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Transformitive Projects

2015 Signature Initiatives at Hollywood Cemetery

A number of signature projects will mark 2015 as a banner year for Hollywood Cemetery and Friends of Hollywood. These include the dedication of a completely restored Palmer fence, the undertaking of an historic genealogy/digitization project, and groundbreaking for a first scenic overlook beside the James River.

Palmer Fence

Restoration of the Palmer Fence in Presidents Circle was one of the first and most ambitious projects identified by Friends in 2009. The fence dates to



Members of the Board of the Anne Carter and Walter R. Robins, Jr. Foundation (left to right): John O’Grady, Hilary Smith, Rita Smith, and Fred Carleton

the mid 19th Century and is named for the family plot that it surrounds. Created in the rinceau style (from the French meaning “foliage”), it is one of the most ornate cast iron fences in Richmond. For years, the fence suffered from weather, tree damage, and because of its proximity to Presidents Circle roadways, encounters with vehicles of every size. Presidents Circle has been closed to vehicles for several decades.

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Work has been underway in fits and starts for several years. Pieces of the original fence were used to create molds from which cast iron impressions were made. Iron casting has been an abandoned skill and metalworking technique for over a hundred years. About two hundred and twelve linear feet of new fence had to be crafted, including an extremely challenging curved corner section. Fortunately, the original gate and gate posts have survived and been reinstalled in their original place.

The newly restored Palmer Fence was dedicated in a ceremony of appreciation held on Friday, November 6. In attendance were representatives of the **Anne Carter and Walter R. Robins, Jr. Foundation**, generous sponsors of the project, the Friends Board, and Hollywood Cemetery Board of Directors. The Foundation was established in 1995 in memory of Mr. Robins and in honor Anne Carter Robins by their daughters, Anne Carter Mallory and M. Bruce Robins.

Genealogy/Digitization

Not unlike many organizations over the decades, Hollywood Cemetery has maintained information about individuals and families interred in the Cemetery using paper records. While the



Photographing and uploading 31,000 markers and monuments

information is generally accurate, numerous data omissions have been identified (e.g., Date of Birth or Death, exact location, etc.). The most reliable sources for this missing information are grave markers and monuments. A pilot project to begin capturing this information by digital photography was performed in 2013 using volunteers. A single section of the cemetery containing a small number of markers and monuments was selected. Digital images were then uploaded on the cemetery's web site where data could be compared to paper records and necessary corrections made.

The enormity of the task of digitally photographing just a limited number of markers and monuments convinced Friends that a well developed project would be required. Through a generous challenge grant from **The Cabell Foundation**, a digitization project is now fully underway. Web Cemeteries, Inc. based in Virgenville, Pennsylvania spent two weeks in the cemetery earlier this fall.

Thirty-one thousand marker and monument images were created and uploaded directly onto Hollywood's records database. As the project progresses, a visitor can open Hollywood's web site on a personal device or home computer, locate a gravesite, extract basic individual information, view an image of the marker or monument, and in many instances, read an obituary or other document of record. Once in the cemetery, the visitor can be guided to a destination by GPS.

Hollywood is believed to be in the vanguard of historic sites utilizing technology in this manner.

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Friends of Hollywood is still seeking donations to meet The Cabell Foundation \$100,000 challenge grant to complete the digitization project.

James River Overlook

After a year of planning, ground was broken on November 6 for construction of the first overlook of the James from Hollywood. Hollywood Cemetery has been recognized for its spectacular panoramas of Virginia's "first river." The overlook will be a classic design and constructed of granite. It is to be located on a parcel of open ground immediately east of the Palmer Chapel Mausoleum. Completion of the project is scheduled for 2016.

Generous funding for the overlook project has been received from the **James River Garden Club** (in recognition of its 100th anniversary) and **Dominion Foundation**. Both the JRGC and Dominion have underwritten several Hollywood projects in recent years. JRGC members are frequent Hollywood visitors and faithful volunteers; Dominion is the Cemetery's very visible and supportive neighbor.

Van Yahres Studio of Charlottesville has prepared design rendering and site plans for the project. Messer Contracting Company of Richmond will serve as general contractor. These two nationally recognized organizations are well known to



Representatives of the James River Garden Club and Dominion celebrate the overlook groundbreaking

Hollywood and served in similar roles for the extensive Presidents Circle renovation project completed in 2012.

The site provides stunning views of the River, and the addition of the overlook will provide a special place for visitors to come for quiet reflection. Because the views of the James are a destination point for visitors to the Cemetery, we have included the landscaping and beautification efforts as part of our long-range plans.



Wilfred E. Cutshaw (1838 – 1907)

Richmond City Engineer Extraordinaire

Many of Richmond's beautiful buildings and landscapes which we enjoy today are the works of Wilfred E. Cutshaw, Richmond's City Engineer from 1873-1907, who is interred at Hollywood Cemetery. His projects include schools, armories, markets, parks, tree-lined boulevards and streets, Old City Hall, and the establishment of Richmond's Urban Forestry Program.



Wilfred E. Cutshaw

Saylor's Creek just days before Lee's surrender. After the war, he taught engineering and mathematics at VMI until his appointment as Richmond's City Engineer in 1873.

Inspired by the American Park Movement, Cutshaw worked tirelessly to transform war-torn Richmond by developing spaces for recreation and entertainment which he skillfully combined with necessary infrastructure and utility improvements. He embellished the Byrd Park reservoir, completed in 1876, with tree-lined carriage paths, graveled promenades and lakes creating New Reservoir Park, renamed **William Byrd Park** in 1906. The **Gothic Revival Pump-House** which he designed and built on the edge of the canal in 1893, included a second floor entertainment hall for parties and dances above the first floor pumping equipment.

Monroe Park, Richmond's first municipal park, was originally an agricultural fair grounds and military camp. In 1877, Cutshaw re-designed it with a radial pattern of walks and by 1904, he had added 300 trees of 26 different species. From the streets fanning west of Monroe Park, Cutshaw created triangle parks at Lombardy, Harrison, and Meadow Streets. During the 1880's and 1890's, Cutshaw designed and built **Gamble's Hill, Taylor's Hill** and **Libby Hill Parks, Chimborazo Park, Jefferson Park** and **Riverside Park**, all offering spectacular

views of the river and the city from these promontory sites.

In 1890, Cutshaw introduced the **Urban Forestry Program** to Richmond when he established the city's first tree nursery, now the Byrd Park Vita Course. By 1904, the nursery had distributed 50,000 trees to beautify the city's streets, parks, and cemeteries. Cutshaw's 1904 report "**Trees of the City**" lists over 60 specimens and varieties of trees propagated on the grounds. Some of the original trees remain in the park today.

After more than a century, many of Cutshaw's buildings are still in use today. The brick and granite Italianate **Stonewall Jackson School** (1880) at 1520 West Main St., today houses professional offices and a restaurant. The handsome red brick and granite **Randolph St. School** (1896) has been converted to apartments for seniors. Clay Ward Market (1891), once the **City Auditorium** at 911 West Cary St., is now VCU's Cary St. Gym, a posh recreational facility. **Steamer Company #5** (1883) at 200 West Marshall St., once a fire and police station, today houses the **Gallery 5** arts center. The **Leigh Street Armory** (1895) will soon house the **Black History Museum**. Cutshaw's commanding authority influenced the city's decision to adopt Elijah Myers Gothic Revival design for **Old City Hall** (1894).

Today, we have inherited a city made beautiful by Wilfred Emory Cutshaw, a dedicated public servant "whose greatest ambition was to turn every available space into recreation resorts for the public" (*Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 1907). Cutshaw is buried in Hollywood Cemetery, Section 2, Lot 13, just north of the Ginter mausoleum. On December 20, 1907, the day after his death, the *Richmond News Leader* tribute read:



We believe the future will show that he was a far-seeing enthusiast and was planning and thinking of a far greater city than most of us can dream of. Years hence his work and purposes will be appreciated and people will realize his wisdom.

Kathryn L. Whittington
October, 2015

A Tour of Hollywood for the Hearing Impaired

Gallaudet Professor Leads ASL Walking Tour

As a small group gathers at the entrance to Hollywood Cemetery, Dr. Sharon Pajka welcomes them, silently. They smile and nod as she mouths words, waves her arms and makes small, intricate gestures with her fingers. Her June 18 tour of Hollywood Cemetery is the first to be conducted entirely in American Sign Language, for the benefit of deaf and hard of hearing visitors.

Although she is not deaf herself, Pajka, the chair of the English Department at Gallaudet University, suffers from Meniere's Disease, an inner ear disorder which causes vertigo and fluctuations in hearing. Doctors told her she would become deaf one day, so she and her mother took a sign language class. Her interest took off from there.



Dr. Sharon Pajka

"I love to chat with people," says Pajka, of her ASL gesturing. "So I just thought of it as, here's another community I can interact with." She wears her dark hair pulled into pigtails on the hot day.

She took guide school at the Valentine Museum in 2014 so that she could lead tours for her deaf friends. As for Hollywood, "I love this place. It's beautiful. I like the gardens. I like weird stuff," she says with a laugh. Pajka helped prune Hollywood's roses earlier this year, on the annual work day.

Her interest in cemeteries began at a young age since she grew up in a family of genealogists. "So as soon as I could read I was running around in a cemetery, looking for names." Her favorite monument at Hollywood is that of Elvira Bruce, located under a tree near Presidents Circle. "It's gothic. It's got a great patina on it." Bruce is not famous, but Pajka enjoyed researching her story. She was a daughter of a plantation owner, and her second husband ended up being the third richest man in the U.S.

Her ASL tour includes some of the cemetery's best known monuments as well as those of several deaf or hard of hearing residents, including William Davis, the son of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, and Pulitzer Prize winning author Ellen Glasgow. "There is a rumor that she was buried with her ear horn," she says.

As the group walks through Hollywood's meandering lanes, Pajka punctuates her stories with gestures familiar to the group. For instance, for the word "garden," she pinches her fingers together and places them below her nose, as if smelling a flower.

After the tour, the group shared their experiences by email. "I enjoyed the peacefulness of the cemetery and how it is so closely connected to nature. I also enjoyed learning about the history and stories of the people who rest there," says Rhonda Jeter from New Kent. "My favorite place was the overlook of the James River."

"I enjoyed the history, the art and symbolism described on the grave sites," says Liz Leitch of Glen Allen, who is also an ASL interpreter.

Sign language tours of historic sites are hard to find, says Jeter. "I took the day off from work to be able to participate in the tour because it was an opportunity that I did not want to miss," she



An ASL Walking Tour

says. "I enjoyed just being with other deaf friends and sharing this experience with them."

As for Pajka, "She was outstanding," says Traci Branch of Chester. "Not only was her ASL fluent – clear and easy to understand – she was mind-blowing knowledgeable about the history of the cemetery."

Stay tuned—Pajka hopes to offer another tour in Spring 2016.

Many thanks to Sharon and the other staff at Hollywood for arranging the ASL tour and welcoming us. I hope that you will offer ASL tours on a regular basis to give other deaf and hard of hearing people the opportunity to explore this wonderful place. Rhonda Jeter, New Kent

President Monroe's "Birdcage" Undergoes Extensive Restoration

In the upcoming months, visitors will notice a missing piece on the Hollywood Cemetery skyline. The monument of James Monroe is undergoing a



Monroe's Granite Sarcophagus

historic restoration in recognition of the bicentennial of his election as the fifth U.S. president. Estimated to cost \$900,000, the Department of General Services is footing the bill for the year-long project.

"The Commonwealth has tended to Monroe's Tomb for over 150 years, but we've reached a point where patches, fillers and paint are no longer sufficient," says Richard F. Sliwoski, director of the Department of General Services. "This project is necessary if we are to preserve this national treasure for future generations."

Located in Presidents Circle, on a bluff overlooking the James River, the monument was designed by noted architect Albert Lybrock and installed in 1859. The black, cast-iron Gothic Revival monument, affectionately known as the "Birdcage" for its airy fretwork, is a National Historic Landmark that is also listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

"We were very pleased to learn that the Commonwealth of Virginia had budgeted resources for the restoration. The tomb had been 'bandaged' numerous times over the years, and it was due the attention it will receive in the restoration," says David Gilliam, the cemetery's general manager, who notes that the Monroe Tomb is one of the most popular sites for Hollywood's visitors.

All work will be completed in the Richmond area and done in accordance with the Secretary of Interior

Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. In September, a crew disassembled the cast iron canopy's 340 pieces (some which may be disassembled further) and removed them from the cemetery. Completed off-site, the restoration will take about nine months and be overseen by New York conservator Abigail Mack, with consultation by Andrew Baxter of Richmond. Both are highly regarded art conservators with clients such as the National Gallery of Art and Smithsonian Museums.

The conservation team is documenting the location and level of deterioration of each piece as it is disassembled. Based upon the findings of a laser scan, an estimated 40% of the pieces will need to be recast.

"Our first question was, 'Gosh, does it have to be removed? Does it have to be reassembled?' Once we saw the report and realized the extent

of internal damage, then we certainly agreed that the DGS is doing the right thing in undertaking a thorough restoration of it," says Peter E. Broadbent, Jr., a Richmond



The restored "Birdcage" will be gray, the original color

attorney who is the vice-president of the James Monroe Memorial Foundation, which, among its works, oversees an annual wreath-laying cemetery at the tomb each April 28, the date of Monroe's birthday.

A new sign will provide historic information about Monroe (**see page 7**), whose reburial from New York to Richmond in 1858, on the centennial of his death, "really put Hollywood Cemetery on the map," says Kelly Jones Wilbanks, executive director of Friends of Hollywood.

Monroe's reburial sparked a renewed interest in his life and works, and speeches at the time recognized his success in bringing the country together. "Monroe was seen as a symbol of national unity," says Broadbent, though he notes

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that the harmony was short-lived. “Unfortunately, three years later came the start of the Civil War.”

The burial site is owned by the state. “It was the intent of the Commonwealth of Virginia to have all of the eight Virginia sons who became U.S. Presidents buried in this circle,” says Gilliam. While John Tyler, the tenth U.S. president, was buried in Presidents Circle in 1862, “they were only successful in having Monroe reburied here.”

Monroe’s granite sarcophagus will remain in place and be protected by fencing throughout the restoration. One



Disassembling Monroe’s Tomb

change for visitors might be the color. Original photos of the Birdcage show it to be closer in hue to its lighter granite foundation; a paint analysis is currently underway.

Whatever the color, Broadbent is looking forward to seeing the renovated monument, expected to be completed by September 2016. “It’s a very historic monument and an architectural masterpiece in its own right,” he says. “It’s certainly emblematic of Hollywood Cemetery.”



The team to restore Monroe’s Tomb

JAMES MONROE MONUMENT



James Monroe by John Vanderlyn 1816.

James Monroe

Fifth President James Monroe was born April 28, 1758 in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

While attending the College of William and Mary he joined in the struggle for independence from Great Britain. James Monroe served with distinction during the Revolutionary War, fighting in six battles and severely wounded at

Trenton. He was praised by George Washington for his bravery and ability, and finished the war serving as an aide to Governor Thomas Jefferson.

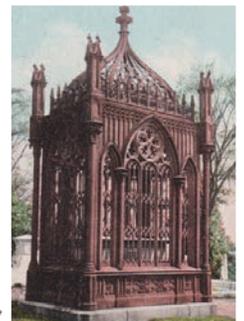
Monroe spent most of his life in public service, including the Virginia legislature, the Continental Congress, the U.S. Senate, as Minister to France, England and Spain, as Governor of Virginia, as Secretary of State and Secretary of War before his election as President. His two terms as President, 1817-1825, were known as the Era of Good Feelings and he remained immensely popular throughout his public career. His 1823 Monroe Doctrine on the rights of national self-determination remains the cornerstone of American foreign policy.

James Monroe died July 4, 1831 in New York City, where he was living with a daughter, and was buried there. In the 1850’s, Virginia requested that Monroe be reburied in Richmond. In 1858, the centennial of his birth, Monroe’s casket was brought back to Richmond by

steamboat, accompanied by New York’s Seventh Regiment with impressive ceremonies in New York and Richmond. Monroe was reburied in Hollywood Cemetery, ensuring its prominence in Richmond.

The Monroe monument, erected in 1859, was designed in an ornate Gothic revival style by prominent Richmond architect Albert Lybrock, and manufactured of cast iron by Perot and Wood of Philadelphia.

The monument, nicknamed the “Birdcage”, will be restored by the Commonwealth of Virginia and replaced by November 2016, the bicentennial of James Monroe’s election as President.



Tomb of James Monroe 1905, by Detroit Publishing Co.

Reprinted courtesy of James Monroe Memorial Foundation and Acorn Sign Graphics

Donald Toney Retires; Kenny Jarrell Named New Foreman

On April 7, Donald Toney retired from his position as Grounds Foreman, after 46 years with Hollywood Cemetery. A native of West Virginia, he heard about an opening at the cemetery from his father, who was working in Richmond at the time. “So I got on the Greyhound, I came out here, 17 years old, and just started working,” he says. “I loved Hollywood from the get go.”



Donald Toney

Back then, the graves were all dug by hand. Around 1970 – 1971, he was the first to start using a back hoe for that purpose. The cemetery had actually bought a new backhoe in 1959, he says, but it sat unused because the “old-timers” were resistant to change. “We’ve come a long way,” he says, with a laugh.

Over the years, he’s often put in 90-100 hour work weeks, putting in extra time handling security at night—and making enough through the long hours to put his four daughters (one is now deceased) through private school.

He remembers taking ice breaks with the older workers, up by Williams Circle—his favorite spot in the cemetery. “They’d get two big blocks of ice and some coolers and I’d get an ice pick,” he recalls. Another memory: “All the funeral homes, they used to give us [the workers] a dozen eggs, a carton of cigarettes, fruit cake, a little bottle of whiskey at Christmas.”

He is grateful to the board and all of the staff at Hollywood, noting how much he enjoyed helping General Manager David Gilliam transform the cemetery. “We’d become working partners. We had in our minds these things we wanted to do,” he says—such as new plantings, roads and drain systems—that Toney helped put in place.

In his retirement, Toney enjoys photography, gardening, helping neighbors with their yards and going fishing with his wife, Mabel, who works as an administrative assistant in the cemetery’s office. He still comes to

the cemetery on Sundays, as a volunteer, to help with weeding and other tasks.

“Donald Toney was an invaluable employee to Hollywood. His length of service enabled him to know so much about every area of the landscape. His dedication and true caring for the property has been a bonus to the cemetery’s operation and upkeep over the years,” says Gilliam. The board recognized him with a plaque and “a resolution spread upon the historical minutes of the cemetery as well as a retirement benefit that will continue throughout his life.”

In April, longtime employee Kenny Jarrell was named the new Grounds Foreman. Jarrell grew up in Oregon Hill. “That’s how I got the job here because I was so close I could just walk down. I was 16 when I started [part-time, in June 1990]. My first jobs were painting fences or watering new shrubs, trees or sweeping stones. Until I was 18, then I could operate lawn mowers and other machinery,” he says. After graduating from Thomas Jefferson High School, he began working full-time at the cemetery in August 1991.



Kenny Jarrell

“Kenny Jarrell was the logical choice to become foreman. He has worked at the cemetery since he worked summers while still in high school at age 16. Kenny knows the place well, and has learned a great deal about the operations, maintenance and service expectations of our families throughout his nearly 25 years of service,” says Gilliam. As an employee, “he is very thorough and detail oriented. Kenny understands the importance of working together for a common goal: to provide the best possible service to our families and maintain the excellent standard of maintenance of the property.”

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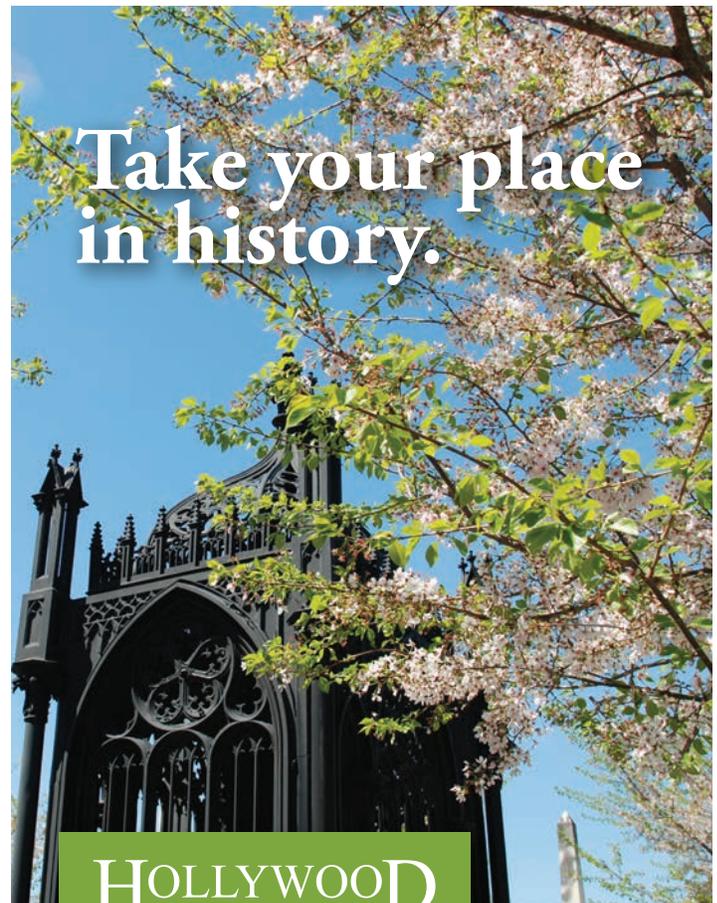
Jarrell manages a crew of about 9-10 full-time workers, and also oversees the variety of contractors who lend their support to the care of Hollywood. Like Toney, who he says “taught him what he needed to know” for the job, he is a hands-on worker. He likes to start early in the morning. “I show up a few hours early, and patrol the cemetery and see what needs to be done. So when the guys get here, we’re ready to go.”

The various sections are on a two-week rotation; meaning it takes two weeks to complete the mowing and maintenance for the entire cemetery. In terms of work load, “the funerals come first, obviously,” he says. Jarrell does most of the backhoe operating himself.

In terms of challenges over the years, he says, “the worst storm I think was Isabel. We had 70-80 trees down, we couldn’t even go down a road it was so devastating. It was staggering to me because at my house [near Virginia Center Commons], there were some high winds but I didn’t see any trees down. Then I got to Hollywood and the whole place is destroyed.”

“I like outside work, I always have,” he says. “Even when I get home, I’m outdoors.” Jarrell is married and has two daughters, ages 9 and 11.

As for his management style, after training his crew, “What Donald kind of did is let everybody be their own boss to an extent. And that’s what I do with my crew now because I like that aspect of it.”



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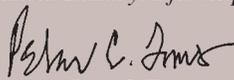
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We are indeed grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Friends in 2015 through October 31. You have enabled us to raise awareness of Hollywood and to continue vital monument and fence restoration. Thank you for helping us to preserve Hollywood Cemetery for generations to come.



Peter C. Toms
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