

The Grove Street Bulletin

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A Publication of the Grove Street Cemetery

Spring 2014

A National Historic Landmark

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Roger Sherman Honored by Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence

The Grove Street Cemetery hosted a unique and memorable program in September 2013, with a visit by the Society of the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence. The group of sixty, escorted by the fifes and color guard of the 2nd Company of the Governor's Foot Guard, conducted a procession to the grave site of one of the country's founding fathers, Roger Sherman (1721–1793), patriot and signer of not only the Declaration, but also the Articles of Association, Articles of Confederation and the Constitution, the only man to sign all four. Sherman was also a New Haven mayor, Connecticut Legislator, Senator and treasurer of Yale College.

Part of a weekend-long series of special events for the group, they also visited the plot of the family of Elbridge Gerry, another signer of the Declaration. And although he is not buried here, the family plot includes his wife, other members of his immediate family and has the rare historical marker of a 'Real Daughter' bestowed by the Daughters of the American Revolution to Emily Louise Gerry (1802–1894), his last surviving child.

The event was marked by a wreath laying, flag placements and presentations at Sherman's grave by Shelley Cruz, DSDI Governor for CT and RI, and Brad Boardman, a Sherman descendant. Boardman read a moving statement by his grand-uncle from 1941 recalling the patriotism as the country was then facing war, when a new granite monument had been erected, repeating the original inscription which was eroding from the original table-top style memorial. For more information see the Society's website www.dsdi1776.com. The event was also covered by the September 23, 2013 issue of the New Haven Independent.



Second Company, Governor's Foot Guard, leading the procession of the Society of the Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence to the grave of Roger Sherman.



DSDI Governor Shelley Cruz addressing the Society and color guard, following the wreath-laying at Roger Sherman's grave. We also learned that the 2nd Company Foot Guard had been led into battle, defending New Haven in the American Revolution, by Captain James Hillhouse, one of the cemetery's founders who is buried not far from Sherman.

Spring Horticultural Tours Continue

“A Horticultural Walk” featuring guided tours of notable trees and other plants was very well attended in April 2013. Jointly organized by the Garden Club of New Haven and Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, tour leaders followed a well-researched narrative with unusual species and specimens of large, older and historic plants and their symbolic associations with mourning and cemeteries. We hope to develop the research into a self-guiding walking tour brochure. The program concluded with a reception at

Mory’s, the historic club popular with Yalies, just down York Street from the cemetery. Thanks to tour program planners Millie Legenhausen, Jodi Bush, Karyl Evans, Bob Gregan, Ben Sandweiss, Cordalie Benoit, John Edwards and Channing Harris.

Given the program’s success, we have teamed again with the New Haven Garden Club to do a similar tour at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 8, this year, anticipating some different plants in bloom.



Left: These older, double-flowering pink crabapples form a memorable archway on *Cypress Avenue*. Apple trees are associated with immortality in both Norse and Greek mythology. **Center:** The pure white, unusual double-flowered *Cornus florida*, White Dogwood has long-lasting flowers which have symbolic associations with the crucifixion: the flowers of four petals represent the cross with a ‘blood stain’ in brown of the center veins and a center circle of points symbolic of the crown of thorns. Dogwood blossoms are carved on many stone in the cemetery. **Right:** Spring horticulture tour providers included Garden Club of New Haven member Jodi Bush, landscape architect Bob Gregan and filmmaker and Garden Club member, Karyl Evans.

New Short Film on Grove Street Cemetery Broadcast on CT Public Television

Karyl Evans, the producer/director/writer of the 2007 film about the Grove Street Cemetery, has created a new short documentary about the cemetery commissioned by the Department of Economic and Community Development in the Connecticut Office of the Arts which has been broadcast on Connecticut Public Television. The short film is one of a series which profiles many of the state’s notable cultural resources, this has just been released and it can be

viewed at: <http://youtu.be/RP7PFAVhT0M>. Part of the narration features information about some of the notable women in the cemetery and was researched and presented by Judith Schiff, member of both the Standing Committee of the Proprietors and Friends’ Board. It was supported in part by long-time cemetery friends, Jim and Mimi Niederman.

New Regulations

The Standing Committee of the Proprietors of Grove Street Cemetery have researched, developed and adopted a new set of “*Rules of the Cemetery Grounds*” as of 2013, available at the office or on the website. The regulations offer guidelines on planting, flowers, new memorials and structures, maintenance, hours, pets, behavior and similar items.

Knowledgeable Docent Volunteers Maintain A Tradition of Welcoming Visitors —Over One Thousand per Year

Approximately two dozen trained guides have sustained an interpretive oral history of the cemetery over the past two decades, for which there is documentation, and probably a lot longer. Chief Docent, Patricia Illingworth, reported on an extremely busy past year of visitor groups and organizations, for whom the docents provided tours. Since the docents group began hundreds of associations, schools, universities, family and historical societies, professional and business groups, researchers, military veterans, cultural, horticultural, medical and religious organizations have visited. Highlights among these are Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, Princeton and Stanford Universities; UCLA, numerous Yale organizations and classes; notable authors, architects, lawyers and judges, other cemetery organizations, the Knights of Columbus, Connecticut Free Masons, groups from Japan, China, Argentina, Italy and the United Nations.

The Docent Register of those who have served in the past was begun in 1995 by Chairperson James Niederman and is currently headed by Patricia Illingworth. It includes notables Dr. David Musto*, Jack Cunningham*, Judith Schiff, Darlene Casella, Peter Dobkin Hall; researchers Jo-Anne Giammattei and Maria G. Villecco, Nancy Ahlstrom, and Birgitta Johnson*, who also served as treasurer of the Board of Friends (*deceased). Prospective docents are welcome and training is provided. It’s an opportunity to study and share important moments and monuments of New Haven and U.S. history. If interested, please contact Patti Illingworth at (203) 389-5403 or at p.b.i.newhaven@att.net for more information.

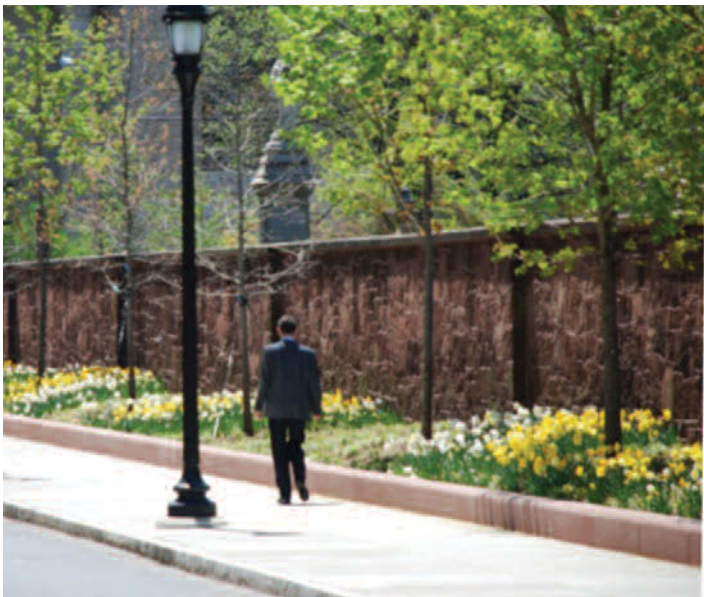
Praised for Service, Niederman Named Honorary Director

Following a unanimous vote of the Board of Directors, Board Chairman John Edwards presented a plaque and commended Dr. James Niederman for his tireless efforts since the creation of the Friends in 1997, including many years as chairman. The Resolution states in part, "Whereas, he led the Friends with great enthusiasm, good humor, and wise counsel...be it resolved that DR. JAMES C. NIEDERMAN is, and from this date forward shall be, an Honorary Director of the Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, with all the rights, privileges and prerogatives attendant to such office."



Jim Niederman, left; John Edwards, right.

A Walkable Landscape



Thanks to Yale University and an anonymous donor, landscape improvements to two more of the five sides of the cemetery are completed. Ashmun Street has new lighting and its first-ever concrete sidewalk, while Prospect offers new lights, sidewalk and a brownstone-curbed planting bed with scarlet oaks, groundcover and thousands of spring bulbs. The improvements were designed by Towers|Golde, landscape architects of New Haven, with important assistance from the City of New Haven Department of Engineering.

Order your DVD of the documentary film, "Grove Street Cemetery — City of the Dead, City of the Living", produced, directed, and written by five-time Emmy Award winner Karyl K. Evans

Copies of the 30 minute Grove Street Cemetery DVD, nominated for two Emmy awards, are available for purchase at \$15.00 (postage pre-paid) per copy. Please complete the form below to receive your copy. You should also consider purchasing copies for family members and for friends. Buy it, watch it, and then give it to your local library or school!

Name _____

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No. of DVD copies _____ @ \$15.00 = \$ _____

Send check payable to Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, Inc., with completed form, to: P.O. Box 9238, New Haven, CT 06533-0238.

How to Join Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, Inc.

Individuals, organizations and corporations interested in Grove Street Cemetery and the objectives of the Friends are encouraged to become members. Annual membership dues are shown below. The membership year is October 1 to September 30. Membership Dues and other contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contributions in excess of Membership Dues are welcome and, unless otherwise specified, will be allocated to its General Fund. We also maintain two additional funds which may be of interest to donors. The Landscape and Landmark Funds were created to support the on-going horticultural programs of the organization and the ever present need for support of the Cemetery's renovation and restoration efforts.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

Dues:

- Individual \$35 Couple \$50 Not-for-profit \$50
 Corporation \$100 Additional Contribution \$ _____

Please check areas of participation that interest you:

- Preservation Program Publication Horticulture
 Docent Fund Raising

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Program on ‘Egypt in Connecticut: Egyptianizing Architecture from New Haven to Coventry’

At this joint program of the Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery and the New Haven Museum, Colleen Manassa, Yale Associate Professor of Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations, is to speak on “Egypt in Connecticut: Egyptianizing Architecture from New Haven to Coventry.” She was the Curator of “*Echoes of Egypt: Conjuring the Land of the Pharaohs*” at Yale’s Peabody Museum last year, which featured a large scale reproduction of Grove Street’s Egyptian-styled gateway, designed by Henry Austin in 1839. Program is on Thursday, April 17, at the New Haven Museum, 114 Whitney Avenue. Reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by the lecture at 6 p.m.

How to Reach Us

Grove Street Cemetery

Open daily from
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
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website: www.grovestreetcemetery.org



Grove Street Cemetery fence post capitol with stylized Egyptian winged sunburst, below.



www.grovestreetcemetery.org

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