



SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Summer 2017 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

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

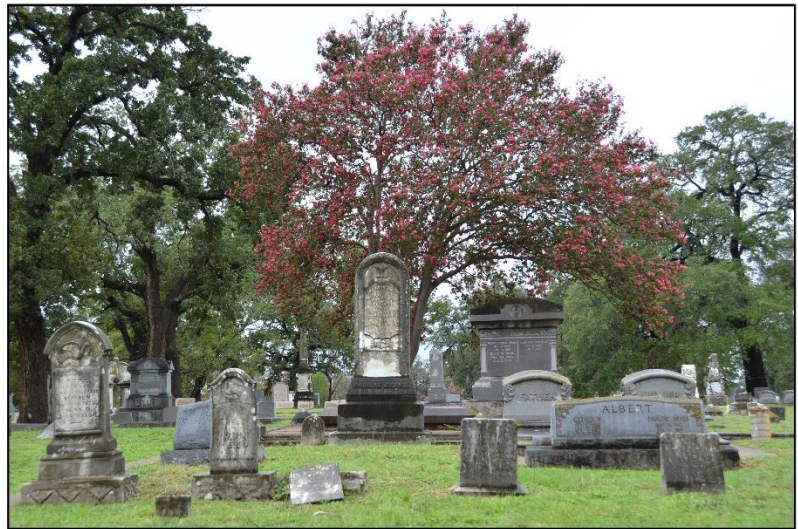
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8th Annual SAC Photo Contest by Leslie Wolfenden

Get your cameras clicking! The 8th Annual Cemetery Photo Contest starts August 1. Send in your favorite photos of statues, flora and fauna, headstones, and scenic shots from Austin's five city cemeteries (taken at any time, not just in the last year). Austin's five city cemeteries include Austin Memorial Park, Evergreen, Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, and Plummers. Entries will be accepted through August 31 at midnight via email to info@sachome.org.

Shortly after that, the photo entries will be uploaded to the internet where you will then have a chance to vote for your top 12 favorites. The 12 photos with the most votes by the end of September will earn places in the 2018 SAC calendar. The winning photographers will win a one-year membership to SAC. The first place photo earns the calendar cover and a free 2018 calendar! This Fall, we will have the 2018 SAC calendar available for sale online.



In Blossom at Oakwood Cemetery, Charles Freeman

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES 2017

www.sachome.org

Last year's winning photo on the cover of the SAC 2017 calendar.

11th Annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Walking Tour October 28 at Oakwood Cemetery by Kay Dunlap Boyd

Fall is just around the corner so we are taking the opportunity to announce our 11th annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Walking Tour Oct 28th (10am-4pm) at Historic Oakwood Cemetery! The free tours cover the chilling, untimely deaths and misadventures of “residents” of Oakwood portrayed by actors at grave sites in Section Two. The forty-five minute tours highlight historical – not scary – events mostly from the 1800s and showcase a wealth of information gleaned from local Austin sites and newspapers. Tours start every 15-20 minutes between 10am-3:15pm at the blue tents erected for the tour. Kids under adult supervision are welcome, but please leave your pets at home. We encourage everyone to wear closed-toed shoes as the ground is uneven in places.

To help make the day a success, we need volunteers to help us. Would you be interested in participating in any of the following ways?

- Telling the stories at the stops. These people will be in costume and tell the researched events of the person at the stop. Costumed volunteers work the morning shift 10am–1pm or the afternoon shift 1pm-4pm, and need to show up about 15-30 minutes before the shift starts.
- Leading the tours from stop to stop.
- Supporting the event by helping us with set up, working registration, selling our books, helping with takedown and clean up.

If you can help in any role on October 28, please contact us at info@sachome.org.



Rescue Mission: Gravestone Cleaning at Oakwood! By Terri Hoover Mirka

Did you know that environmental pollutants like mold, mildew, algae, lichens, and air pollutants are gradually eating away at many of the oldest historic monuments in cemeteries? This destructive biological growth has attached itself and dug its roots into the pores of the gravestones of our ancestors and is causing deterioration and disfiguring of these vital links to our past. These growths are feeding on the gravestones and gradually destroying them.

Fortunately, there is now a well-tested cleaning solution, D/2 Biological, which not only safely cleans the surface of the stone, but it also penetrates below the surface to fully flush out toxins.



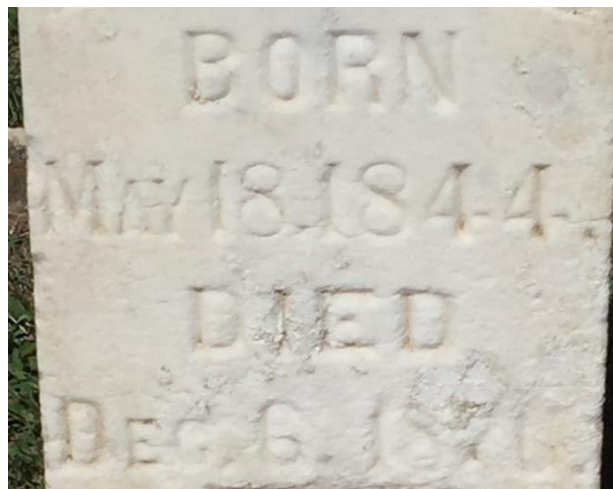
Jacob Theis' 1876 gravestone before cleaning



Close-up of D/2 applied, making the growths feasting on the stone even more visible...



Two months after D/2 cleaning solution applied



The pollutants are removed, but they have damaged the stone. The year of death is barely visible.

Cleaning Progress at Oakwood Cemetery: See for Yourself!

The SAC Board of Directors has conducted extensive cleaning tests over the past two years on our own family stones and have seen tremendous results, so we are now cleaning other Oakwood Cemetery gravestones. Our initial focus is the Community/Public Burial Grounds (southwest side of Section 4, directly north of Main Street) so that the gravestones of early Austin citizens who could not afford to purchase a burial place are protected from further deterioration.

See the photo of a section of Oakwood Community Burial Grounds on June 16, 2017 right after D/2 Cleaner was applied. D/2 immediately reveals the pollutants thriving on the gravestones. The stones were sprayed with water and then D/2, gently brushed to remove surface toxins, and rinsed with water. D/2 was then reapplied so that the deep toxins could be flushed out over the next month.



And one month later on July 16! Note that these gravestones are all in the full sun so results were faster than stones in the shade, which typically have more toxins and do not benefit as much from the sun's help with the D/2 cleaning process.

How Can You Help with Gravestone Cleaning?

Descendants: If you would like your ancestor gravestones to be evaluated for cleaning, please complete the “Permission to Repair or Clean Monuments” form found at www.sachome.org.

Everyone: If you would like to sponsor the preservation of a monument, please consider a donation to SAC. D/2 Biological Solution is very effective but relatively expensive, retailing at \$40 for a gallon. If you make an online donation on the SAC website, please add a note under “special instructions” that your donation is for “Gravestone Cleaning.”

And/or join our *Gravestone Cleaning Team* by emailing us at info@sachome.org.

Gravestone Cleaning Project: The Fine Print

- SAC cannot clean monuments over 6’ tall for our safety nor will we clean stones that have any damage such as chipping or flaking as we do not want to cause any harm.
- This work is done on an as-needed basis and is based on the availability of limited SAC funds, resources, and volunteers. There is no charge, however donations are appreciated.
- D/2 is a non-hazardous and biodegradable cleaner and is recommended by many organizations, such as the National Cemetery Administration, National Park Service, and the Association for Gravestone Studies.
- See the SAC Spring 2016 Newsletter for our D/2 Biological cleaning experiment and tips on using the product. For more information on D/2 cleaner, see <http://www.d2bio.com/>

From the Cemetery Extracted by Kay Dunlap Boyd

An Unclaimed Corpse in Austin

In a certain undertaking establishment in Austin there is the corpse of a white man, and it has been there ever since May 1, 1900, the date of his death. The man’s name is J. W. Wilson, and he came to this city about the middle of last April. He was in ill health when he arrived here, and a few days after his arrival he became so ill that it was necessary to send him to the city hospital. There, on May, he died from the effects of a severe hemorrhage. The body was turned over to a local undertaker to be prepared for burial.

Just before his death Wilson said that his home was at Springfield, Ill, and he was a member of the Masonic lodge there. After his death telegrams were sent to Springfield inquiring about Wilson’s relatives and answers were received stating, that he was not known there. The body was then embalmed and placed in a coffin, which has been kept at the undertaking establishment ever since. The corpse was viewed by a Tribune reporter, and it was in a good state of preservation. It had shrunk up some and the color of the flesh had turned yellow. It was learned by the reporter that the body will not be buried until some word is heard from relatives and in the meantime it will be kept where it is now.

From *Austin Daily Tribune*, Sunday July 15, 1900.

(Follow up from the sexton report: J. Wilson was buried Sep 28, 1900 by the city in lot 5 (pauper). He was about 50 years old, from Germany and died of heart disease.)

Obituary

He gathered them in;

He gathered them in,

Poor old Papa Nitschke has been gathered to his fathers. He was an honest fair and upright man. He contended for what he believed was right, and died in the belief that his Redeemer liveth. As a refugee on account of his political convictions he landed in this country in 1848. Mobil, Ala., was his first home and there and he met his better half who was willing to share the hardships and tribulation which the old pioneers had to face. An intelligent woman from the British Isle, she had the determined will to face all obstacles. Pa will meet her above and there is this consolation that he tried to raise his children right.

He leaves to mourn his loss Mrs. John Ezell, Mrs. Geo Isherwood, Mrs. Matthew Clarkson, Mrs. Albert Schutze and his sons, Messrs. Louis, Julius, Oscar, Bassett and Ed Nitschke. As city sexton of this city for the past fourteen years, he did his duty, and, with assistance of his sons, made a garden out of a wilderness. He left his work to speak for him and those who knew him best respect and revere his memory.

Located in Section 3, Lot 541.

From *Austin Weekly Statesman*, Thursday Oct 18, 1888.

A sad occurrence took place near the city on Sunday last. Mr. B. C. Holman and his little daughter were instantly killed by lightning while standing in the door of their home. Mr. H. was a respected citizen of the county and leaves a wife and large family to mourn his untimely loss.

Located in Section 1, Lot 22.

From *Weekly State Gazette*, Austin, August 10, 1864.

Introducing New Board Member, Warren Friedrich by Kay Boyd

Warren Friedrich has been a friend of Save Austin's Cemeteries for several years and has supported the SAC by giving presentations of J. W. Hannig, the husband of Susannah Dickinson who survived the fall of the Alamo and was sent by Santa Anna to give Sam Houston the news. Warren has portrayed characters in Oakwood Cemetery tours and he has led tours. He is also a frequent volunteer for the photo documentation project at Oakwood Cemetery. Now he is joining the Board of Directors. Here is an introduction to Warren:

Warren is a second generation German American and a native Texan. After thirty-three years of government and military service, Warren retired with a goal to track his family's history and to continue his research into German immigration into Texas, which began in the 1830s.



He is currently a member of the German/Texan Heritage Society, Save Austin's Cemeteries, the Susanna Dickinson and Joseph Hannig Museum, and the Bullock Texas State History Museum where he is an active volunteer bringing Texas history and the history of "Germans in Texas" to native Texans and visitors to Texas. He is dedicated to bringing history alive for future generations of Texans through storytelling, costumed presentations, Oakwood Cemetery Tours, and German Immigration talks. We welcome Warren and we are so pleased to have him join the SAC Board!

Election of Officers at Annual Meeting of SAC Membership - October 7, 2017 by Kay Dunlap Boyd

SAC is always looking for interested and energetic people to serve on the board of directors. From these people the officers are chosen. We have some outstanding SAC members running for office this year.

Those running for office for the term 2018-2020 are:

- Sally Victor – President
- Warren Friedrich – Vice President
- Terri Mirka – Secretary
- Kay Boyd – Treasurer

Save Austin's Cemeteries holds an election every two years (odd years) to elect officers to the board of directors. This election is held at the annual meeting in October. SAC members of good standing are allowed to vote.

The officers will be elected by a majority of the voting membership present and those casting votes by mail. Newly elected officers will take office following the adjournment of the meeting at which they are elected.

Other current board members are Bobby Cervantes, Jan Root, Karen Eshliman and out-going president Dale Flatt.

The board members serve to uphold the mission of the organization. The object and purpose of Save Austin's Cemeteries is to work in partnership with the City of Austin in the preservation, documentation, and selective restoration at the city's owned and operated cemeteries. This is to be accomplished through educational workshops, tours, lectures, fundraising, and any other related activities that may be applicable from time to time.

Austin Museum Day Sunday, September 17, 2017 by Kay Dunlap Boyd

SAC is a member of the Austin Museum Partnership and we are always proud to show off our "Outdoor Museum." Volunteers will be on the Oakwood Cemetery grounds Sunday, September 17th from 9am to 11am – while the weather is cool and before the other museums open – to give tours to visitors. We usually have coupons to hand out to visitors from local sponsors.

This will be the 20th Annual Austin Museum Day, a free city-wide celebration of art, culture, history, music, nature, and science. More than thirty-five museums welcome visitors. This is the seventh year SAC has participated in this event.

Visit <http://www.austinmuseums.org/museumday/> and download the Austin Museum Partnership mobile app for details about Austin Museum Day, participating museums, and hours.

Texas History Symposium - September 15 & 16 by James Harkins

You are invited to the 8th Annual Save Texas History Symposium on September 15 and 16! Returning to Austin, the symposium will examine Texas and the Great War – World War I.

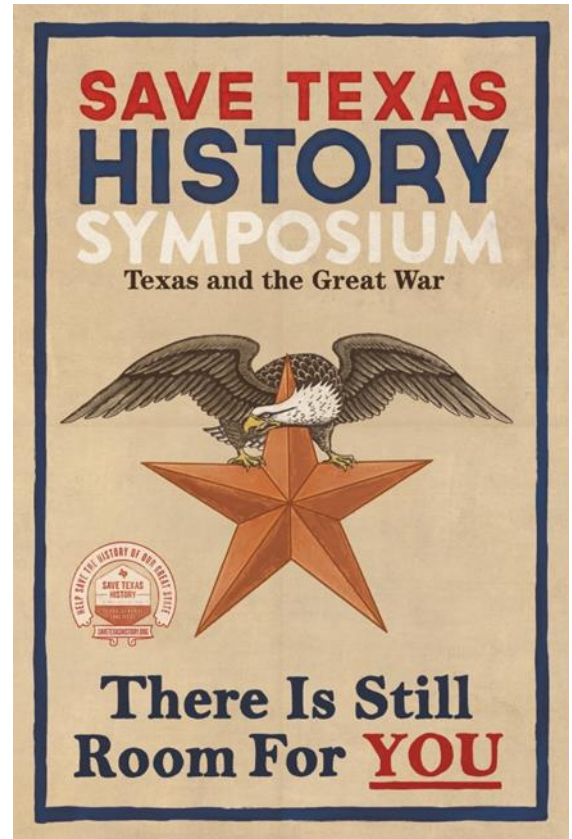
This year marks the centennial of American involvement in World War I, in which Texas, and Texans, had a major impact on the American war effort at home and abroad.

Register today at www.savetexashistory.org.

Save Austin Cemeteries members will receive a \$5 discount if you use the promo code “TOMBSTONE” at the time of registration.

Learn more about everything from the Zimmerman Telegram to the Battleship Texas, the 36th Infantry Division, the women’s peace movement, how the news shaped public opinion on the war, the riots at Camp Logan, and how we are remembering the war effort on its centennial.

For the first time, we will also have a FREE workshop available to symposium registrants. The workshop will include tours of the Texas General Land Office Archives, as well as speakers discussing resources for studying World War I.



IMPORTANT DATES & FEES:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

- **Texas World War I Resources**
Texas General Land Office, 1pm-5pm (Free with Symposium Registration)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- **Save Texas History Symposium**
Commons Learning Center at the Pickle Campus of the University of Texas (8am-5pm - \$80)
- **Save Texas History Reception**
Texas Military Forces Museum (Camp Mabry) (7pm-9pm - \$75)

Monument Care - The Catch 22 by Dale Flatt

I have always loved the artistry of older headstones; many tell the story of a life long since passed. “Born in Prussia in 1798, came to the United States in 1839, Married in 1842” – these old stones are often marble or crafted from local stone that is soft and fragile. They show their age and many are broken beyond repair. Over time, the fragments are stolen as souvenirs or are discarded by cemetery operators.

Cemetery operators want no responsibility for the upkeep to grave stones, let alone the historic fencing and other funerary objects that get damaged due to vandalism, weather-related events, or accidental damage from the grounds crews. This makes financial sense from the management stand point. You would go broke trying

to keep up with their care because monuments shift with the soil. They lean and when they reach a tipping point, they fall. Many weigh in well over several hundred pounds. It takes special equipment and a skill set to reset. So, it is the family's responsibility.

All cemeteries consider the monuments as private property of the families who purchased and placed the stones. But what happens when the family line dies off? Or perhaps descendants of those at rest have moved away from the area, who then is the responsible party?

In a hypothetical situation, what if I were to contact you and tell you that your great grandpa's obelisk has fallen and needs to be reset, and hey it's only going to cost you \$4,395.00! Are you willing to write that check? If you are like me, you have your own family to care for, car payments, home payments, student loans, and the list goes on.

At historic Oakwood Cemetery, descendants are six and seven generations removed from the early burials. Some families are big and there are many branches to the tree, making it difficult for relatives to decide who should pay for the work. This is why so many monuments have disappeared and many others are at serious risk.

In Texas, there is a state law under the Health and Safety Code Sec. 713.011 adopted in 2009 that states that the city is responsible; however, it is at best an unfunded mandate. There is no state agency that enforces this law. Instead, the State relies on local authorities to enforce the law, and yes, that would be the City of Austin – the Catch 22.

The city actually has a policy that states:

All subsequent re-setting or re-leveling of existing monuments is at the expense of the site owner or the relatives of the deceased. In the event a monument is deemed detrimental to the appearance of the grounds or may prevent proper care of the cemetery, and the owners or relatives cannot be located, the City of Austin shall have the right to reset the monument, without responsibility for any loss or damage that may occur during the process. In the event that a monument presents a public safety issue, the City of Austin will attempt to locate the owner or a member of the family. If unable to contact the owner or family, the City of Austin shall reset the monument.

I have been monitoring the City's involvement in cemeteries since 2004 and do not believe I have seen the City straighten or repair a monument that was reported at risk. I have turned in monuments and critical infrastructure items and far too many years have passed. The City has no trained persons to do this and not a single line item budget exists for this... Catch 22. Oakwood Cemetery is designated a National Register of Historic Places contributing property, a Texas Historic Landmark, and an Austin Historic Landmark. Designations like these add more layers of protection, but a lot of red tape, too. It is another Catch 22.

Lead, Follow or Stand aside! Descendants, please visit www.sachome.org to complete the "Plot Owner's Contact Information" form and a "Permission to Repair or Clean Monuments" form if you know of a monument for which you have legal ownership/responsibility in need of repair. Submit the forms to info@sachome.org. We are in the planning stage to have a professional stone conservator come to Austin in the fall to teach us the basics on repairing stones. There are many hurdles to get this repair program off the ground and ensure that quality workmanship and materials are used. Follow us on Facebook, in our newsletters, and SAC emails for more information.

History Revisited III stories collected by Kay Dunlap Boyd

Some of Our Friends

On Monday last a reencounter took place in the streets of our city, between a man by the name of Guinn and Captain (Benjamin) GRUMBLES (lot 390), which resulted in the shooting of Guinn by Grumbles with a double barrell shot gun. It seems that on Saturday evening previous, there was a drunken misunderstanding between the parties, at which Guinn was very much incensed, and threatened the life of Grumbles.—Guinn continued his threats until Monday, when Grumbles again coming into town, Guinn saw him and told him that “if he Grumbles was a gentleman, to go and arm himself”, that he himself was armed, that Grumbles had insulted him and he would have satisfaction.—Grumbles told him he was sorry for having insulted him, but took him at his word, and procured a gun, and took his position in the retail grocery of John HORAN (lot 346) and as Guinn crossed the street from the SWISHER (lot 34) house to GLASSCOCK’s (lot 243) grocery, with a double -barrelled shot gun in his hands, Grumbles shot him. Guinn received some 12 or 13 shot, the most of them in his thigh. It is thought that he will recover, as none of the wounds are considered very dangerous. Grumbles was before Justice Allen on Tuesday evening when the examination of the affair was commenced. We are informed that the Justice recognised [sic] the defendant to appear at the next term of the District court in a bond for a thousand dollars. Messrs. John A. Green, and T. S. Anderson appeared for the defence [sic], and Messrs. Brownrigg and West for the State.

From *Texas State Gazette*, April 8, 1854

The Railroad in Austin

December 25, 1871 – Houston and Texas Central Reaches Austin

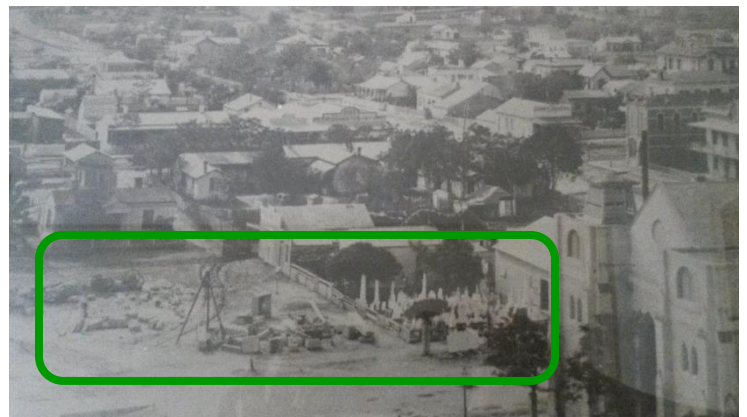
On this day in 1871, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad reached Austin, making the city the westernmost rail terminus in Texas. The completion of the first railroad to the capital city marked a new era in Austin's development. As the only railroad town for scores of miles in most directions, Austin was transformed into a trading center. Construction boomed and the population more than doubled in five years.

From Texas State Historical Association

After the railroad arrived in Austin in 1871, many products including gravestone materials became available. This article reflects the use of marble and other supplies. By 1894, there were three railroads in Austin.

Austin Marble Works

Macken, Russell & Macken, Proprietors, Fourteenth and Colorado Austin Marble Works was established by Mr. A. J. Jernigan in 1871 and it came into the possession of the firm of Macken, Russell & Macken in 1893. The premises utilized cover a quarter city block and comprise show rooms, office, work shops, yards, etc. It contains a granite polish machine, derricks, etc. which are operated by a 25-horse power engine. In the show rooms

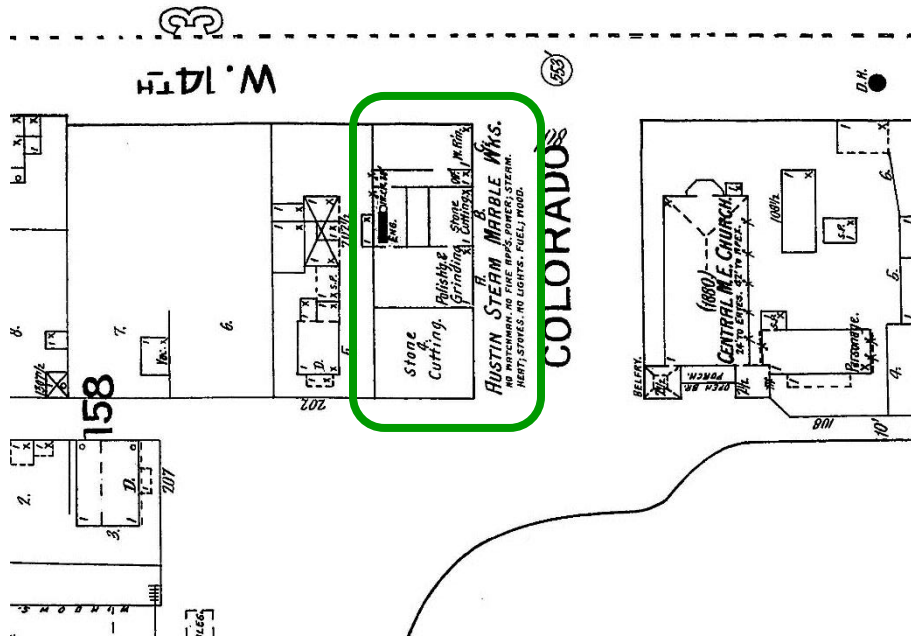


may be inspected a beautiful assortment of monuments, headstones, statuary, memorials, etc. all off designs embracing artistic skill and conception in the highest degree. Besides monuments, the firm supply cut building stone, marble hearths, iron fencing, ceilings, etc. The house also deals in both domestic and imported marble and granite, and they are direct importers of beautiful and artistic statuary from Italy. It is the aim of the proprietors to furnish strictly first-class work to the public at reasonable prices, so that the goof taste of the people may be both educated and gratified.

From The Industrial Advantages of Austin, Texas or Austin Up To Date, 1894.

Photo courtesy Texas Historical Commission, undated.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1894, Sheet 4.



Update on the Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Project by Dale Flatt

The archeology team continues exhumations and is hopeful to complete the work by mid-July. So far, eleven burials have been exhumed and bone preservation is very good. Burial depth has varied quite a bit, which is the reason for the extended time period. Approximately twenty shafts have been opened or are currently being explored.

The bioarcheology lab has indicated that it may be late this fall before they can complete their full project analysis. Staff is pressing for a quicker turnaround, but we may have to be patient on a final project report.

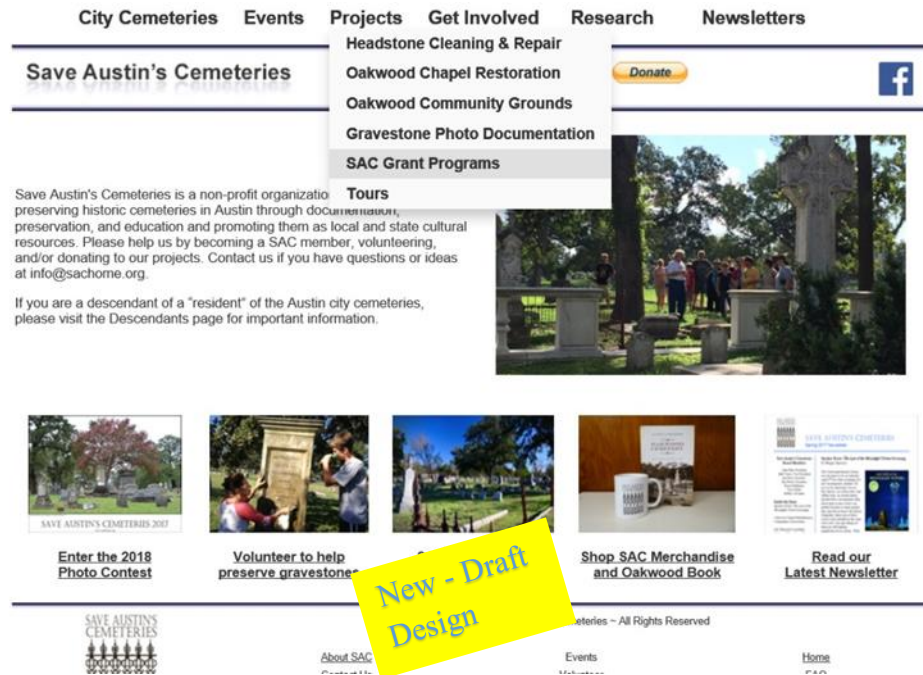
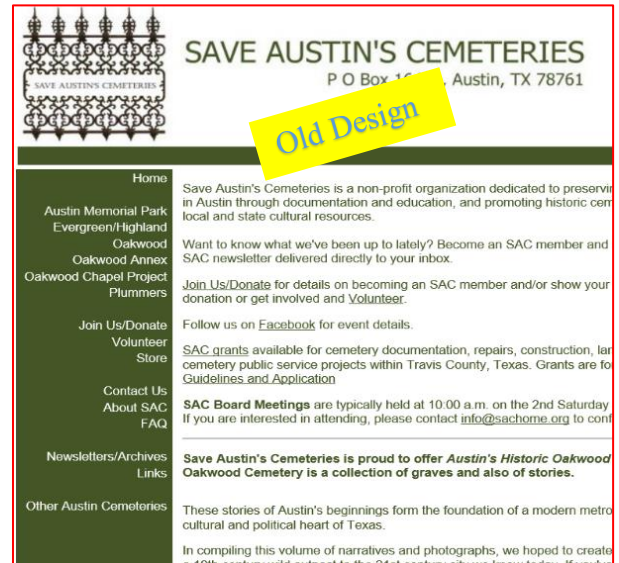
After a few coordination meetings with civil and structural engineers, the architect has submitted a progress set for the redesign intended to limit impacts to the discovered burials. The contractor for the Chapel Rehab project, Gadberry Construction, is beginning to price the proposed changes. This will take some back and forth to make sure that the costs are not significantly increased on the project. They are hopeful they can resume construction activity in August 2017.

Austin Water Utility provided a new tap to the wastewater main on Navasota Street, just outside the west cemetery gate. They are coordinating with their facilities staff to secure a trade permit and run the new 4" line to the building.

The SAC Website is Being Revamped! by Terri Hoover Mirka

We are doing a long over-due update to the Save Austin's Cemeteries website at <http://www.sachome.org>. Major enhancements to the old website (shown at the right) include:

- Revising most of the content
- Moving to a more modern and user-friendly design for computers and mobile devices
- Using more consistent descriptions of all the burial records now located under each of the cemetery pages
- Getting rid of broken links to articles no longer available
- Adding sections for events and projects
- Adding more photographs of what SAC's members and friends do!



The most significant design change is moving from a left-hand navigation column to a better organized navigation at the top with drop-down menus to topics under each menu item. Here is the new design along with one of the drop-down menus to illustrate the navigation difference.

Most of the content is already updated, and we will move to the new design in early August. Please be patient with us as we ensure all the previous information is migrated and logically organized. We welcome your suggestions for improvements at info@sachome.org. We will also continue to use Facebook as well for the latest on events.

A note of thanks to Denny's Restaurant from the SAC Board!

The SAC Board of Directors would like to thank Denny's Restaurant for letting us use a room for our long meetings while the Oakwood Cemetery Chapel is being renovated. Denny's is conveniently located beside Oakwood Cemetery at 1601 I-35, Austin, TX 78702.

SAC on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

You can follow Save Austin's Cemeteries on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These links will take you to Save Austin's Cemeteries.

Facebook (link to: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveAustinsCemeteries/>)

Instagram (link to: <https://www.instagram.com/save.atx.cemeteries/>)

Twitter (link to: <https://twitter.com/SaveATXCemetery/>)

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

If you are interested the city's cemeteries and would like to attend a board meeting, please contact info@sachome.org to confirm the time and place of the next board meeting.

Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events!

Sept. 17	Austin Museum Day at Oakwood Cemetery, 9-11 a.m.
Oct. 7	Photo-documentation starts again at Oakwood Cemetery 9 a.m.
Oct. 7	Elections for SAC Board Officers at Oakwood Cemetery
Oct. 28	11 th Annual Murder, Mayhem & Misadventure Walking Tours at Oakwood Cemetery 10-4
Nov. 4	It's My Park Day and 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.