

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Spring 2016 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

Dale Flatt, President
Sally Victor, Vice President
Jan Root, Secretary
Kay Boyd, Treasurer
Karen Eshliman
Terri Mirka

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Our Man Danny Camacho by Dale Flatt

On April 27, our long-time board member, volunteer, and friend, Danny Camacho passed away. Here are thoughts from Dale Flatt.

Daniel Dwight Camacho Nov 22, 1945 - April 27, 2016

As a cemeterian, I often tell people that we live our lives between the dash – the familiar dash between our birth and death dates commonly found on a modern headstone. From the moment we take our first breath to the exhalation of our last breath, those moments are marked by a dash. A baby's heart starts beating eighteen days from conception; one day our heart falters and it stops – and then comes the dash.

Our lives are the combination of our experiences. It is what we do and how we handle life's events that help write our life's story. Everyone has a story; most are very similar. Danny's was a life rich with experiences. I find myself privileged to have not only called him friend, but to have traveled with him on four separate road trips, including two out of state, to learn more about historic cemeteries. Just last week we discussed yet another "Road Trip" – another chapter of the Danny & Dale Show – while gas prices were still low.

Most of us who knew Danny will agree that he was a story teller. Danny's passion for history and his strong sense of community service were both fulfilled by his many years as a volunteer at the Austin History Center. It was there that I first met Danny.

For the last twelve years, Danny and I explored Austin history together. We served on a few non-profit boards together and we often discussed the frustration of working with city departments. Danny taught me how to conduct research, where to find little nuggets of history and weave them into someone's life story, but more importantly he introduced me to the art of telling a story.



Save Austin's Cemeteries' most popular tour is our annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure. It was during these MMM tours that the showman Danny was set free. One year, it was a Beetlejuice-style character; another year, he was a circus ring master, and then my favorite was *Día de los Muertos* – his Day of the Dead-style costume with that purple hat. Danny was always a crowd pleaser, a master showman, and a storyteller.



(Photos by Hal Mohrlök)

In the Hispanic culture, the Day of the Dead is when loved ones go to the cemetery and remember those who came before them. It is a colorful event with costumes, flowers, and makeup/masks. It is a celebration of life where life stories of the dead are told to the younger generation. It is believed that as long as these stories are told and passed down through the generations, then the dead live on.

Danny decided years ago to choose cremation when his time came. Danny's family has honored his wishes. We are working with his family, conducting research into the family lot at historic Oakwood Cemetery to figure out if Danny's remains will have a final resting place near his grandmother, in the cemetery he so dearly loved.

While still in the discussion stage, rest assured Danny's memorial will not be a big green tent with cloth-covered chairs with sad faces that mark that day. In keeping with his cultural heritage, I think Danny would have liked the idea of a *Día de los Muertos*-style procession starting off at the chapel with his friends in colorful clothes and a little grease paint or a mask to conceal our mundane identities. This will allow us to openly celebrate his life and for a short period of time we will be the storytellers. We become the dash in the story of Daniel Dwight Camacho.



(Photos by Hal Mohrlök)

How the Oakwood Cemetery Confederate Monument Came to Be by Carl Crowther, Chaplain, Camp 59, Sons of Confederate Veterans

There has always been talk among the members of the Littlefield Camp about erecting a fitting monument for the men from the Austin area who served in the armed forces of the Confederate States of America who are at rest in Oakwood Cemetery. This monument came to be with the combined efforts of many dedicated people, but in great part due to our brother, Tony Johnson, who spent much time finding as many Confederate veterans buried within the cemetery as he could and researching records of their Confederate military service.

Once the decision was made to move forward with our goal of erecting a monument, we had to create a design. One day while on my lunch-hour, I sat at my desk with a pencil, ruler, and piece of paper, and drew the design. Being mindful that we needed to keep the monument's size modest due to cost factors, but still wanting to try to make it big enough to have at least some of boldness of presence, I thought about using measurements that are standard for people's dwellings and accommodate for an average man's body-size. I figured that the width of an office door would be good for the width of the base of our monument. I just turned to my office door, measured it to be three-feet wide, and used that for our base-width. Considering my own height of 5'10" being about average, I figured that making our monument's footing, base, and plate totaling 4'9" would come up to the top an average-sized man's chest.

Based on a standard ceiling height for most rooms of our day being about nine feet, I figured we would go up just one more foot and make our total monument height ten feet.

The obelisk design draws the viewer's attention upward towards the sky or heavenward, as church steeples do. In February of 2012, during our monthly meeting, Tony Johnson wrote down on a sketchpad the inscriptions that he wanted on the monument. Little did we know that Tony Johnson would pass away a few months later. Tony's wishes were that he be cremated.

On the sunny Saturday of June 9, 2012, Tony's memorial service was held at Oakwood Cemetery on our Camp's cemetery property, where the monument would be installed. Tony's ashes were fired over our cemetery property from H.W. Irby's cannon in three separate shots.

Three of Tony's family members took their turns at pulling the lanyard.

The monument was installed in March 2016, and publicly dedicated on April 16, 2016. "Lest We Forget" is etched toward the top of the obelisk. Below that is the Confederate Seal. On the center section, these words will greet visitors as long as the monument stands: "Dedicated to those men who served in the armed forces of the Confederate States of America who are buried within these hallowed grounds."



Website Assistance Needed. Can You Help Us?

Save Austin's Cemeteries is searching for someone who can redesign our website. If you or anyone you know would like to talk with us about it, please contact us at info@sachome.org. We would love to talk to you.

Oh No! Who Bleached My Ancestor's 1862 Gravestone? By Terri Hoover Mirka

It must have been bleach ... applied with harsh scrubbing. How else could that formerly gray- and black-stained gravestone suddenly have a pristine white look of a new marble monument? The stone had been cleaned several times over the years using the traditional method of water, non-ionic soap, and a gentle brush, but it still had many stains.

As it turns out, Paul Ridenour, a cousin from Dallas, had discovered the benefits of D/2 Biological Solution and thoroughly sprayed the marble monuments during several visits to Oakwood Cemetery, and the family monuments now look almost new. After seeing his results, I had to learn more about D/2 Solution and experiment with the product myself as I was still skeptical as to how cousin Paul could have gotten the results without harsh chemicals and scrubbing.

D/2 Biological Solution – What the Manufacturer Says (<http://www.d2bio.com/>)

Here's a summary of what the manufacturer claims about D/2:

- Is a biodegradable, easy-to-use liquid that safely removes stains from mold, algae, mildew, lichens and air pollutants – without the use of harmful acids, salts, or chlorine;
- Leaves no harmful residue, will not etch metal or glass, and is safe around plants;
- Removes staining from a variety of surfaces including natural stones such as marble, granite, limestone, sandstone, slate; masonry surfaces such as brick and cast stone; concrete; wood; aluminum and vinyl siding; and canvas.

I needed valid endorsements and scientific proof to be convinced though. D/2's website claims "it has been used to clean millions of buildings and monuments – From the White House to Arlington Cemetery." The real proof behind this claim was readily available and documented:

- The U.S. National Cemetery Administration lists D/2 as its preferred cleaner following a seven-year study to evaluate marble cleaners.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which maintains more than 3.5 million white marble headstones, selected D/2 as its preferred cleaner following a separate six-year study by the National Park Service.

I was sold after uncovering this secondary research, so now it was time to conduct my own experiment!

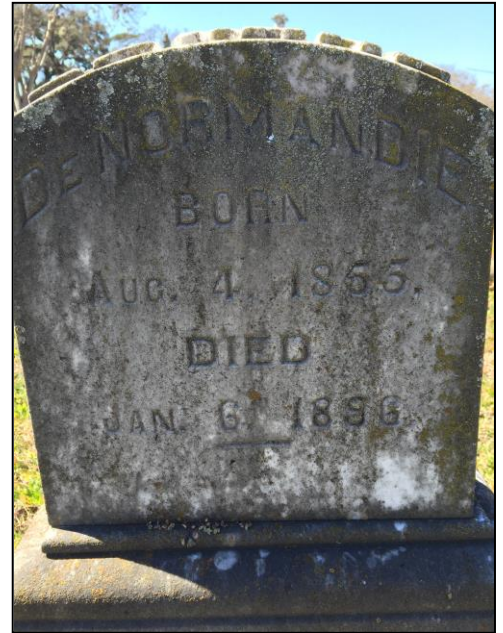
How to Clean with D/2 Biological Solution

Quick Result Method

1. Take a pre-cleaning picture of your dirty monument to document the results (see picture 1)
2. Make sure the stone is safe to clean. If the surface is crumbling or flaking, then you could cause damage. "Do no harm!"
3. Rinse the stone with water before applying D/2 (This step is not currently listed on D/2's website, but is recommended by several experts, including SAC's own Dale Flatt!)
4. Apply D/2 with a hand pump sprayer (garden style pump sprayer), roller, or soft brush.

5. Allow undiluted D/2 to remain on the surface 10-15 minutes. (see picture 2)
6. Apply additional D/2 as necessary to maintain a wet surface.
7. Gently scrub with a wet soft nylon or natural bristle, wooden-handled brush. **Do not use a metal brush.** Work from the bottom of the stone upward to prevent streaking.
8. Lightly mist with water and continue scrubbing.
9. Rinse thoroughly with clean, potable water
10. Let dry and take another picture (See picture 3).

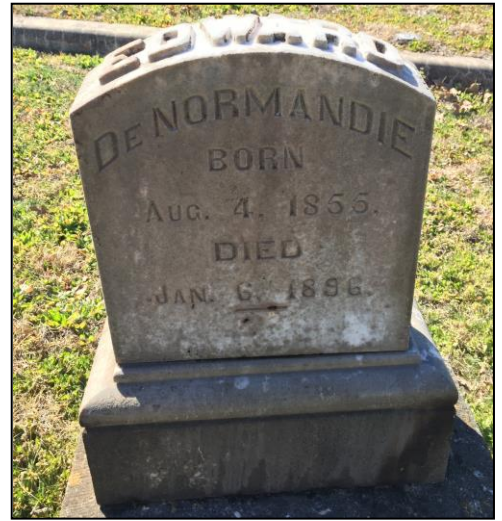
Picture 1: Pre-cleaning: Marble Gravestone from 1896, which had never been cleaned



Picture 2: D/2 turned the stone an orange-ish color after it was applied, showing the product is at work on the stains!



Picture 3: Gravestone after using the “quick result method,” but with only a brief amount of gentle scrubbing.



Picture 4: Gravestone one month later after using the “quick result method” twice plus the “no scrub longer-term method”



No Scrub/No Rinse Longer-Term Method

1. Using a sprayer (pump-up, low pressure, or other), wet the entire surface with D/2.
2. Allow to air dry. D/2 works with the elements and results occur within one week to one month, depending on severity of the stains. (See Picture 4)

Notes and Maintenance

- D/2 should be used at temperatures of **45°F or above**. Reapply if rain occurs within twelve hours of application.
- You can use both methods described above, doing an initial quick cleaning and then re-soaking with D/2 to let D/2 work with the elements over time. (Results of the combined approach are shown in Picture 4)
- Heavy growth can be detached by manual scraping using wooden or plastic tools immediately after application of D/2.
- For badly stained stones, you may need to reapply after a month and/or use several iterations of the quick clean method.
- After initial treatment of substrate, a once-a-year light spraying will help maintain a clean, stain-free surface.

Where to Buy D/2 – Try It Out Yourself!

D/2 is currently available in 1-gallon and 5-gallon containers, and 55-gallon drums. You will need to put the solution in a spray bottle or larger hand-pump sprayer for application.

As of April 2016, the manufacturer for D/2 lists 10 distributors for their product under “where to buy.” The Texas distributor is Cemetery Preservation Supply www.gravestonecleaner.com. This company has set up

coupon code OAKWOODAUSTIN for a 10% discount for readers of this newsletter and plans to release a smaller bottle of D/2 (than the gallon size) and a cleaning kit in the near future.

Primary Source: <http://www.d2bio.com> accessed 26 April 2016. Please visit this website for detailed information about the D/2 Biological Solution product, the studies conducted, and how to use D/2 including a video demonstration.

Sarah Bolton's Headstone Comes Home by Kay Boyd and Sally Victor

Sarah Jayne was born March 3, 1828 in Stuben, New York. Her father was Timothy Jayne. Sarah married a Felter and a Bolton. In 1900, she lived with her husband, John Bolton, in Buchanan County, Iowa, where he was a farmer. By 1908, the Austin city directory shows her as a boarder at the Altemheim Home. This was a home for elderly women on Avenue H, here in Austin.

She died on December 24, 1913 from “paralysis, LaGrippe (also known as influenza) and old age” as stated on her death certificate. She was buried in Oakwood Cemetery on Christmas Day in section 2, lot 462. At some unknown date, her tombstone disappeared from Oakwood Cemetery. The story picks up here with an article reprinted from the *San Marcos Daily Record*, dated March 30, 2016.

“Headstone Headed Home” by Anita Miller - Managing Editor

Nobody knows how it happened, but a headstone that went missing from a Travis County grave before spending decades in San Marcos is on its way back to where it is supposed to be. Leighton Stallones, a commissioner of Hays County Emergency Services District #3, said it was more than thirty years ago when the headstone belonging to Sarah Jane Bolton was found in a ditch by a Hays County maintenance crew.

Not knowing what else to do, they brought it back to the San Antonio Street barn where the South Hays Fire Department is headquartered. There it lay, covered in debris, for decades. “I had asked about it several times, but no one knew anything about it,” Stallones said. Then, the district built a new station out on Hunter Road and when time came to vacate the old building, Stallones decided not to leave the headstone there. “I took it home and put it under a big oak tree,” he recalled. There it stayed until a few weeks ago. “I decided to start to try to find the site and the cemetery where it belonged,” he said, a pursuit that brought him to Bill Pennington of Pennington Funeral Home, a business that has been in San Marcos for more than a hundred years. But Pennington didn't have any records past 1915, and the headstone read that she lived from 1828-1913. On Pennington's suggestion, Stallones contacted Texas State University and Kristina L. Tom of the archives department at the Alkek Library, who suggested he try the website, www.findagrave.com. Turns out Bolton had been buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Travis County, and had been a widow who died “of paralysis and old age,” according to her death certificate. Robert Sage of findagrave.com didn't take long to respond, come and pick up the headstone and return it to its rightful place. “How or why it was removed many years ago we do not know, but the lady's headstone will soon be returned to her grave,” Stallones said.



The headstone did return to Oakwood when Robert Sage contacted Save Austin's Cemeteries to confirm that Sarah had been buried there. On March 12, 2016, Sarah came home to Oakwood. Her tombstone is now back where it belongs with her son, daughter-in-law, and two small grandchildren who died from scarlet fever.

It's My Park Day, March 5, 2016 by Sally Victor, Barbara Surles, and Jan Root

Take a lovely cool blue sky day in early March, add thirty-five plus volunteers, season with terrific snacks, blooming wildflowers, and top with loads of enthusiasm. Stir the pot and you get a lot of work done at Oakwood Cemetery and Evergreen Cemetery at this year's *It's My Park Day* city-wide event.

With the help of the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department, corporate sponsors, and Austin public-minded folks, *It's My Park Day* 2016 was a rousing success. Save Austin's Cemeteries expanded beyond the boundaries of Oakwood Cemetery this year and also held an event at Evergreen Cemetery. Dale and Kathy Flatt led volunteers at Evergreen Cemetery and Barbara Surles kept up her long string of successes as leader of *It's My Park Day* activities at Oakwood Cemetery.



Oakwood – Around thirty people showed up and many were new volunteers. Most worked on photo-documentation in the northeast part of Oakwood Cemetery. Led by Leslie Wolfenden, experienced volunteers showed new volunteers how to document gravestones and family lots. Everyone had a grand time. A few intrepid volunteers marched around the cemetery to pick up trash. One reported a very different kind of leftover - a goat's head (already deceased, of course). Park staff was called and responded very quickly to remove the aforesaid leftover. Not the first time according to the staff, who wore protective gloves!

Evergreen – Dale had five people sign up to spread mulch, but PARD staff had already completed that task. Volunteers trimmed the crepe myrtle trees and collected two big bags of trash. A plot owner donated the flagpole that was dedicated to her husband who was killed in World War I. PARD installed two raised bed planters with money they received from a mini-grant and PARD officers chipped in to help.

New SAC Board Member by Terri Mirka

Terri Hoover Mirka, a long-time SAC member, recently joined the SAC board of directors. She was born in South Carolina, but got to Texas as soon as she could when she joined Dell Inc. in 1998. She retired from her role as a Dell marketing director in 2005 to dedicate more time to raising her two children who are now both in college. Terri holds a MBA degree in International Marketing and worked at Price-Waterhouse in Germany and at NCR/AT&T in Ohio prior to her move to Texas. She enjoys family history, gardening, and traveling – especially to her mother’s native city of Munich, Germany.



Her paternal roots are very deep in US history with many ancestors arriving to the Colony of Virginia in the 1600s and serving in all major US wars since early times. Her first “Texas” ancestors were the Swisher family who moved from Tennessee to Robertson’s Colony in 1833. Other direct ancestor family lines – Le Pert, Mann, Parks, Paxton, Sims, and Trabue – settled in Texas in the 1840s and 1850s.

Terri’s 4x-5x great-grandparents buried in Oakwood cemetery are:

- Captain James Gibson Swisher (1794-1862) – Veteran of the War of 1812 and the Texas Revolution, and signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the Republic of Texas in 1836. Swisher, from the Territory of Tennessee who came to Texas in 1833, moved to Austin in 1846 and owned a hotel, tavern, river ferry, and farm from which he donated the land that is now South Congress Avenue. Swisher Street in Austin and Swisher County, Texas are named for him. (Oakwood Sec. 4, Lot 127)
- Elizabeth Boyd Swisher (1798-1875) – Elizabeth, a Tennessee native, the mother of 11 children, was an early Austin business woman, managing the Swisher Hotel in Austin in the 1850s and the Swisher Ferry from the ages of 62 until 77. (Oakwood Sec. 4, Lot 127)
- Colonel John Milton Swisher (1819-1891) – Veteran of the Battle of San Jacinto at age 16, career civil servant who held many offices in the republic and state of Texas starting in 1839, such as serving in the last Congress of the Republic of Texas and as the Auditor of the State of Texas. He was also a banker/financier in Austin and Galveston, founder of the Austin Street Railway Company in 1870 to construct the city’s first street railway system, and developer of Austin’s first platted neighborhood south of the river, the Swisher Addition, naming the streets after Swisher family members. (Oakwood Sec. 1, Lot 28)
- Daniel Trabue, Jr. (1799-1864) – A merchant and native of Kentucky who moved to Texas in the early 1850s with his wife Mary Paxton. He had stores in Austin, Galveston, Houston, and Washington Municipality. (Oakwood Sec. 1, Lot 150)

Free Access to Historical Archives by Kay Boyd

If you are a researcher or historian, you will be interested in free access to historical records available through the Texas State Library and ancestry.com <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/arc/ancestry>

Free access to our records (Texas State Library and Archives Commission) that have been digitized by ancestry.com is available to Texas residents. This access requires you to create a free Ancestry.com Texas account.

Ancestry.com Texas

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission houses a vast collection of documents related to Texas government and history, and provides a variety of reference services and materials for free public use at the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building in Austin and the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty.

What Texas materials are available?

The following data collections are included free to Texans via ancestry.com:

- Alabama, Texas and Virginia, Confederate Pensions, 1884-1958
- Texas, Prison Employee Ledgers, 1861-1938
- Texas, Muster Roll Index Cards, 1838-1900
- Texas, Wills and Probate Records, 1833-1974
- Texas, Convict and Conduct Registers, 1875-1945
- Texas, Court of Criminal Appeal Indexes, 1892-1947
- Texas, Capitol Building Payroll, 1882-1888
- Texas, Memorials and Petitions, 1834-1929
- Texas, Bonds and Oaths of Office, 1846–1920
- Texas, Index Card Collections, 1800-1900
- Texas, Voter Registration Lists, 1867-1869
- Nacogdoches, Texas, Spanish and Mexican Government Records, 1729-1836
- Texas, Land Title Abstracts, 1700-2008 (original records held by the Texas General Land Office)

Murder, Mayhem and Misadventure 2016: October 29th by Megan Spencer and Kay Boyd

Would you like to portray a person in the MMM 2016 tour? If so, please mark this date on your calendar: October 29. The event runs from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, but for presenters, we divide the day into two shifts: 10 am-1 pm and 1 pm-4 pm. It's lots of fun and we'll take good care of you!

The tour stops have not been identified yet, but as always we try to bring new Oakwood stories to life, while often repeating a few favorites as well. If you would like to represent a person from the past and tell their story, please send a message to info@sachome.org and we will keep you informed as the stories come together. We will also be asking for tour guides to help us, so let us know if you are interested. Tour guides walk with groups from one stop to the next. It's a great way to get exercise and to meet lots of nice people!

July 16 Guest Speaker Session

Our next Guest Speaker Session will be held on July 16 at the Yarborough Library at 10:30 a.m. The Yarborough Library is located at 2200 Hancock Drive.

Submit an Article to the SAC E-newsletter

If you would like to submit an article to the SAC e-newsletter, please send your article or idea to info@sachome.org.

SAC Board Meetings

SAC Board Meetings are held as needed at least four times a year. If you are interested the city's cemeteries, please join us. Contact info@sachome.org to confirm the time and place of board meetings.

Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events!

July 16	SAC Guest Speaker Session 10:30 am at Yarborough Library
Oct. 1	Photo-documentation starts for the season at Oakwood Cemetery
Oct. 29	Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Halloween walking tours at Oakwood Cemetery
Nov. 5	Photo-documentation session at Oakwood Cemetery

If you would like to stop receiving SAC emails, or if you have updated contact information, please send an email to info@sachome.org.