



NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY

SECOND AVENUE ABOVE EAST SECOND STREET

www.marblecemetery.org

November 2015

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OUR TRUSTEES - ANNE WRIGHT BROWN



Anne and Rosie the Riveter, at home in Maryland

Trustee Anne W. Brown first saw the name of the Cemetery in 1996 while looking for the burial places of her Markoe and Wright families. All she had to go on was a footnote in the Princeton class of 1794 bicentennial biographies: Marble Cemetery, New York City. She found that the Marble Collegiate Church couldn't help, because there has never been a connection, nor could the phone book, nor any cemetery directory. There was no universal internet. Thanks to an old Manhattan city directory in the stacks of the Library of Congress, a year and a half later she finally walked into the overgrown half-acre. She has yet to find her way out.

Becoming the Cemetery's de facto historian, genealogist, and researcher was never her intent, but after identifying the burials in her own vaults, she couldn't stop. She wanted to learn about all the purchasers and identify all the burials. Then she realized that restoration was going to require the help of as many descendants as she could locate. Another addiction set in, and there are now thousands of heirs in the Cemetery's files. Still,

Anne estimates that they are only 2% of the total.

Her earliest projects were drawn from the Cemetery's own extensive records, allowing her to understand the Cemetery's layout and to tabulate occupations and causes of death. Later, more wide-ranging research is evident in the notebooks bulging with portraits of early owners and burials, paintings of their ships, and images of their newspaper advertisements. She has learned a great deal about early 19th-century death and life in lower Manhattan and has created some interesting displays. Weights and measures, tariffs and prices, long-gone neighboring cemeteries - all are grist for the Brown mill.

"The first people I contacted thought I was a crank. It was because not even native New Yorkers had ever heard of the Cemetery. Now that we have a reputation for welcoming visitors into our gorgeous grounds and for professional restoration, I'm hoping that support from our hereditary owners will increase," Anne says. "The Cemetery was a gift to us from our ancestors. It's time for all of us to reciprocate."

Editor's note: Learn more about Anne and the Cemetery in this article published by the New York Times on May 22, 2000: <http://nyti.ms/1hNG9Rk> (Marble Walls, Roomy, But No Place to Live; Descendants Inherit a Cemetery Filled With History, but in Disrepair)

WHAT'S INSIDE

- *Our Donors - Many Thanks!*
- *Wall Restoration Progress*
- *Dead House*
- *How to Donate*
- *13th Annual Open House New York*
- *Path Forward for Restoration*



Photo courtesy of Caroline S. DuBois

Black-Eyed Susans in bloom.

WALL RESTORATION PROGRESS

A major gift by an anonymous donor has allowed us to spend the summer months restoring the South Wall.

The repair of all our walls is an ongoing process. Inspection of the parging on the South Wall made it a priority for this year. Careful removal of deteriorated marble covered by inferior concrete revealed that moisture had fragmented the stones behind. Additionally, amateur repairs already made on the other side of the wall will need to be inspected, undoubtedly leading to more expert repairs needed in the year ahead.



Peter Guziak, master stone mason

NEW YORK MARBLE CEMETERY, INC.
A 501(c)(13) registered charity

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TRUSTEES

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Anne Wright Brown | Lynn K. Rollins |
| Caroline Starin DuBois | Daphne Jay Bell |
| Lydia Potter Snyder | Peter C. Stearns |
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DEAD HOUSE

Recent shaft repair work is giving archaeologists from the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission an opportunity to study the foundation of the New York Marble Cemetery's Dead House.

The Dead House was used as a receiving vault for the temporary storage of coffins before burial in the Cemetery or transportation out of town. It was torn down in May, 1956, by Chelsea Demolition, a company operated by the Blasoff brothers who were then the Cemetery's caretakers.

HISTORY

Although it wasn't mentioned in the original construction documents, the Dead House was built by 1832 in the same marble masonry style as the surrounding walls. It had a wood door inside the stone door and wire over the windows, and covered the far west end of the South Wall. Its façade held the three family name plaques which would otherwise have been in the wall: Vault 51, Perkins Nichols and Sarah Cadle; Vault 52, Dr. David Hosack, and Vault 103, Daniel Parish. The Nichols and Hosack tablets were moved to the South Wall after the Dead House was demolished, but the whereabouts of the Parish tablet is a mystery. All that remains of the plain, undecorated, flat-roofed building, which was approximately 10 feet square, are some buried foundation walls.



*Dead House circa 1900.
Photo courtesy of the Museum of the City of New York.*

It sat on top of Vault 51, which belonged to cemetery developer Perkins Nichols, who was reprimanded by the trustees for unauthorized use of the Dead House. He may have been using it in conjunction with his own vault for temporary and unrecorded burials to add to his income, as he could easily have left his own vault open for handling of remains. His well-documented financial problems lend credence to this idea.



MAKE A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION

Online via  at www.marblecemetery.org

Or send a check to: Lynn K. Rollins, Treasurer
New York Marble Cemetery, Inc.
P.O. Box 315
New York, NY 10159

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For information on gifts of appreciated stock or for a financial statement, phone 646-734-9667,
or email treasurer@marblecemetery.org

The New York Marble Cemetery is a 501(c)(13) registered charity



ANNUAL RECEPTION
& OWNERS' MEETING
SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016
1-4 PM

Photo courtesy of Ellen Schofield



Meg Robbins, talking with visitors about the PowerPoint presentation.

HUNDREDS VISIT DURING OPEN HOUSE NEW YORK

The Cemetery welcomed nearly 1,000 visitors during the 13th Annual Open House New York on October 18th, 2015. Braving chilly winds and cloudy skies, people streamed down the alley into the garden, reaching a steady rate of 150 people per hour in the late afternoon. A special feature was a seven minute PowerPoint presentation designed to showcase our history and rental events. The presentation used a combination of photographs of restoration of the gates, walls, and garden with events that highlighted the versatility of our oasis.

PATH FORWARD FOR RESTORATION

Today, we are enjoying enthusiastic cooperation between a team consisting of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, the New York State Department of State Division of Cemeteries, as well as professional Engineers, Architects, Archaeologists and Historians, as shown by this photo of a group who are preparing for an archaeological study at the Cemetery.

L-R, Joan Berkowitz, Historic Restoration Consultant; Gresham Lang, landscaper; Christopher Neville, former trustee & owner of vault 4; Amanda Sutphin, Director of Archaeology, Landmarks; Eliot Rowlands, owner of vault 52.

