



NCCA February Newsletter 2017



A welcome from 2017 NCCA President, Jim Hoobler

Dear NCCA Members and Friends,

The Nashville City Cemetery Association is moving ahead with several projects, due to the leadership of Todd Breyer over the past year, and to an excellent board of directors. We are going to update the second edition of the book on the history of the cemetery. We are also going to publish a book of photographs and biographies of the "residents" in our cemetery. Lynn Maddox is the author of that book. Debra Brewington and Fletch Coke will be helping out on that project. Fletch will also begin work on doing a book on the members of the Robertson family interred at City Cemetery, and discuss those founders rolls in the birth of our city.

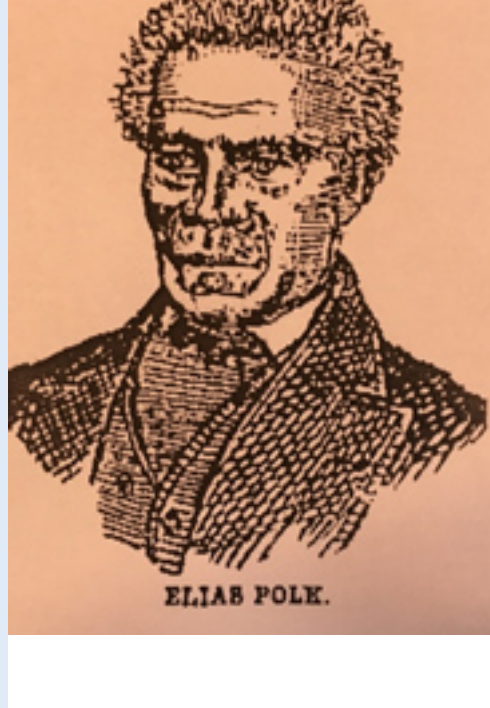
We have looked into the ways that we communicate with the membership, and how by using an electronic newsletter we can expand what we send out, and make it much more timely. In an effort to serve everyone though, we realize that some do not have e-mail. So, we are asking two things of you. Please send us an e-mail address if you have one, so that you can receive the expanded newsletter. If you do not have e-mail, please be certain that we know that, so that we can print and mail one to you.

We are working on our next Living History Tour, which will focus on the frontier period, and the inter-action between the peoples who already claimed this land, the Native American's, the slaves that were brought here by the first settlers, and those intrepid pioneers who crated Nashville. This is the 250th anniversary of Andrew Jackson's birth in 1767, so these will be people that he knewhe Hermitage will be helping us with costumes and publicity.

Always wishing to learn how other groups work with some of the same tasks, several of us visited Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta. It too is city owned, and has many of the leading citizens of that city buried in it. They have a large permanent staff, an on-site office, and host many events throughout the year. They were kind enough to give most of their day to us, and we learned a great deal, which we hope to use at our site. Some of our new board are already communicating and networking with them to improve what we do, and to serve Nashville better.

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your support for the organization, its board, and our work. I am very grateful to those who serve on the board, and the members whose support makes our efforts bear fruit. We will have a productive, and exciting year ahead, and it is all of you who will make that happen.

Jim Hoobler



Elias Polk

UPCOMING EVENT - March 4

Dedication Ceremony at NCC - March 4, 2017

Honoring lives of Elias Polk, Mary Polk and Matilda Polk

On March 4, 2017 at 1:30 P.M. Nashville City Cemetery in coordination with the James K. Polk Home and Museum in Columbia, Tennessee will honor the lives of Elias Polk, Mary Polk, and Matilda Polk through a dedication ceremony that will include the laying of replacement tombstones at Nashville City Cemetery. Reverend Dr. Lester of Clark Memorial UMC will speak at the ceremony.

Elias Polk was born into slavery in 1806 in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina in the same house as future President James K. Polk. As an infant Elias was moved with the Polk family west to Tennessee where they settled on a small farm in Maury County. At age eighteen Elias was sent to live with James and Sarah Polk at the time of their marriage.

Over the next twenty-five years, Elias worked very closely with James Polk as he rose through the political ranks as a U.S. Congressman and Governor of Tennessee. In 1844 when James Polk became President of the United States, Elias traveled to Washington, D.C., but would frequently return to Tennessee doing various jobs for the Polks.

After the death of President Polk in 1849 Elias remained at "Polk Place" in Nashville with Sarah Polk. Shortly after the Civil War he began his own political career. Elias became a strong conservative voice promoting the Democratic Party. In 1867 he was even considered as a candidate for the General Assembly. He worked to create many clubs for African Americans throughout the south, including: The Colored Seymour and Blair Club, the Colored Men for Greeley, the Colored Tilden and Hendricks Club, the Independent Colored Conservative National Club, and the Colored Agricultural and Mechanical Association of Tennessee. Elias was appointed Porter in the Tennessee State Legislature in 1871 and was appointed a similar post in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1876.

Throughout his life Elias Polk often boasted to have seen every president from John Quincy Adams to Grover Cleveland and would continue to see them all as long as he should live. Elias Polk died in December 1886 in Washington, D.C. After his death his wife, Mary Polk of New York (who was forty-one years younger than her husband) was left with a vast amount of debt. She had to take out advertisements in newspapers asking for funds to be raised to send Elias's body from Washington, D.C. to Nashville. With the help of many people Elias's remains were brought to Nashville by train and interred in Nashville City Cemetery on February 13, 1887. Mary Polk continued to live in Nashville until her death on August 22, 1888. She was laid to rest next to her husband in Nashville City Cemetery.

Matilda, sometimes called "Aunt Matilda," was born into slavery in 1739. She lived with the Childress family outside of Murfreesboro until 1824, when she was sent to live with James and Sarah Childress Polk in Columbia. Following the Polks' tenure in the White House, Matilda was moved to "Polk Place" in Nashville for the remainder of her remarkably long life. Sadly, she died in the 1849 cholera epidemic at the age of 110 and was buried in Nashville City Cemetery.

by Curators Zach Kinslow and Tom Price from the James K. Polk Home & Museum.

James K. Polk Home and Museum

www.jameskpolk.com

Museum located at 301 W.7th Street, Columbia, TN

A note from Membership Chair Steve Sirls



Hello everyone. I am now back on this board and have been asked to make more folks aware of our beautiful Nashville City Cemetery. Instead of thinking of it as a cemetery, think of it as an outdoor museum full of mystery and history of our city. All walks of life and famous families are buried there or will be reburied there soon. Charles Dickinson is even there now for sure. Charles lived in my house with his wife Jane Erwin Dickinson at the time that he was killed in a duel with Andrew Jackson. Andrew was also shot but lived to tell about it. Charles was reburied in the NCC after his remains were discovered on Carden Avenue. We even had a beautiful memorial for him here after the service, complete with funeral pie. That is chess pie for those who might be wondering.

Please renew your membership or donate by sending a check or using a credit card and send it to the P.O. box listed in this newsletter. Please let us know if you know others that would like to be involved with our many programs. They could also join as members or as donors to The Living History Tour or the Memorial Day Dash.

I am so happy to be back in the fold learning more about our city and the history that makes us so unique.

Regards,
Steve
stevesirls@comcast.net

become a member!

donate through Giving Matters

Master Gardener Corner

From Robert "Bob" Mather

President Master Gardeners of Davidson County & Co-Chair of the City Cemetery Project. Master Gardener Corner & NCCA Board Secretary

Mark your calendar for the Master Gardener's Tour at NCA –

**May 13, 2017
10:00 -11:30 a.m.**

While we have been indoors most of winter, thinking of all those wonderful plants we will have once spring arrives, the Hellebore (Helleborus) has been showing those distinctive blooms of white, green, pink, purple, and cream. This perennial, also known as Lenten rose, has toothed, leathery leaves with long-lasting flowers produced as soon as January. The year round foliage persists through shade and snow. They tolerate a wide range of soils and exposures, from neutral to acid soil and sun to part shade, though be sure to check individual species. There are several new varieties and cultivars for the genus Helleborus, but I still prefer the old fashion white or pink as we have at the Nashville City Cemetery.

The Master Gardeners of Davidson County have been tending the flowerbeds at the City Cemetery since 1998 and offering a hand-on class for Boxwood care and trimming for the past 8 years. Our demonstration is open to Master Gardeners, our new class of Master Gardeners and members of the Nashville City Cemetery Association. Our next demonstration will be Saturday February 25th form 9am – noon. Please feel free to come join us, just bring your gloves hand clippers. There is limited parking in the Cemetery, but available along Oak Street to the north of the Cemetery. We will reschedule incase of rain.

Also join us for our annual "Master Gardener tour of the Cemetery" on May 13th from 10 -11:30.

Come visit your Nashville City Cemetery.
Robert Mather

