

SAVE AUSTIN'S CEMETERIES

Winter 2018 Newsletter

Save Austin's Cemeteries Board Members

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

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April 21st

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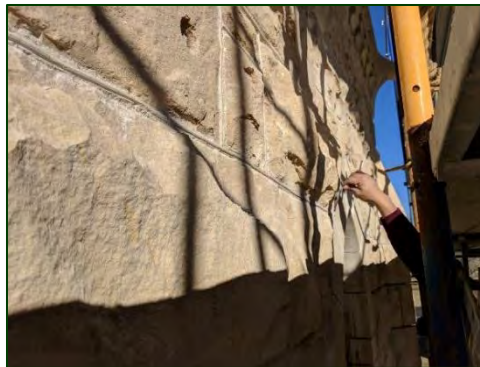
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Oakwood Chapel Rehabilitation Update by Kevin Johnson, PARC Project Contact

After completion of the archeological phase of work, which resulted in nearly a one-year construction delay, construction resumed at the Oakwood Chapel site in late October 2017. Field work followed careful coordination with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) who reviewed the archeologist's interim field report and granted approval to resume structural reinforcement of the grade beam. Pier drilling resumed on November 20. Drilling was monitored by archeologists, and all 25 piers were able to be placed per the structural engineer's drawings.



One additional burial required exhumation due to its discovery underneath the north wall of the chapel, but all structural reinforcement was completed within the contractor's schedule prior to the holiday break.



Since then, work scopes have moved above ground and include utility rough-in (HVAC, electrical, plumbing), masonry cleaning and repointing, wood carpentry, and roofing. As of the week of 2/5/18, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing trades have completed the rough-in of their systems and inspections for all trades have been completed.

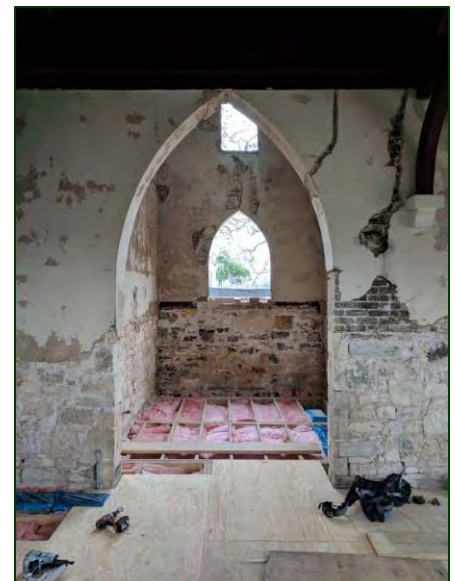
The masons have moved to the south façade of the tower and are continuing their precise mortar repointing work. The eastern façade of the tower has been entirely repointed, and the attached photos show the craftsmanship.

Carpenters have installed the wooden floor framing and decking, which spans the crawl space supported by the piers. The decision was made to return to a wood-framed floor in lieu of a poured concrete slab after the discovery of burials and indications in the existing stone masonry that the original flooring was supported by wood joists. Prior to completion, the subfloor will be topped with reclaimed wood native to Texas.

The next steps include completing all roofing work and replacement of the historic wood-framed windows and doors. The original intent had been to carefully repair the historic windows; however, they were not salvageable in their current condition and were removed by the lead abatement contractor. The windows were each carefully photographed before removal and shop drawings were submitted before fabrication, along with a sample window frame. Everything is detailed to match the profile of the original frames. The original hardware for the operable casements are being restored. Several of the doors were in better condition than the windows, and are being chemically stripped and restored. However, a couple of doors are also being newly fabricated to match. This work is being done by MMI General Contractors, a preservation contracting firm that does preservation work on Texas courthouses. Once the windows and doors have been installed, the building will be dried-in and ready for finish trades on the interior to begin their work, including plaster and finish carpentry. The project remains on schedule, with anticipated completion in June 2018.

Additionally, the exhumed burials have been delivered to the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State University (FACTS) for bioarcheological analysis. Preliminary analyses will consist of cleaning, inventorying, and general recording of individual burial features into a relational database structure. Next, all human remains will undergo a non-destructive physical examination to discern information related to the biological profile (age, sex, ancestry, stature), as well as that associated with pathological, traumatic, and/or skeletal change. The archeologists expect this analysis to be completed by late May, with a final report deliverable in the early summer of 2018. The Parks Department will keep stakeholders informed as this information becomes available.

(All project photographs provided by the City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department)



The Rough Road to Texas Independence Tour at Oakwood Cemetery, April 21, 2018 By Terri Hoover Mirka and Jan Root

Ever wish you could learn more about Texas' struggle for independence as told by folks who lived, fought, and died for that cause? Learn from first-hand accounts from "residents" of Oakwood Cemetery what it was like to live and fight in Texas during the Revolution days.

Please join us at Oakwood Cemetery on the 182nd anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 2018, as we acknowledge the many heroes interred at Oakwood who participated in the Texas Revolution (October 1835 to April 1836) and celebrate the establishment of the Republic of Texas. Tours run from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The fight for Texas' independence from Mexico may not be well known or understood by many of today's Austin residents who have moved here from other states. For many native-born Texans whose families go back generations, the stories of the people who fought for a new land and a government free from Mexican rule is something they hold near and dear, for it was their ancestors who shed blood to help in that great cause.

Some of the highlights we will be celebrating are Oakwood residents who:

- Participated in the opening battle of the Texas Revolution at the Battle of Gonzales
- Was one of the leaders at the Siege of Bexar and negotiated General Cos' surrender
- Actually survived the Alamo
- Escaped from Goliad, avoiding the tragic Goliad Massacre
- Elected as one of 59 representatives to write and sign the Texas Declaration of Independence and risked being charged with treason
- Helped win the decisive Battle of San Jacinto
- Guarded Santa Anna after his capture

We hope to make the tours not only educational, but also filled with fun and interesting facts! If you would like to answer the call and become a volunteer to help with planning, marketing, or helping to ensure the smooth-running of the event, please let us know at info@sachome.org.

Recognizing our Military "Residents" in Austin's City Cemeteries by Terri Hoover Mirka

We have begun an ambitious project to identify and record the many military personnel buried at Oakwood Cemetery and the other city cemeteries so that we can recognize their dedicated service to the United States of America with American flags during select holidays and to improve their gravestones.

Our first step was to walk and survey the full grounds of Oakwood Cemetery and the small African American Plummers Cemetery to identify military markers as well as inscriptions on private gravestones that referenced military service. For Evergreen Cemetery and the Oakwood Cemetery Annex, detailed burial records recorded by volunteer Robert Sage list many of the military designations so we are using those thorough lists to extract a summary of all military. We will determine how to include Austin Memorial Park's many military burials at a later time.

Our goal is to have a summary list by summer 2018 for each cemetery with detail on foreign wars served and military branch if available. If you have military ancestors buried at any of the city cemeteries and want to

ensure we have included them in our records, please email us his/her name and burial location at: info@sachome.org.

The Travis County Historical Commission is also developing plans to recognize all known WWI veterans during 2018 for the 100-year anniversary of the conclusion of World War I so we will provide an update once plans are established.

Samples of Military Markers – Our Veterans Deserve Better!

Pictured are a sample of the current types and state of military markers found at Oakwood and Plummers Cemeteries. See below on how to help!



Left: Spanish American War Veteran; Short upright white marble gravestone, Oakwood. Right: WWI Veteran; Flat, light granite gravestone, Plummers.



Left: WWI Veteran; tall upright white marble gravestone, Plummers. Right: WWI, WWII & Korean Veteran, bronze marker attached to private headstone, Oakwood.

Cleaning and Preserving our Veteran Gravestones – How You Can Help

We are also including military gravestones in our focus area for gravestone cleaning and restoration evaluations because many stones are not legible and are damaged. Our veterans deserve better so if you would like to join the cleaning team or donate to the Veteran Gravestone cleaning or USA Flag funds, please help! Donation options can be found on our website www.sachome.org/

Government-Provided Military Markers

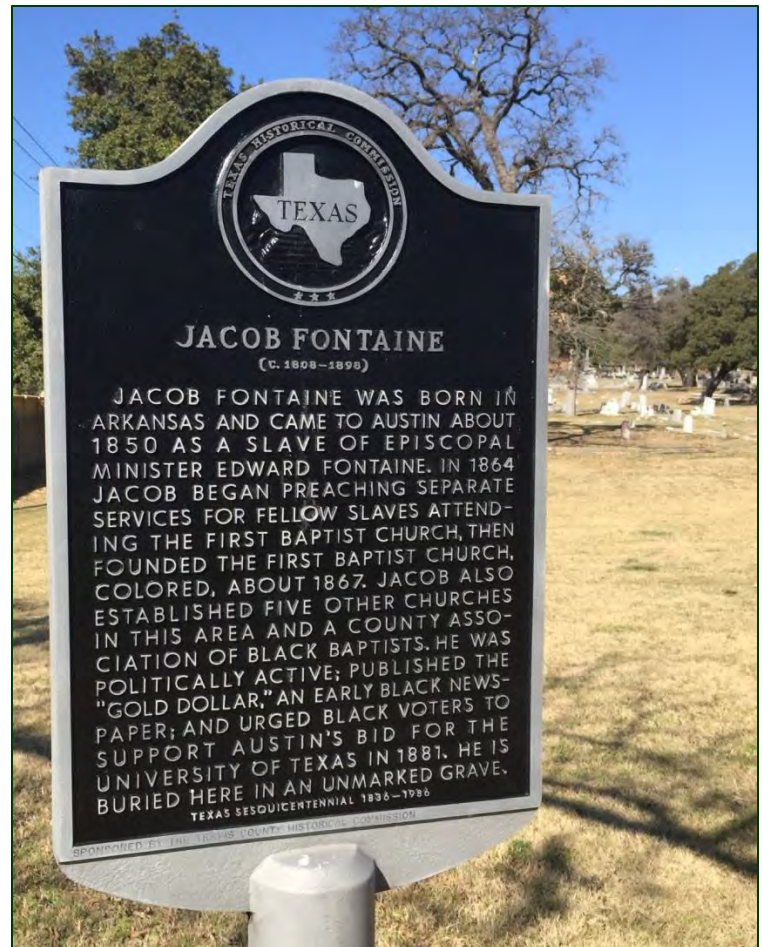
The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will furnish, at no charge to the applicant, a Government headstone or marker for the unmarked grave of any deceased eligible veteran in any cemetery around the world, regardless of their date of death. For eligible veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990, a government-issued headstone or marker may be provided for those whose grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone.

Flat markers in granite, marble, and bronze and upright headstones in granite and marble are available. There is no charge for the headstone or marker itself, however arrangements for placing it in a private cemetery are the applicant's responsibility and all setting fees are at private expense. Please visit www.cem.va.gov/hmm/ for additional information.

Black History Month: Jacob Fontaine by Terri Hoover Mirka

In honor of Black History Month, SAC would like to recognize Reverend Jacob Fontaine whose historic marker looks over the Oakwood Community/Colored Grounds. Rev. Fontaine was an extraordinary African-American leader who was a founder of churches, a preacher, a political and civic leader, and a newspaper publisher.

Marker Text: (c. 1808-1898) Jacob Fontaine was born in Arkansas and came to Austin about 1850 as a slave of Episcopal minister Edward Fontaine. In 1864 Jacob began preaching separate services for fellow slaves attending the First Baptist Church, then founded the First Baptist Church, Colored, about 1867. Jacob also established five other churches in this area and a county association of black Baptists. He was politically active; published the "Gold Dollar," an early black newspaper; and urged black voters to support Austin's bid for the University of Texas in 1881. He is buried here in an unmarked grave. Texas Sesquicentennial 1836-1986

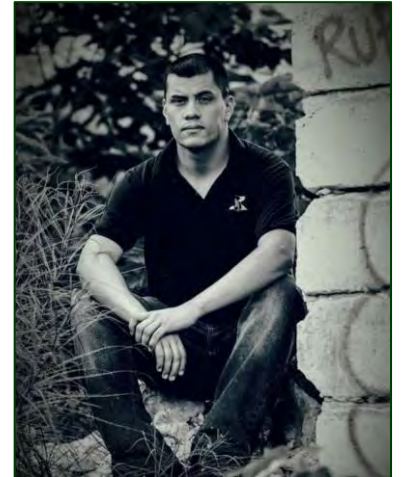


SAC Board Changes by Sally Victor and Kay Dunlap Boyd

Nothing is static in our world so change is good and will always visit us. This winter, there have been a few changes to the Board of Directors of Save Austin's Cemeteries. Bobby Cervantes has stepped up to become the Vice-President to fill the boots of Warren Friedrich who has resigned. We are happy to welcome a new board member, Cynthia Evans. More about all these wonderful folks follows.

Warren Friedrich joined the SAC board of directors last summer. After sharing his wonderful ideas and input on Oakwood history, he decided he wants to focus his time on his other volunteer projects. He is currently a member of the German/Texan Heritage Society, 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 will still be volunteering with SAC as a member of the history tour committee, photo documentation, and as an actor/presenter and tour guide. By no means is he leaving Save Austin's Cemeteries. He is dedicated to bringing history alive for future generations of Texans through storytelling, costumed presentations, Oakwood Cemetery tours, and German Immigration talks. Warren is a story teller without equal.

Bobby Cervantes was born and raised in Austin. His family's Texas roots are deep. The first Cervantes was born in 1791 in what is now Laredo, Texas. Cervantes often visits the graves of his ancestors who were laid to rest in San Antonio at San Fernando Cemetery #1. Bobby has spent ten years involved in the preservation of the Sneed Mansion, a pre-civil war era home in south Austin attributed to Abner Cook. This historic property, which includes a cemetery, fell into disrepair and was at the mercy of developers and vandals, when he stepped in to save it. In 2015, he became a member the Travis County Historical Commission. Last year, he joined Save Austin Cemeteries as a member of the board of directors. His goal is to get young people involved in historic preservation. Bobby is a school teacher and is serving as a Campus Improvement Administrator, while working on a Ph. D. in education.



Cynthia Evans is our newest board member. She was born and raised in Oklahoma. Her interest in family history began as a young girl, listening to her great-grandmother talk about earlier times. As a young adult, her interest in genealogical research grew and she continues to document her family's history. Cynthia currently serves as the Genealogy Preservation Coordinator for the George Washington Carver Genealogy Center. She holds a B.A. in Business Administration and an M.A. in Museum Science. Since earning her Master's degree in 2004, she has worked in various museums and archives in the state of the Texas, including the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Johnson City, Texas and the Austin History Center, where she was honored to produce their first large exhibit on African American history in Travis County. She has twelve years of combined experience in the museum, library, and archival field.

Superstitions about Death and Burials collected by Kay Dunlap Boyd

For some of us with Save Austin's Cemeteries, when we see a black butterfly, we think Danny Camacho is watching over us.

Here are some other superstitions, some you may have heard, others that might be new to you.

- A corpse should leave any home or building feet-first, or else the corpse would be looking back at the building and calling for someone within to follow him in death.
- A black cat crossing in front of a funeral procession means another death in that family.
- If the deceased lived a good life, flowers will bloom on his grave, but if he has been evil, only weeds will grow.
- Never take flowers from a grave or that spirit will haunt you.
- A living flower taken from a gravesite will not grow.
- If you smell roses when none are around, someone is going to die.
- A single snowdrop growing in the garden foretells a death
- It is bad luck to wear anything new to a funeral, especially shoes.
- If you hear three knocks and no one is there, it usually means someone close to you has died. The superstitious call this the three knocks of death.
- If a picture suddenly falls off the wall, someone has died.
- If you spill salt, throw a pinch of the spilt salt over your shoulder to prevent death.
- If you bury a woman in all black with no color on her dress, she will always come back and haunt the family.
- You should always cover your mouth while yawning so your spirit does not leave you and the devil enter your body.

FEMA Cemetery Preservation Workshop: From Cleaning to Repairs by Dale Flatt

Over the many years of documenting historic Oakwood Cemetery, it had become very clear that many of the older marble and limestone memorials were either at risk or in fact had been damaged, with some fragments lying in the dirt. Others had been stolen or discarded.

Several opportunities have come our way to begin to learn the art of restoration. Just last week, I had such an opportunity to travel to Corpus Christi, Texas, and get some hands-on experience. The workshop was part of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program to address disaster plans for historic cemeteries.

Monuments are the property of the families that placed them and they are also protected by state law. There are lots of examples of bad, but well-meaning repairs of monuments in many cemeteries that have been done in the past. We at SAC are learning to walk, as it were, taking classes and starting with simple repairs and resetting of smaller monuments, all to ensure that these monuments will last several more generations.

At the following links, I have posted videos on YouTube, so you also can see the type of things we are learning:

<https://youtu.be/HgajGJUsTy0> Basic Headstone repair

<https://youtu.be/IwMcrhBAk-0> Military Marker resetting

<https://youtu.be/gIGuUTs34E> Die & Base resetting



I would like to thank our instructors and presenters:

- Joe Ferrannini of Grave Stone Matters, who came in from Hoosick Falls, New York;
- Jason Church with the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training Center, who drove in from Natchitoches, Louisiana;
- James "Rusty" Brenner and Dan Kieninner from Texas Cemetery Restoration, who drove down from the Dallas Texas area;
- Carlyn Hammons from the Texas Historical Commission, Cemetery Preservation Program from Austin, Texas;
- Mr. Ted Kinnari, the inventor of D2- the headstone cleaner that we use, from Westport, Maine.



Ted Kinnari and Dale Platt

It's My Park Day March 3, 2018 by Terri Hoover Mirka

Please join our group of dedicated volunteers at Oakwood Cemetery on Saturday March 3rd for a fun and productive work session starting at 9 a.m. to noon during "It's My Park Day Spring 2018." We will split into two groups that will either continue our photo documentation mission or do general clean-up of the cemetery grounds at Oakwood. Join us to get a little exercise, a free IMPD t-shirt, and snacks.

The Austin's Park Foundation holds city-wide "It's My Park Day" volunteer events in both the Spring and Fall each year.

Thousands of volunteers work to improve parks and greenbelts throughout the city, so we at Save Austin's Cemeteries host events at Oakwood Cemetery as we are part of the Parks Foundation. Volunteers receive a great IMPD Spring 2018 t-shirt as thanks for their service



You can access direct links for sign-up directly from SAC's Facebook, Twitter or website:

<http://www.sachome.org/events/IMPD.html>.

From the Cemetery: Notes and Obituaries collected by Kay Dunlap Boyd

These are notes and obituaries on men connected to the upcoming Rough Road to Texas Independence Tour. These men were involved for the fight for independence, except for William H. Huddle. Mr. Huddle painted the battle scene at San Jacinto, which hangs in the State Capitol. Each of these men will be identified by an InfoSpot that will connect you to more information.

- **Joseph Baker** died in Austin, Texas July 11, 1846. (from his marker erected by the State of Texas, 1936)
- **Col. Lewis Miles Hobbs Washington** was killed in February 1857 in Nicaragua while he was a news reporter. His body was not recovered. His wife Rebecca is buried in Oakwood, where his historical marker is located.
- “This is a sad night in camp, a few rods from where I am writing, lies the corpse of **Maj Gen Thos. Green**, the Napoleon of the West. Maj. Gen. Green was killed instantly about 5 o’clock on the evening of the 12th at Blair’s Landing on Red River.” *Weekly State Gazette*, Austin, April 27, 1864
- DIED, In this city of the 11th instant, **Dr. William Carleton**, aged 53 years, a native of England. (Sexton record states he was buried Nov 12, 1865 of paralysis). *The Southern Intelligencer*. (Austin, Tex.), November 16, 1865.
- **Major Wm Oldham**, killed by fall from bluff of river, 66 years old, buried June 22, 1868. (from Sexton record)
- **George W. Glasscock** died February 28, 1868 when he was thrown from a mule on his land near Webberville.
- **James S. Patterson**, one of the oldest citizens of the state and survivor of the battle of San Jacinto died at his home of this city on the 8th inst and was buried this morning. *The Democratic Statesman* 09 Nov 1872. (The Sexton record noted he was 73 years of age.)
- **Resolution To The Memory of THOS. F. MCKINNEY**
Thomas F. McKinney, late of the county of Travis, formerly for many years an active, energetic, public spirited, obedient citizen of the counties of Galveston and Brazoria, departed this life at his residence in Travis county on the morning of the second of October 1873, in the seventy-third year of his age. Thos. F. McKinney, who in 1836, with a liberality that sacrificed his private fortune, and with a trust in the good cause that nothing could discourage, aided in establishing a new nation, called the Republic of Texas – now own fertile, growing and beautiful State. We request that the secretary of this meeting cause a copy of the forgoing resolutions to be presented to Mrs. Anna McKinney, in the name of the friends and fellow-citizens of the deceased. *Daily Democrat Statesman*, (Austin), October 14, 1873
- **James R. Pace** died of consumption and was buried on July 2, 1876 at the age of 73. He was from the Williamson Creek area of Travis County. Reported in Sexton record.
- **GEORGE HANCOCK DEAD**-The distinguished citizen whose name heads this article died in the city of Austin early on the morning of the sixth of January 1879. In his demise another one of the few links uniting us with the past is severed, and the rest may almost be counted upon our fingers. He emigrated to Texas in 1835. He participated in the war of independence, was an active participant in the battle of San Jacinto and remained during the greater part of 1836 in the volunteer army of Texas. He opened a mercantile house in 1845 in Austin. In 1861 Mr. Hancock withdrew from active mercantile pursuits. In

the capital contract of 1872, he served Austin as but few have ever served her, devoting much time and money in accruing the victory for our own loved city, for which he always labored well. Extracted from *Weekly Democratic Statesman*. (Austin), Thursday, January 2, 1879

- The old veteran **Oswin Wilcox** of Sherman's regiment at San Jacinto and who served in the campaign of 1842, lies at death's door east of Waller creek on Cherry street in this city. He has but one dollar and absolutely fears that he will be buried as a pauper. Of this old man has a proper and holy horror, let him be assured that whatever the conduct of the Legislature towards the old soldiers, this one shall have a place in the State cemetery and be buried with civic military honors. Meanwhile those whose patriotic and generous impulses are stronger than those of the few one of the Legislature, who would enrich the pedagogues and let the old soldiers and the states credit starve, will see that the venerable man who has come down to us from a bygone age want anything. There is no reason why he should die stronger than the legal republic, and there are enough of his comrades and worthy Texans to see that he wants for nothing and that his last wishes shall be executed. *Daily Democratic Statesman*, (Austin), April 5, 1879.
- **DEATH ENDS SUFFERING After 5 Day Illness W. H. Huddle Passes Away**
Mr. Wm. H. Huddle died at his residence yesterday. Austin's citizenship sustained a serious loss. He was ardent and wholesouled in everything he undertook. He was a firm believer in Austin's future, a stalwart advocate of her plans for betterment. He was the truest of friends, a noble citizen, a doting husband and father. His sudden illness was deplored by all; His untimely death will be a matter of universal regret. *Austin Weekly Statesman*, March 31, 1892
- **J. M. HILL DEAD, He Was One of the Survivors of the Battle of San Jacinto**, (Austin, Texas, February 14). Col J. M. Hill, aged 94 years, a veteran of the battle of San Jacinto, died tonight after an illness which lasted for the past ten days. The widow and seven children survive him, and they were all gathered around his bedside when final summons came. During the days of his vigorous manhood, Colonel Hill was a well-known planter in Fayette county, where he raised his children. His widow is 90 years of age and last September this elderly couple celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. The funeral will take place at 4 pm tomorrow. Extracted from *Houston Daily Post*, February 15, 1904.

Call for Volunteers! Saturday, April 21st Texas Independence Day Tour by Kay Dunlap Boyd

Our volunteers are an integral part of our activities – photo documenting, monument cleaning, and special events. On April 21, we offer another opportunity to volunteer when we host a history tour called, The Rough Road to Texas Independence. Tours will run from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. The tour will cover the battles of 1835-1836 and the Oakwood people who participated in them. If you can help us in a time slot, please email us at info@sachome.org. You'll have lots of fun! We need volunteers for the following stations:

- **Set Up** 8:30 am
- **Actor** All slots filled, but you can sign up for backup or future tours
- **Tour guide** 10-12:30 or 12:30-2:30-3:00.
- **Runner/Support** 10:00-12:30 or 12:30-3:00
- **Hospitality Table** 10:00-12:30 or 12:30-2:003
- **Book Sales and Donations** 10:00-12:30 or 12:30-3:00
- **Take Down and Clean Up** 3:00-4:00
- **Musician**-acoustic, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, harmonica etc. for an hour or so

Generations in Oakwood by Kay Boyd

If you don't tell the story, who will? Save Austin's Cemeteries wants to hear your family story!! As a SAC member, you can submit your family history and a photo of those buried in Oakwood. If you look on our website at <http://www.sachome.org/e-newsletters/e-newsletters.html>, you will find some articles we published in the past on Casis, Hofheintz, Townsend, McKinney, Parker, Luna-Fuentes, and Stromberg.

Christmas in the Cemetery Photos by Terri Hoover Mirka



Left: Oakwood Cemetery. Right: Oakwood Cemetery Annex.



Left: Plummers Cemetery. Right: Evergreen Cemetery.

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!

Mar 3	It's My Park Day and Photo Documentation 9 – noon
Apr 7	Photo Documentation 9:00–11:00 or 1:00-3:00 (depends on weather forecast)
Apr 21	The Rough Road to Texas Independence Tour 10:00 – 3:00
May 5	Photo Documentation 9:00 – 11:00
Aug 1-31	SAC Photo Contest
Aug 4	SAC Speaker Series: Robin Grace Thompson-Soto, Flower Hill Foundation, North Village Library Branch, 10:30am
Oct 6	Oakwood Photo Documentation Session
Oct 20	Murder, Mayhem and Misadventure Tour
TBD	Albert Fuster Memorial Event

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