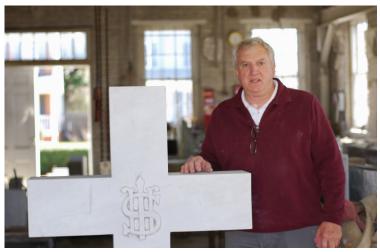


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SPRING 2014 • VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1

A.P. Grappone and Sons A Century-Old Partner with Hollywood Cemetery

66 A re you sure you don't want to take off your coat? It's a little dusty in here," says Tony Grappone, as he leads a visitor from the sales office into the workshop. A.P. Grappone and Sons, his family business, has for more than 100 years carved most of the stone monuments in Hollywood Cemetery. Headstones of all sizes stand upright on the floor and lie sideways on workbenches. An idling sandblaster—the source of the dust—hisses.



Anthony E. ("Tony") Grappone, Jr. with latin cross carved for Presidents Circle

Sandblaster aside, Grappone's firm is still best known for its custom designs and Old World craftsmanship. Grappone, the company's president and owner, is hand-carving a headstone: chiseling the letters and the delicate curved petals of a stone rose. Custom designs make up half of his work.



Lifting an 1,800 pound marble cross is a cautious business

"I like a challenge. When somebody else says they can't do it, then we will do it," he says.

His great-grandfather, Alfonso Grappone, moved to Richmond from Italy. He worked as a stonecutter, creating the stonework for Old City Hall and other jobs. In 1910, Alfonso and his son, Albert Peter, started their own company, A.P. Grappone, at the company's present site in the Randolph neighborhood. Tony's father, Anthony, and Tony's three brothers also worked there. As a child, Tony spent many hours hanging around the family business. He worked there during the summers in high school, and started full-time right after he graduated from college in 1968.

(continued on page 2)

Page 3	Page 4	Page 6	Page 8	Page 9	Page 10
Volunteer Rose Day	Religious Symbolism	Grace Evelyn Arents	May 4th Picnic	Cronly and Herbert	Friends Contributors

Grappone (continued from page 1)



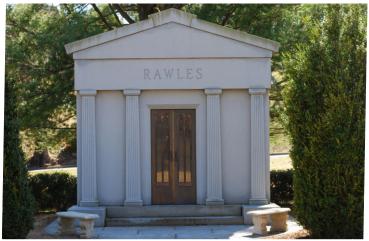
A family photograph ca. late 1920s. From left to right: Marion (Tony's uncle), Anthony (father), Zep (uncle), Alfonso (great-grandfather) and Albert Peter (grandfather).

"I was fortunate enough to never work anywhere else but here, so I picked up a lot," he says. In addition to carving, he learned many "old ways" that now come in handy at Hollywood Cemetery, like how to tie a rope around an obelisk so that it could be lifted—a difficult maneuver because

of its tapered shape. Once, a massive tree fell on top of a mausoleum, causing a stone roof slab to shift. "It was right over where the bodies were, so we were very concerned that it would fall in ... It was nine tons, just this one piece of stone." He brought two cranes to the site and relied upon instinct. "We more or less took a chance, thinking of what my family would have done."

Some of the Hollywood mausoleums created by Grappone's company include the Reynolds, Robins, Sauers and Rawles mausoleums. Creating such a structure—from the initial drawings to the preparation of land, laying the foundation and actual construction—can take up to six months. "You're building a house of stone," explains Grappone.

A.P. Grappone handles about 80% of Hollywood's installations, according to David Gilliam, the Cemetery's General Manager. "It's a very good relationship. They're



The Rawles mausoleum, designed and constructed by Grappone and Sons

very conscientious about their work," he says. Grappone, who also creates memorials, signs and benches for non-cemetery clients, enjoys his work with Hollywood. "It's a beautiful cemetery ... There's so much history there, it's just wonderful."

The majority of the headstones in Hollywood are made of granite or marble, and in a traditional style. Due to the historic nature of the cemetery, Grappone will request preapproval of a project if he has any questions about it fitting in.

Grappone likes the personal side of his business. In this regard, he is supported by office manager Kelly Fisk, who meets with customers and determines their wishes, and Gordon, his wife, who creates designs—often drawn by hand, a rarity

in the business. "Most people who come in here have never done this before, so you have to kind of guide them along in the right direction," he says. "But I think before it's over, we're just good friends, that's what it amounts to." It's satisfying when he can help his customers achieve closure by creating the right stone for a loved one, he says.

When it comes to his

play favorites. "All of

them are memorable

projects, he doesn't



An exceptional example of Grappone old-world craftmanship

for me. That's what's nice about our work," he explains. "It's a piece of us going out each time."

One client, who had lost his wife, asked Grappone to carve four letters onto the back of her headstone, now in Hollywood. "It meant something between him and his wife," says Grappone, who never learned the secret.

But he did learn the romantic meaning of the words on another Hollywood couple's headstone. "*Always kiss me goodnight,*" he recalls. "It was the last thing they would say before going to bed."

March 15, 2014 Second Annual Rose Day Builds on 2013 Success

S aturday, March 15 was a beautiful day considering the freezing weather earlier in the week and snow storm that followed it. For Hollywood rose lovers, it was an ideal late winter day for pruning, thinning, and preparing Hollywood's unusual collection of antique roses for their spring "coming out."



2014 Rose Day Volunteers

At last count, Hollywood is home to approximately 130 rose bushes, some of which may be at least 100 years old. Many of these were planted by the families of Hollywood's 'residents'.

In late 2012, Connie Hilker, owner of Hartwood Roses near Fredericksburg, and Kelly Wilbanks met one another, the result of which became a project to locate, catalogue, photograph and record the condition of all Hollywood roses. What followed was a special working relationship leading to a highly successful rose work day in March, 2013, involving nearly forty volunteers. Hilker oversaw the effort, recording what was done to each bush by its volunteer team. Most bushes were "touched" in some way that day—snipped, pruned, sawn, lopped.



Volunteers from 2013, Al and Sherry Minutola, with recruited friend Brenda Christenson, put finishing touches on one of their adopted roses

This year, over twenty faithful gathered to resume work from last year's stopping point. Hilker divided the volunteers into teams and supplied each with instructions about their assigned bushes. By

the middle of the afternoon, 110 rose bushes possessed a fresh spring look.

Half of the 2014 rose day volunteers were returning enthusiasts from 2013. One team even asked to prune the same bushes that they had been assigned in 2013. It was clear that their prior work had set each of their charges on a new and healthy course and that their 2014 refinements would simply speed that progress.

Once again, Hilker reminded volunteers about the importance of using alcohol squeeze bottles to clean their tools as they moved from bush to bush. "One cannot be too careful," she warned. Just a few weeks before this year's event, seven fine roses situated in close proximity to one another were diagnosed with rose rosette disease (an untreatable virus) and had to be destroyed.



Thank you, Connie Hilker, for your enthusiasm and marvelous leadership. You once described yourself as a "certified rosarian, master

Alesa Hemenway and Caroline Tisdale created T-shirts and bags for the occasion

carpenter, remodeler, and a dreamer." We think you have basically covered it except you did omit "friend." And you

Hollywood Rose Day Volunteers March 15, 2014

Lisa Caperton Brenda Christenson Patty Forster Alesa Hemenway Connie Hilker Gay Kistler Deirdre Knight Grace LeRose Suzy Miladin Sherry Minutolo Al Minutolo

have been that in spades!

Lynn Pappas T. Tyler Potterfield Liz Price Joan Reid Laura Ross Dean M. Siwiec Caroline Tisdale Peter Toms Nanette Whitt Richard Whitt Meg Winn

Religious Symbolism in Hollywood Cemetery



One of Hollywood Cemetery's many pleasures is the range of gravestone symbolism represented throughout its grounds. When the cemetery was founded in 1847, gravestone designs throughout the nation were becoming more elaborate and diverse. So Hollywood's patrons were able to create a wider and richer assemblage of grave art than earlier cemeteries in the region. And not only are the cemetery's many symbols beautiful and inspiring, they teach surprising history lessons as well.

One example appears on one of my favorite monuments, that of John Dove, M.D. (1792-1876), located near Presidents Circle. Dove's obelisk proclaims his longtime leadership in a local freemason lodge. On one panel, it features a Noah's Ark with a dove overhead, and another panel features a six-pointed star, often called the Star of David in Jewish contexts. In the center of the star is inscribed the masonic square and compass. Most visitors likely see the star and conclude that Dr. Dove was a member of the city's Jewish community. Indeed, one often finds pebbles left on this marker by those practicing a distinctively Jewish folk custom for paying respect to the dead. *See photograph 1.*

But the "Star of David" on Dr. Dove's gravemarker was most likely used for its association with freemasonry in the mid-

1800s, despite the accompanying scene from Genesis. At Richmond's Hebrew Cemetery across town, the so-called Star of David is an infrequent symbol, appearing on twentieth-century grave markers but rarely before that. As it turns out, Dove himself was Episcopalian. So while modern-day gravestones issued from the Bureau of Veterans Affairs for deceased members of the Jewish faith prominently feature the Star of David, the symbol's usage has had different associations throughout our nation's history. Its more popularly-understood usage appears in Hollywood Cemetery's Soldiers Section, where it is engraved alongside Hebrew lettering atop the Jewish Confederate Memorial there. *See photograph 2.*





Another religious symbol with a surprising history is the Latin cross, used to denote a Christian burial. Early in American history, the cross as a physical symbol was widely seen by Protestants as one used exclusively by Roman Catholics. One Boston Episcopalian explained in 1847, "When a stranger enters a city, and passes a church with a cross upon it, his impression is that it is Roman Catholic; and when one visits the cemetery... and sees a stone embellished with the same symbol, he takes it for granted that a Roman Catholic sleeps underneath." To find a cross on a grave in Richmond predating this time period, one must look to those few Catholic burials in St. John's Episcopal churchyard. By the 1850s, this pattern was starting to change. Under great controversy, some Protestants at the time sought to appropriate the cross for their own use as a church and graveyard symbol. By the 1860s and 1870s, these attempts had largely succeeded, and physical representations of crosses stirred less controversy. So a walk through Hollywood Cemetery shows the increasing proliferation of the cross as a religious symbol among all denominations of Christians. See photograph 3.

(continued on page 5)



A related religious symbol that became popular in the late 1800s consistently confuses visitors: the so-called "dollar sign" symbol. Its resemblance to a dollar sign notwithstanding, the symbol is actually composed of an overlay of the letters "I," "H," and "S." An excellent example can be found on the grave marker for James P. Purcell (1821-1882), on which the complex symbol rests at the base of the tall cross. This is unmistakably a Christian symbol, yet its specific meaning is under dispute. Some contend that the letters represent an abbreviation of the name of Jesus in Greek. Others claim that the letters stand for *In Hoc Signo*, a Latin paraphrase of God's charge to the Emperor Constantine, from the Greek "in this sign you will conquer." Still others suggest that it means *Iesus Hominum Salvator*, or the Latin "Jesus, Savior of men." *See photograph 4.*

Perhaps the most dominant religious symbols in the cemetery are the many representations of angels, those heavenly beings mentioned throughout scripture. Interestingly, though Biblical references to angels are either male or androgynous, angels became closely associated with femininity in the nineteenth century. This is evident in the full-bodied angel over the grave of Linda M. Ragland Sizer (1856-1878), among many others. The large size of such full-bodied representations make their presence felt across the rolling landscape. The scholar Elizabeth Reis found that these increasingly popular angels represented a new "emphasis on consolation rather than commemoration," and she identified eight categories of angels appearing in cemeteries, based on the tasks they were seen to perform. These included soul-bearing, praying, decorating and guarding, pointing, recording, trumpeting, sword-bearing, and child angels. *See photograph 5.*



A less religiously-charged symbol, yet no less spiritual, appears in the form of the pointing hand. At Hollywood, the graves of Indie Turner (1841-1872) and Jeremiah Clifford (1834-1871) each show a right hand with index finger extended upwards to heaven. Turner's inscription states "Gone but not forgotten," while Clifford's invites

the viewer to "Meet me in Heaven," making their heavenly meanings clear. Still, the viewer is left to wonder: is this the hand of God? Or the hand of the deceased? Or merely an anonymous signal, offered by the stone to visitors? Other hands seen on stones throughout the cemetery are shown clasping one another in welcome or in farewell.

See photograph 6.

We might conclude with one final example of religious symbolism in Hollywood that circles back around to one of the earliest examples of religious symbolism in colonial America. Among New England gravestones especially, innumerable grinning "death's heads" with a skull and wings pointed observers toward human frailty and the need for pious reflection. It has been long out of fashion for its macabre themes, but at least one example has been taken up by a recent interment at Hollywood. In one plot, an old-fashioned winged skull peers back at the viewer. "Expect the unexpected," it seems to say, when it comes to religious symbolism throughout Hollywood Cemetery. *See photograph 7.*

Contributed by Dr. Ryan K. Smith, Associate Professor of History at Virginia Commonwealth University.





<u>Profile</u> Grace Evelyn Arents: An Ever Present Community Spirit



Grace Evelyn Arents. Courtesy of St. Andrew's School

wo rows of boxwood lead up to the stately mausoleum of Major Lewis Ginter, one of the finest memorials in Hollywood Cemetery. At first glance they appear to be a landscaping feature adding an elegant touch to the major's final resting place. A closer look reveals a small column nestled between the hedges bearing the name of Grace Evelyn Arents, who was Major Ginter's beloved niece. Compared to her uncle's majestic memorial, her grave marker is diminutive and easily overlooked, belying a formidable woman whose contributions to the well being of her adopted Richmond are extraordinary examples of selfless giving and continue to enhance the quality of life for countless residents.

Miss Grace, as she is known to her many admirers that include 500 "friends" on Facebook, was born in New York in 1848. She was the youngest child of Stephen Arents, a barrel maker, and Jane Swain Ginter, who was Lewis Ginter's older sister. Ginter's parents died when Lewis was 11, and Jane helped raise her brother until he moved to Richmond around 1842 where he made his <u>first</u> fortune in textiles. Stephen Arents died in 1855, and Lewis likely provided assistance to Jane and her four children. While still in New York, Grace trained as a nurse, but little else is known about her life there.

Three fortunes in a single lifetime

After fighting with the Confederates during the Civil War and losing most of his fortune in the aftermath, Lewis Ginter returned to his native New York, where he made a <u>second</u> fortune in banking. He lost that in the crash of 1873 and then returned to Richmond in 1874, where he established tobaccobased interests and amassed a third

fortune. Within a few years Jane moved her family to Richmond, where they could live a comfortable and secure life with her affluent, well-established brother.

The Arents attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church with Lewis, and it was here that Grace first learned about the exciting mission work that was taking place about a mile

from their home on Franklin Street. Several factories were situated along Richmond's canal, and the Oregon Hill neighborhood had developed to provide housing for the laborers, many of whom were immigrants. While Oregon Hill provided easy access to these workplaces, it was somewhat isolated from the rest of Richmond. In the 1870s members of St. Paul's Church identified Oregon Hill as a community in great need of assistance and began a Sunday school that established a mission presence in the neighborhood.

Drawn to Oregon Hill

By 1875 a faith community had formed, and a small frame church was erected

at the corner of Laurel and Idlewood. Miss Grace was drawn to the work going on in Oregon Hill, and her first contribution to these efforts was the gift of a pump organ that provided music for the church and a job for someone to pump the organ as it was played.

In his book St. Andrew's Episcopal Church and its Environs, William Glenn writes, "[Miss Arents] soon saw that the people on Oregon Hill needed more than a church. Most worked hard at low paying jobs, and were poorly educated. There were no schools in this area, and no minimum age of



St. Andrew's School, Oregon Hill, Richmond (ca. early 1900s)

obtaining a job. Consequently, many children left school early to supplement the family income. Miss Arents saw the need where it was greatest, and she decided to center her activities on St. Andrew's Church."

These "activities" were remarkable. Miss Grace understood that education would be a key factor in providing the people of Oregon Hill opportunities to improve their lives. She helped start a sewing school in 1894 that eventually became St. Andrew's School. When her Uncle Lewis died in 1897, he left her a significant portion of his estate, enabling her to fund an ever expanding vision for the neighborhood. By 1905 the school provided vocational and educational opportunities for adults and children. These included needle work, manual training, drawing, woodworking, kindergarten, primary and grammar morning and night schools, vocal music, physical training, and nature study. To this day the school remains committed to providing quality education to children from low income families.

While St. Andrew's School ensured education for the younger children, Miss Grace realized the teenagers needed a high school in close proximity to continue their studies. In 1912 she provided funding for Grace Arents School on Pine and China Streets, which brought the Richmond City Public School System into the neighborhood, and now operates as Richmond's Open High School.

Richmond's first free library

Grace Arents valued the importance of literacy, and in 1899 she established the first free library in the city on Cherry Street. Eventually this library was absorbed into the Richmond Public Library System. The building now houses the William Byrd Community Center.

As a nurse, Miss Grace was also concerned about issues related to the health and well being of people living in depressed urban environments, where lack of sanitation, indoor plumbing, and access to medical care



Miss Grace in her beloved garden at Bloemendaal. Courtesy of the Valentine Richmond History Center

contributed to serious health problems, especially for children. In 1913 she purchased the Lakeside Wheel Club from her uncle's estate. Originally used as a recreational facility for bicyclists, the property included a onestory clubhouse and lake situated on 10 acres. After adding a second story to the clubhouse, Miss Grace opened the newly named Bloemendaal (Dutch for "valley of the flowers") as a place where sick children from low income urban neighborhoods could come and get well in a healthy environment.

Health and Children

She funded numerous other efforts that improved the health and quality of life in the neighborhood. Miss Grace

participated in the work of the Instructive Visiting Nurses Association founded in 1900 to bring medical services directly to low income families, facilitating their presence in Oregon Hill where they offered a variety of programs to benefit the community. She opened the first playground in Richmond and then added others. She built bath houses, which were appreciated by the many families without indoor plumbing. Dilapidated, unsafe structures were torn down and replaced with affordable modern homes.

St. Andrew's Church was the locus

for this extensive social ministry that was transforming the neighborhood. In 1901 construction began on the beautiful Gothic Revival church that replaced the original wooden structure and remains a vibrant faith community in Oregon Hill. Additionally, Grace Arents helped establish other Episcopal churches, such as the Church of the Holy Comforter and St. Thomas' Church.

Obviously Miss Grace spent an exhaustive amount of time and

energy in her effort to improve the lives of countless people. Still, she was also able to carve out time to pursue interests in travel and horticulture. It was likely her Uncle Lewis who kindled her passion in these two areas. In 1888 the two embarked on a worldwide voyage that included stops in Australia, Ceylon and Italy. This was one of many trips they took together, and after Major Ginter's death Miss Grace continued her extensive travels, usually accompanied by her very dear friend Mary Garland Smith.

Thanks to the improvements in public health that Miss Grace helped implement, demand for a children's convalescent center diminished, so in 1917 Miss Grace moved from the



The Conservatory, center piece of the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. Courtesy of Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Ginter home at 901 West Franklin Street to Bloemendaal and established a farm where she could deepen her knowledge of horticulture, develop new agricultural practices, and establish a variety of gardens, including roses and vegetables. During her travels she collected exotic botanical specimens, which she would bring home to cultivate. Bloemendaal remained Miss Grace's home until her death in 1926. She bequeathed the property to the City of Richmond, and in 1987 Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens opened, bringing to fruition Miss Grace's vision of a botanical garden honoring the memory of her uncle, now considered one of the finest in the country.

(continued on page 8)

Grace Evelyn Arents (continued from page 7)

The transformations effected by Grace Arents' work in Richmond, particularly Oregon Hill, were made possible in part by the generous use of the financial wealth she received from her Uncle Lewis. But Miss Grace's lasting and tangible presence in this community goes far beyond the brick and mortar projects she funded. She is deeply loved and admired by many people, most of whom were born long after her death. Her tireless love and compassion remain palpable to this day, nurturing all who continue to benefit from her active work and ministry throughout the city.

Atop the pillar that marks Miss Grace's grave are the words of poet John Greenleaf Whittier, "From scheme and creed the lights go out, the saintly fact survives; The blessed Master none can doubt revealed in saintly lives." This certainly is a fitting commentary for someone whose work in this world still touches the lives of so many others. Hers was indeed a saintly life whose legacies remain a living testimony

Friends of Hollywood Cemetery Invites you to our Third Annual

SUNDAY PICNIC at HOLLYWOOD CEMETERY

Sunday, May 4th, 2014 1:00 P.M. – 3:30 P. M.

Performances by the Oak Lane Band and The Virginia Girls Choir



Courtesy of Virginia Historical Society

Pack a picnic basket, bring a blanket and relax to sounds of great entertainment. Guided trolley car tours will be provided. Cupcakes from Pearl's Cupcake Shoppe, an ice cream truck and hotdogs from Cool Concessions will be on site.



Please email Kelly Wilbanks at kwilbanks@hollywoodcemetery.org or call 648-8501 to make reservations. Rain Date - Sunday, September 21st at 1:00 P.M. of "that saintly fact," which even the highest boxwoods cannot obscure.

Contributed by Rev. Deacon Barbara Ambrose of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Richmomnd, VA

An Evensong and Commemoration of the life of Grace Evelyn Arents will be held on June 20 at St. Andrew's Church, 236 South Laurel Street in Richmond's Oregon Hill Neighborhood. The service begins at 7 p.m., and the public is warmly invited to share in the celebration of this remarkable lady.

Picnic Entertainment

The Oak Lane Band will return by popular demand for its third appearance at the Friends of Hollywood Annual Picnic. Their song list is filled with everyone's favorites, their music is acoustically lively (but not too much so), and their enthusiasm for what they do—how about contagious?



From left to right: Massie Valentine, Russell Lawson, Bill Hardy, Liz Nance, and Andy Smith

The Virginia Girls Choir will make its first appearance at this year's picnic. It is a <u>community-wide</u> choir for girls in grades 3 to 12, founded at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in 2008. Under the direction of Dan Moriarty, the girls "work to sing with spirit and understanding in a variety of musical styles." The choir draws participants from various schools, congregations, and faith traditions. We are delighted that they will be joining us.



Virginia Girl's Choir

FRIENDS OF HOLLYWOOD

New Directors – Friends of Hollywood

Two highly qualified individuals have been elected to the Board of Friends of Hollywood Cemetery: Elizabeth R. Cronly and Joseph R. Herbert.

Lilliboo Cronly has been a life long resident of Richmond. Influenced from childhood by her mother and father, Lilliboo has developed a passionate interest in conservation, preservation, and horticulture.

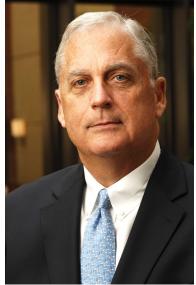


One of her most splendid memories is of her days on the Maymont Foundation Board, especially her leadership of the Maymont Flower Show. "It was a wonderful way to support Richmond," she recalls. She feels the same way today about her board association with St. Andrew's School. Lilliboo is a member of the James River Garden Club and former trustee of the Richmond Ballet. For years, she has enjoyed

Elizabeth R. (Lilliboo) Cronly years, she has e being involved in events for Historic Richmond.

"Mother brought me to Hollywood regularly. I grew up with a bit of a Hollywood background. We would come and visit, and tidy up as we did. Mother wanted to make sure that all 'loved ones' were cared for." Lilliboo is married to John H. (Jack) Cronly III. They have five children, the youngest of which is currently in college, and two grandchildren.

Two years ago, Joseph R. (Joe) Herbert contacted Hollywood about volunteer opportunities. "I grew up in Richmond, eighteen of my family is buried at Hollywood, and I would be interested in helping in anyway that I might." "We could use some direction on a genealogy project," David Gilliam (Cemetery Manager) remembers responding. Joe



Joseph R. (Joe) Herbert

reacted with spontaneous interest and for almost two years has given his time, resources, and leadership to a multi-year project to review and close gaps in Hollywood's extensive records database. In 2013, Joe self-published a book entitled *Hollywood Cemetery's Notable Residents*, sale proceeds of which benefit Friends of Hollywood. Joe currently serves as Chief Financial Officer of a privately owned company, DriveFactor, Inc., headquartered in Richmond. Joe is married to Barbara Herbert, and they have one daughter.

We welcome these special additions to the Friends Board.

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Continued from pages 10 & 11

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We are indeed grateful to the following donors for their generous support of Friends in 2013. 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.

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A Grappone Family Picture (ca. mid-1930s)



Zep (Tony's uncle)

Margaret Anthony (aunt) (father)

ony Albert James er) (uncle)

s Marion (uncle)

Alfonso (great-grandfather) Albert Peter (grandfather)