CONSERVATION

TAKING ACTION FOR RESTORATION

The Cemetery Wall  The 672'-long by 12'-tall garden wall encircling the cemetery is a rare example of early 19th Century Greek Revival masonry work. Along with the family name tablets, it offers a unique connection to the past, and is our primary architectural feature. Restoration of the wall is our highest priority.

Action Taken  When part of the wall came down this winter as a result of the freeze thaw cycles (particularly hard on the already friable Tuckahoe Marble), we took immediate action. Emergency stabilization and damage control work was done to install temporary wooden supports near the inner gate and remove the overhanging coping stones from the North West corner.

Much More to Do  Despite the flashing and coping installed in 2000, moisture has invaded the wall’s interior and the mortar holding the stones is losing its grip. In early March, another 100-square-foot section of the inner East wall collapsed. We are working to prevent further damage, but it is an uphill fight without substantial funding.

HISTORY

EARLY CONNECTIONS WITH NYU

Our design was to create a university.

— Chancellor James M. Mathews

On a cold December evening in 1829, nine men met in Reverend Mathews’ living room at 93 Liberty Street to take the first steps in founding a radically new form of university for New York — an experiment in nonsectarian, egalitarian education that is now New York University. Four of these men were also in the process of establishing, with 150-plus other New Yorkers, a new and nonsectarian private cemetery in the City for their families, which they built in a meadow a mere five future blocks from the University’s planned home. In 1830, New York was a far-smaller city than it is now — home to only 202,600 people and not substantially settled above Twelfth Street. It was a small world and the inhabitants knew their neighbors. The original subscribers to the Cemetery’s vaults were part of New York’s educated, mercantile, religious, and professional circles. They knew each other and shared a general world view and many of the same interests and ambitions; more importantly, they were often courageous thinkers and complex leaders.

In 1829, nineteen years before the 1848 revolutions swept the European and western world, profoundly altering the socio-economic structure and view of western culture, they saw a burning need in the City for a liberal arts university with a broad-based curriculum that would be open to all, regardless of national origin, religious belief, or social background, and with a specific intent to offer financial aid. Columbia was the one local college and it only offered an excellent but sectarian, strictly classical education to a mere
twenty-some students per year. It had a very generous endowment and saw no need to change. Talented young men were forced to leave the City, and even the country, to find a university education.

The speed with which NYU grew is testament both to its timeliness and the hard work of its founders. Between 1829 and 1837, the founders met with the City and the academic world, drew up formation and subscription agreements (21% of the founding subscribers were from Cemetery families), elected the first Council (40% of which were connected to the Cemetery) and University Officers (the first Chancellor, Rev. James M. Mathews, was from a Cemetery family), saw the University incorporated, enrolled the first students (including five sons from Cemetery families), started classes, and built the first NYU building on Washington Square. In six-plus years, NYU went from concept to a functioning university. It was a difficult period, punctuated by the 1835 Fire and the 1837 Crash. Reverend Mathews made mistakes but the fact remains that he and his Council created an entirely new form of university for their City where none had before existed, and that (in current President John Sexton’s words) “two centuries later, NYU is one of the world’s leading institutions of higher learning.”

During the University’s first seventy years, twenty-nine men from Cemetery families would give 330 man-years of work to NYU (eight years of Chancellor, thirty-eight years of Presidents, sixteen years of Officers, and 268 years of Council Members). They gave skills and experience that ranged from those of God to those of Mammon — four ministers, four lawyers, and one doctor served as Chancellor, Presidents, Vice-President, Secretary, Council Members, and Head of the Medical School, and twenty businessmen served as Treasurers and Council Members and helped keep the University afloat.

Between 1830 and 1902, the NYU leaders who came from Cemetery families were: Chancellor Rev. James M. Mathews (v. 156), 1831-39; Council Presidents James Tallmadge (v. 118), 1834-46, Rev. Gardiner Spring (v. 137), 1846-48; and John Cleve Green (v. 146), 1851-75; Vice-President James Tallmadge (v. 118), 1831-34; Secretary Henry Van Schaick (v. 156), 1856-65; and Treasurers Frederick A. Tracy (v. 47), 1832-34; Waldron B. Post (v. 56), 1834-36; and Obadiah Holmes (v. 115), 1836-39. Twenty-one men served as Council Members, including three sons (Henry Van Schaick, George Griswold, Jr., and Anson G. Phelps, Jr.) who continued the work that their fathers had started.

The founders of the Cemetery created a calm place of rest for their families even as they used their skill to help create a revolutionary, new place of learning for the City. They knew that a strong, vibrant, and healthy City would best serve the City and their families, in perpetuity. They helped found and foster, in President Sexton’s words, “an NYU that will shape minds, build our country, and connect our world in the coming decades as it has since 1831.”

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OUTREACH

INCREASE IN VISITORS

During 2003 the Cemetery was open on 16 days, collecting nearly 1,200 names in our guest book. We continue to host “Open Gate” days the fourth Sunday of each month.

Our tour guides greeted 2,000 visitors with displays and history lessons during the first annual Open House New York and will participate again in this city-wide event on October 9 & 10, 2004.


During All Souls’ Day, we exchanged visits with the New York City Marble Cemetery (www.nycmc.org) which was established in 1832 and is located at 52-74 East Second Street. Many of our Owners have ancestors in both locations.

We welcome walking tours, out-of-town Owners, and reporters by appointment.

THE NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY, INC.
10375 Mackall Road  St. Leonard, MD  20685-2490
410-586-1321  office@marblecemetery.org

TRUSTEES  Anne W. Brown; Peter C. Luquer;
Waldron K. Post; Sophia D. L. Truslow;
Caroline S. DuBois

In addition we have an Advisory Board consisting of over 20 owners, neighbors, and historians.

Report Staff: Caroline DuBois, Rodman Neumann, Sophia Truslow
GIVING – Thanks to our DONORS

The Trustees are extremely grateful to the ninety-three generous individuals and foundations for their support during the past year. We have removed their names from the on-line version of this Report out of respect for their privacy. Their gifts have enabled us to continue the first phase of our Restoration Program, pay our masonry bill, and repair our beautiful wrought iron gates. We also wish to thank Brooks Robbins, Advisory Board member, for all his letters and follow-up calls to our supporters.

21ST CENTURY RESTORATION FUND

WE NEED YOUR HELP

To qualify for funding to rebuild the wall, restore the tablets, and enhance the landscaping, we must:

❖ Regularly open the site to visitors.
❖ Practice the best historic restoration techniques and management policies.
❖ Receive significant financial and operational support from owners and friends like you.

Meanwhile, our long-term goal of rebuilding our wall and enhancing the landscaping has been eclipsed by the urgent and expensive need to repair this winter’s damage.

Please send us your generous contribution to help restore and protect this fragile historic open space.

— Thank you

Send your check to:
THE NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY, INC. ❖
10375 Mackall Road ❖
St. Leonard, MD ❖ 20685-2490

Enclosed is my contribution:

$ __________

Name _________________________________________

Address _________________________________________

_______________________________________

Phone ___________________ E-mail _____________________________

Relationship to the Cemetery (descendent, neighbor, friend, etc.) ____________________________

For more information on gifts of appreciated stock or for a financial statement, call 410-586-1321.
❖ office@marblecemetery.org ❖

Your contribution is tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

THE NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY, INC. is a Sec. 501 (c) (3) registered charity.
The first privately-owned, nonsectarian cemetery in New York City, established in 1831.

A New York City Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The half-acre Cemetery lies hidden in the interior of an East Village block; its underground vaults concealed beneath an open lawn and enclosed within a 12-foot masonry wall and wrought-iron gates.

The Cemetery’s 156 vaults have accommodated over 2000 burials in an arrangement designed, during an era of frequent epidemics, to safeguard public health from the little-understood ravages of infectious disease.

The vaults lie in a regular grid beneath the lawn, and the surrounding wall bears tablets naming the original family vault owners.

Today, each vault belongs to the descendants/heirs of its Nineteenth Century owner and all current owners have the right to burial.

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**Annual Reception**
**Friday, May 7, 2004**
**On the Cemetery Grounds**
**4 – 6 PM**

(owners’ meeting at 5pm)

Featuring Refreshments & Distant Cousins

Look for our handsome iron gates adjacent to Provenzano Lanza at 43 Second Avenue
Two blocks North of Houston Street in the East Village

RSVP & Information: Caroline S. DuBois  212-206-1106

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**Postmaster:**
**Address service requested**

**The New York Marble Cemetery, Inc.**
10375 Mackall Road
St. Leonard  MD  20685-2490

www.marblecemetery.org