



A VERY SPECIAL PARK

Heritage

The Newsletter of Green Lawn Cemetery
Summer 2021

Walking at Green Lawn: The Cemetery as Teacher

By Rev. Dr. Susan Ritchie, North Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Lewis Center

I have been walking in Green Lawn Cemetery at least once a week since the start of the pandemic. When COVID-19 descended upon us, grief settled like a heavy fog into even the smallest nooks and crannies of our everyday lives. I needed to spend time in a place like Green Lawn, specifically designed to inspire, uplift, and most of all, ease mourning.

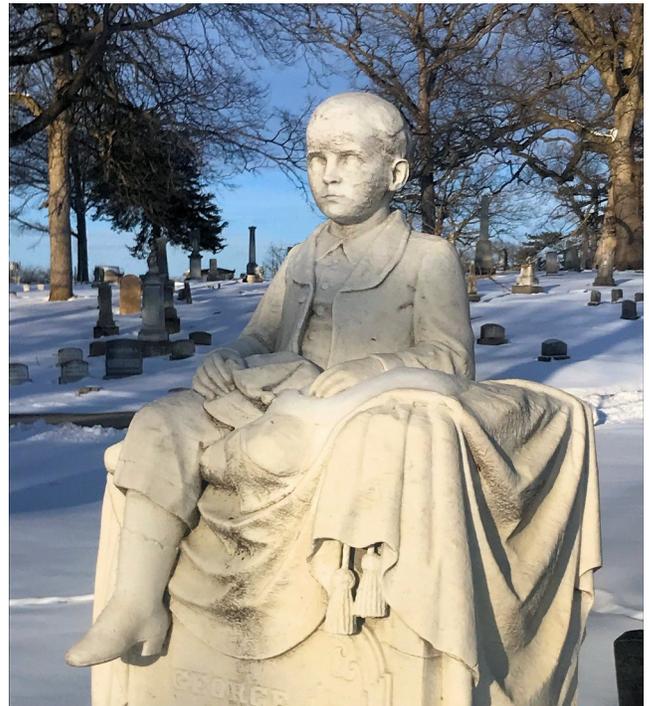
Green Lawn Cemetery is our own central Ohio example of the rural cemetery. The rural cemetery movement swept the country after the 1831 dedication of Mt. Auburn in Cambridge, Massachusetts. These resting places on the outskirts of cities replaced the overcrowded urban graveyards that were the source of both real and imagined health risks. They also represented a significant cultural change. Americans were resisting the older style burial grounds that intentionally unsettled living visitors. Puritan theology emphasized the importance of facing the last judgement with fear and trembling. By the early 19th century, however, Americans were approaching death with a new optimism, seeing death more as a form of quiet sleep. The cemetery's task was to comfort the grieving, serving as a "moral teacher." In his dedication speech at Mt. Auburn, Judge Joseph Story spoke about how the new cemeteries could "preach lessons, to which none may refuse to listen, and which all that live must hear." Rural cemeteries would inspire visitors to "cultivate feelings and sentiments more worthy of ourselves."

Rural cemetery landscapes typically include both old-growth trees and newer plantings. Their monuments, statues, chapels, and mausoleums showcased the talents of skilled artisans (many of them recent immigrants). By placing death in the context of both nature and art, they comforted the living by giving them the opportunity to explore grief in a setting that promoted quiet reflection. Trauma does not result from specific experiences but from not having a way to process those experiences. The cemetery offers such a space. Even its winding roads keep mourning in mind—grief being rarely as predictable as the orderly city block. As the living travel the

cemetery's paths, beauty itself is their companion and guide, each step along the way providing its own lesson.

Green Lawn's statue of five-year-old George Blount reminds me how important it is to love, even though all loves lead to loss. In 1873 when George died after a fall down the stairs at his

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President's Message

Greetings to the Green Lawn Family!



Randy Rogers, President and Executive Director

Since our last issue of *Heritage*, I have watched Green Lawn's serviceberry blooms give way in succession to redbud, plum, dogwood, buckeye, cherry, tulip, and finally our catalpas and basswoods are in bloom.

During those successive floral bursts we planted 175 new trees and the cemetery staff transitioned from cold weather maintenance to warm weather.

As busy as it was, it is now that much of the heavy lifting starts as we execute this summer's road repairs, restoration projects, an exciting new art installation on the Thurber family lot, and, at long last, a schedule of tours that is starting to resemble our pre-Covid activity!

Our operator, Memorial Properties of Ohio, is making solid progress pre-selling our impending addition of two new mausoleum buildings at New Garden and overall is doing very well.

We are also making progress on our application for the National Register of Historic Places and (in part thanks to another generous grant from the Little Garden Club of Columbus) will be making more improvements around the pond this summer.

I hope to see many of you out on the grounds this summer as our work progresses!

Wildlife Stories



Surely one of the most lyrical of scientific names is that of the Yellow Poplar, or Tulip Tree—*Lireodendron tulipifera*.

When looking at the beautiful flower and even the shape of the leaf, it is not hard to see how it gets the name Tulip Tree!

A tall, straight-trunked resident of wet and medium soils, this tree is a valuable hardwood forestry tree and a wonderful shade tree spread throughout the lower, flatter areas of Green Lawn.

It is also a host for the caterpillar of the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail and an important source of pollen for honey bees.

FUN FACTS:

An adult Tulip tree can transpire up to 55 gallons of water a day through its leaves during the summer!

A giant Tulip Tree plays an important role in Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Gold Bug*!

Walking at Green Lawn: The Cemetery as Teacher (Continued from page 1)

parents' hotel, his family buried him with tender care. Given children's high mortality rates in early America, it seems reasonable to imagine that parents might resist attachment to their children to protect themselves from loss. Yet Victorians were willing to risk love, even knowing grief would be inevitable. For many years, George's grave was the most decorated at Green Lawn, with toys and clothes often draped over his form. Over a century later, his family's care inspired what we presume were strangers.

I make new discoveries each time I visit Green Lawn. Last summer, I noticed for the first time the marker for Everett Photus, "Skeptic and Philosopher," buried on Cremation Island in 1982. Who was this person who made such a bold declaration in a space often characterized by conventional religious sentiments? I did a little research. Photus was a Greek immigrant from Turkey, a restaurant worker who loved to philosophize. I was pleased to make his acquaintance. Cemeteries remind us that we remain in relationship with those who have died. The dead are dead but not lost.

For this reason, one task of the rural cemetery is slowing the erosion of history. I am very moved by the wolf sculpture recently dedicated to the earliest residents of Columbus. We lost their names and grave locations when the downtown burial grounds were closed and the bodies relocated. But the cemetery insists we not forget them. As the plaque reads: "Here they are, as anonymous as the wolves they displaced, but just as they told stories and left remembrances of the wolves, we have their stories and remember them."

We often assume the history of cemeteries is that of its most famous residents. But a good cemetery works as hard to honor generous lives lived without great recognition. I recently discovered Washington Townsend's grave at the back perimeter of the park. An enslaved person in the household of President Andrew Jackson, he escaped to Ohio in 1860. His gravestone speaks of his "perfect honesty, faithfulness, dignity, courtesy, and sweetness of disposition." His life "was a rebuke to those whose opportunities were greater and achievements less."

Unfortunately, we are not listening as well as we should to the cemetery's lessons. Even prior to COVID-19, we isolated death and dying from normal experience more than the Victorians did. Today most people only indirectly experience the death of their most intimate friends and family. Now many cannot even be at the bedside of their dearest loved ones. I recommend visiting Green Lawn Cemetery as often as possible. We need the consolations and lessons it offers now more than ever.



Green Lawn Receives Ohio History Fund Grant to Research African American Burials

Green Lawn Cemetery has received a generous grant from the Ohio History Fund for an exciting new research project: **“Separate But Equal? Policies and Practices of African American Burials at Green Lawn.”** The funds will allow us to not only research and document burials of African Americans but to explore changes in societal attitudes and deepen our understanding of practices and politics related to race in both Columbus and at Green Lawn. Through partnerships with Columbus Metropolitan Library and Columbus Landmarks Foundation, Green Lawn will share its findings through a multimedia exhibit, symposiums, and a series of guided walking tours.

The locations of the graves of many notable African Americans are well-known: civil rights activist Reverend James Preston Poindexter, abolitionists, Underground Railroad conductors, and many Black soldiers, including Medal of Honor recipient Clinton Greaves. Yet in many sections believed to be African American, graves are unmarked and the history of those buried there unknown.

Discoveries in the past year have called attention to the many African Americans buried here whose stories have yet to be fully appreciated: Elliott Blaine Henderson, dialect poet; Lulu Hall Alexander, entrepreneur and businesswoman; Dr. William Arthur Method, co-founder of Columbus’ first black hospital; W. Ellsworth King, lawyer and member of Columbus City Council; William M. Ellis, photographer and specialist in hand-painted photographs; Mother Elizabeth Good(e), oldest African American suffragette and member of the Sojourner Truth Society; and Thomas W. Howard, musician and orchestra director.

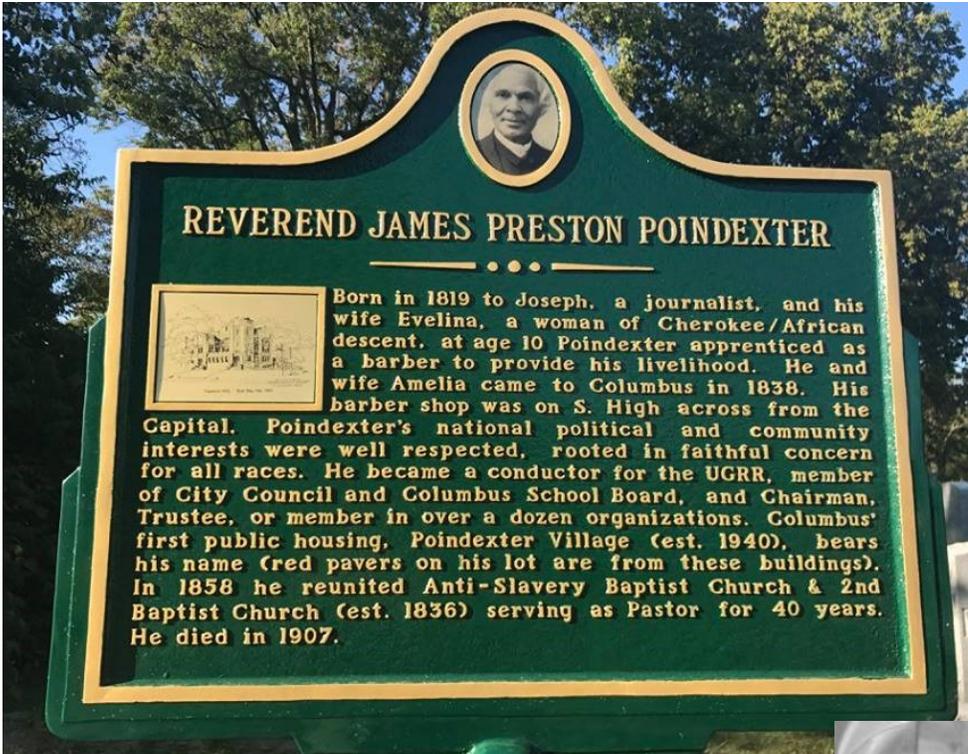
Researcher Nettie Ferguson brings a wealth of experience to the project. She has long been active in the Franklin County Genealogical and Historical Society – African American Interest Group, published in genealogical newsletters, and presented at state, regional and national conferences. The project will give her the time and resources to delve into library collections and cemetery records, interview funeral directors, and research family histories. She will work closely with project director Doreen Uhas Sauer, board member of the Green Lawn Cemetery Association and Education Outreach Coordinator for Columbus Landmarks Foundation. Together they will guide volunteers participating in the project.

Once the study is completed, Green Lawn and Columbus Metropolitan Library will partner to develop a virtual exhibit featuring an overview of the research as well as biographical information, digital images, and contextual information to aid genealogists and future researchers. In late summer and early fall, Green Lawn and Columbus Landmarks will lead a series of guided walking tours related to the research. Finally, an advisory group of scholars, city and county officials, high school students, and community members will explore ways to memorialize those interred here.

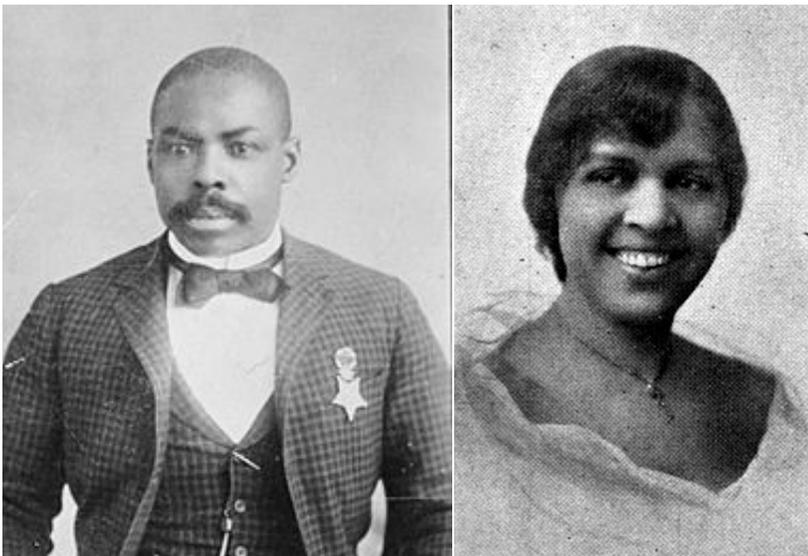
Stay tuned to upcoming issues of *Heritage* for continuing updates! For more information, contact project director Doreen Uhas Sauer at doreencolumbus@icloud.com

This project is made possible in part by the Ohio History Fund, a grant program of the Ohio History Connection. The Ohio History Fund is made possible by voluntary donations of state income tax refunds, sales of Ohio History “mastodon” license plates, and direct donations to the Ohio History Connection.





Clockwise from top left: Rev. James Preston Poindexter; poet Elliott Blaine Henderson; Dr. Arthur Lawrence Kelton; entrepreneur Lulu Hall Alexander; and Medal of Honor recipient SGT Clinton Greaves.



News from Memorial Properties

Operating Green Lawn Since 2019!

Memorial Properties is pleased to report that sales continue to expand and operations continue to focus on providing premier service for families during their time of need.

Currently two areas are getting special focus from the sales team:

Pre-construction sales of crypts in our next building in the New Garden Mausoleum complex are picking up and on schedule to meeting the construction schedule of completion in 2024 or sooner. Four more buildings are planned, similar to the existing buildings but with upgraded finishes and a few more artistic touches.

Also, we recently purchased the inventory of markers and monuments left behind when Columbus Art Memorial went out of business last year. We are offering many of these at clearance prices. As always, purchasing your monument from the cemetery results in a portion of that purchase going to the upkeep of the cemetery and not just the pocket of a monument salesperson.

The sales team can provide any style or type of monument permitted in the cemetery, but while they last, some of these beautiful markers are an especially good deal. Just call the office at 614.221.2726 to schedule a time to view the inventory.



An Important Announcement!

Readers of the *Heritage* will be the first to learn of a coming change to the hours of the cemetery grounds! When we reduce our hours this fall (in mid-October when we traditionally start closing at 5 p.m. instead of the 7 p.m. summer closing), we will also OPEN LATER—at 9 a.m. instead of our summer 7 a.m. open. This will allow the grounds crew more time to plow and salt on snowy days. Previously they would come in between 4 and 5 a.m. and only have a couple of hours to clear our miles of roads and paths. The later opening will give them two additional hours to make the cemetery safe and hopefully avoid most unplanned delayed openings.

Upcoming 2021 Green Lawn Cemetery Programs

Due to COVID-19, First Saturday programming has been discontinued until further notice. However, several guided walking tours of Green Lawn are scheduled to help support our preservation efforts.

June and July, Select Dates: 5:00pm-7:00pm: “Civil War Ghosts of Green Lawn Cemetery”: Columbus Ghost Tours will offer historical walking tours each Saturday and Sunday in June and July. Recommended for those age 16 and over. Part of the proceeds will support Green Lawn’s restoration efforts. **Tickets available at <https://columbusghosttours.com/merchandise/ols/categories/civil-war-ghosts-of-green-lawn-cemetery>**

Columbus Ghost Tours will also offer “**Night at Green Lawn Walking Tour**” from 8:30pm-10:00pm on select Friday nights throughout the summer, giving visitors a rare opportunity to experience Green Lawn after the gates have closed. **Tickets available at <https://columbusghosttours.com/merchandise/ols/categories/night-at-green-lawn-tour>**

Various Dates: “Green Lawn Cemetery Bike Tour (Fundraiser)”: Columbus Outdoor Pursuits is partnering with Green Lawn to offer guided tours narrated by historian and naturalist Randy Rogers. Proceeds support restoration efforts at Green Lawn. On July 18, Columbus Outdoor Pursuits and Green Lawn are partnering with Gay for Good, and proceeds will benefit all three organizations. Tours begin and end at Green Lawn Abbey (700 Greenlawn Ave.). Easy-to-ride cruiser bikes are available for an additional \$10 or you may bring your own. Helmets are available for free. **Tickets available at: <https://outdoor-pursuits.org/events-calendar-op/>**

July 11 at Green Lawn Abbey (700 Greenlawn Ave): 2:00pm-4:00pm: “The 1913 Flood and the Rebirth of the Riverfront”: Green Lawn Abbey will present a program featuring architect and author Conrad Hinde and architectural historian Barbara Powers. Mayor George Karb, who led the rebuilding after the flood, is interred at the Abbey. The program will explore the recovery efforts of Mayor Karb and architect Frank Packard. This event is a precursor for a driving and walking tour of the cemetery on July 18. For more information, see www.greenlawnabbey.org.

July 18: 3:00pm-5:00pm: “Green Lawn Cemetery and the Great Flood of 1913”: Green Lawn Cemetery is partnering with Green Lawn Abbey to present part two of the Abbey’s program on the Great Flood of 1913. Historians Randy Rogers and Doreen Uhas Sauer will conduct a combination driving and walking tour focusing on the flood’s devastating impact on Columbus and the flood stories that can be found at Green Lawn. Meet at Huntington Chapel in the cemetery. No registration is necessary, and donations will be taken at the door.

July 25: 1:00pm-3:00pm: “Summer Walk Through Green Lawn”: Columbus Landmarks Foundation is partnering with Green Lawn Cemetery to present a guided walk through Green Lawn. This tour will start at the Brown Road Gate. (Enter from Greenlawn Ave. and drive all the way through the cemetery following the white-lined road. Parking will be available inside the Brown Road Gate). This tour will focus on the original design for Green Lawn by landscape architect Howard Daniels. Proceeds will benefit restoration at Green Lawn. Register in advance at <https://www.columbuslandmarks.org/>

TBA: Watch our FB page for a very special program in August where we will unveil a new art installation—a life-sized bronze of **Muggs, The Dog Who Bit People** on the James Thurber lot in conjunction with Thurber House and the Thurber family.

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Columbus, Ohio 43223

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7:00 AM - 7:00 PM
Starting October 19th:
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



OFFICE

Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Sunday
By appointment



CHAPEL

Visit Office for access



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**Special Thanks to our Green Lawn Trustees and
Volunteers**

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