Boxwood plantings in front of the Keeble building, the Robinson family plot, and two other areas were given the proper attention and are looking neat and elegant. As usual, those participating in the event learned a little of the history of the City Cemetery as they were working, and there were many questions. Everyone was invited to return on **Saturday, April 18, at 10:00 a.m., for the SPECIAL SATURDAY TOUR** that Sandlin and Mather will be leading at the Cemetery that day. Some of those attending this workshop had never visited the Historic Nashville City Cemetery before and expressed great interest in returning and learning more about its history and its recent restoration. We can expect to see many of these Master Gardeners helping with the annual Living History Tour later this year.



Lou Anne Sandlin (second from right) instructs volunteers on proper Boxwood trimming techniques.



**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 **Descendants' 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:  
P.O. Box 150733, Nashville, TN. 37215-0733.