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Association for Gravestone Studies e-newsletter

Issue 43

November 2006

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AGS Conference & Annual Meeting 2007

**The Association for Gravestone Studies Thirtieth Anniversary Conference
Rivier College, Nashua, New Hampshire
June 21-24, 2007**

Detailed itineraries of the Wednesday pre-conference tour and Friday bus tours are posted on the [AGS website conference page](#). Also included are photos of some of the gravemarkers we'll be seeing on these tours.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposals are solicited for scholarly papers, twenty minutes in length, to be presented during the lecture sessions. We encourage papers on gravestone subjects from around the world as well as specific to the New England region. Presenters are encouraged to

incorporate visual images in their paper, through the use of slides or power point, and the type of visual presentation should be stated.

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION SESSIONS

As part of the Association for Gravestone Studies Conference, we host fifty minute "Participation Sessions"--programs conducted in a workshop format where cemetery scholars, preservationists and educators can exchange ideas. These programs are ideal for panels and we recommend including others in your presentation. All Participation Sessions proposals should allow time for questions and audience discussion. We are encouraging Participation Sessions that focus on four themes:

- Cemeteries in the Digital Age
- New Resources for Cemetery Research
- Development and Promotion of Cemetery Tours
- Current Issues in Preserving Cemeteries

All proposals should include the paper or session title and a 250 word description of the topic which focuses on its value to the audience. A brief biography of the presenter should also be included. Presenters are required to register for the conference. All proposals must be received by the close of business on Friday, March 30, 2007. Please send proposals for papers or participation sessions via traditional mail or email to:

Association for Gravestone Studies 278 Main Street, Suite 207, Greenfield, MA 01301,
info@gravestonestudies.org.

News from the AGS Office

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It is with mixed emotions that I announce my acceptance of a new, full-time position at the University of Massachusetts. It has been a great pleasure to work with AGS members and trustees and I'm happy to say that I will continue assisting AGS, temporarily, during the transition period. I will be in the office on Saturdays from 9-2 and will continue producing the e-newsletter, working on the website, and doing bookkeeping tasks.

The office will be well-staffed during the week (Tuesday-Friday) by our office assistant Penny Davis, and our archivist Marie Ferre.

Sincerely,  
Andrea Carlin

And from Penny...

Dear Officers, Trustees and our most valued members,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to step up and support the Association, temporarily, in this time of transition. I have learned so much working closely with Andrea Carlin in her position as Administrator for the past three years I am certain with your understanding and guidance, our organization will continue to prosper and perform its main function of educating and instructing the public, inviting all to join us in the invaluable work of conservation and preservation.

I will be here to keep the office, with our Archivist's assistance, on Tuesdays to Fridays from 9-2. Please send all communications to our Greenfield, MA address or email.

I look forward to being of service; please be patient and we will all learn and grow together.

Sincerely,

Penelope R. Davis  
Office Assistant

Notice: Our new office hours, effective November 28th, will be Tuesday-Saturday, from 9 AM - 2 PM. The office will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday from November 23rd- November 27th, and also on Saturday, December 2nd.

### **Interview with Jessie Farber**

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Stuart Grover's interview with Jessie Farber was featured in the *The Villager*, a quarterly newsletter published by and for the residents of Carleton-Willard Village in Bedford, Massachusetts where Jessie lives. The interview details Jessie's involvement with AGS and includes information about New England graveyards.

[The article, attached here, is a PDF file.](#)

Query: Japanese and African-American Graves in New Jersey

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This query comes from Jim Parris. He writes: "Recently I found a small group of 19th century Japanese graves in New Brunswick, New Jersey. I've also found another, single Japanese grave in East Windsor.

I'm not certain of the reason why they are here and wanted to know if there was anybody who might know of more such graves. I am also interested in learning the locations of the graves of Chinese railroad workers in New Jersey.

I also found some African-American graves decorated with shells and tiles and would like to find more if anyone might know."

Jim's email address is: parrisjim@verizon.net.

### **Query: Decorated Graves**

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This query comes from Alexandra Rasic. She writes: "I work at a historic site museum in southern California (the Homestead Museum: www.homesteadmuseum.org) which includes a cemetery that dates back to the mid 1850s. Every holiday season, the cemetery gets left out of our interpretation, and we'd like to change that! Does anyone know of any literature that covers the tradition of decorating graves? Is it more of a recent phenomenon, or does it have a long history? If anyone has something to suggest or share, I'd love to hear from you!"

Alexandra's email address is: crakerjac@sbcglobal.net.

Looking for Volunteers in West Springfield, Massachusetts

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AGS member Joe Nadeau called the office asking if any local members would be willing

to help with gravestone restoration at Park Street Cemetery in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Please give him a call at (413) 593-6643 if you have questions or can volunteer.

You can read about Park Street Cemetery in Rusty Clark's book *Stories Carved in Stone: West Springfield, Massachusetts*, available for purchase through the [AGS bookstore](#).

### **Follow Up: Identifying Two Unusual Markers**

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In the October issue of the AGS e-newsletter, we had a query from Fran Phillips about two unusual markers she discovered in Rosedale Cemetery, located in Montclair, Orange, and West Orange, New Jersey. [The attached PDF file](#) is a summary of responses she received from AGS members. Photos of the two markers are included in this file.

AGS Member Website

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Kim Jacobson's "[Magnolias & Peaches](#)" website includes cemetery transcriptions and photos from 8 counties in Alabama. There is also a [section devoted to tombstone iconography](#) that is cross-referenced with the burial listings.

### **AGS Member News: Juliette Hill**

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Long time AGS member Juliette Hill presented a slide lecture describing the evolution of grave markers in the U.S. to an audience of residents of the Carlton Willard Village, a retirement community in Bedford, Massachusetts and to a group of guests from Bedford's Congregational Church. AGS President Tom Malloy and wife Brenda were also in attendance. They were visiting Jessie Farber, a resident at Carlton Willard.

AGS Member News: The Valliant Foundation

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The Valliant Foundation is an AGS institutional member based in Neavitt, Maryland. The Foundation was formed by members of the Valliant family to protect their family cemeteries. We received a copy of their first newsletter, which describes the creation of the foundation and their activities. Below, is an excerpt from the newsletter.

During the winter of 2002, James Aldridge Valliant and Mary Valliant Warner Thomas got together and decided to try to form a foundation for the protection of cemeteries of the Valliant family. They contacted their cousins Bob Jones, a lawyer in Elkton, Maryland, and John Valliant, director of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. Both Bob and John liked the idea of forming a foundation.

On May 9, 2002, the IRS granted the Foundation 501 (c) (3) status. The Foundation then became actively involved in the preservation and repair of monuments in the Valliant Cemetery, located on Claylands Farm in Royal Oak, Maryland. Twenty-one Valliant graves are located at Claylands. First, Foundation member Mary Thomas met with John Camper, co-owner, with his sister, Jean C. Bryan, of Claylands Farm. It was agreed that some trees needed to be removed from the cemetery since the roots were damaging some of the stones. Later that day Mary met with Scott Sipple, president of William Sipple Monument Company of Milford, Delaware regarding the repair of stones. Scott advised that eight trees would have to be removed to allow access for the large equipment required to repair the monuments. He expected the cost of the repairs would amount to approximately \$13,000 to \$15,000. It would cost an additional \$5,000 if the company would be required to clean the stones. Hopefully, family members will be able to do the cleaning on a volunteer basis. The Sipple Company commenced repairs in the

spring of 2006.

Other Valliant graves are located at properties know as "Cove Hall" and "Fort Ventura" in Bellevue, Maryland.

### **Website Link: StonePics - Cemeteries of Newfoundland**

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www.StonePics.com is the result of a unique project to photograph and index every cemetery, headstone, and monument in Newfoundland, Canada. The site includes:

- Location information for 1700 cemeteries including exact latitude and longitude;
- General information about cemeteries and headstones of Newfoundland;
- A total of 177 different CD volumes available for purchase containing the digital photographs of the headstones and monuments used to build the database;
- General information about cemeteries and headstones of Newfoundland

Stonepics is also documenting cemeteries in other locations. They are currently working on the Pioneer Cemetery in Seattle and the main city cemetery in Prague, Czech Republic. The latter is the largest cemetery in the Czech Republic and contains 1.2 - 1.4 million interments. They completed photography of the Czech National Cemetery (Vysehrad Narodni Hrbity) in Prague in 2003.

Information about The Hebrew Free Burial Association

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 We just received information about the Hebrew Free Burial Association (HFBA) in New York City. The HFBA began in the 1880's as a free burial society serving the residents of Manhattan's Lower East Side, and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1889. As the need grew in adjacent Jewish communities, HFBA also grew to serve the broader metropolitan area of New York City. HFBA is currently the largest free burial society outside of Israel.

HFBA also owns two cemeteries, both on Staten Island, and coordinates a volunteer cemetery clean up project in which schools, synagogues, camps, and other community groups visit the cemeteries to help with maintenance, raking leaves and clearing debris.

To learn more, please check out their website, <http://www.hebrewfreeburial.org/>.

### **Video News Story: Granite's Global Competition**

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 The video story, linked below, is to the *New York Times* online. It is about the granite industry in Barre, Vermont and how it's adapting to the rise of cremation and foreign imports.

[Granite's Global Competition](#)

Event: Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Massachusetts

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**Mount Auburn Cemetery's carol singing and poetry reading**, Saturday, December 16, 2006 at 1 PM. Walking throughout Mount Auburn Cemetery's magnificent grounds, participants will sing carols and read poetry while visiting the graves of Phillips Brooks, the former Rector of Boston's Trinity Church and the author of "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, author of "Christmas Bells." Mount Auburn Cemetery is celebrating its 175th Anniversary with a year of lectures, music, and

other events at the Cemetery.

The event is free, but please register online at [www.mountauburn.org](http://www.mountauburn.org) or call (617) 607-1981 to RSVP.

Please call or visit [www.mountauburn.org](http://www.mountauburn.org) for further information.

**Event: Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York**

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December 2, 2006, Saturday, 1:00 PM - Historic Fund Tour – James Barron, New York Times staff reporter, author of Piano: The Making of a Steinway Concert Grand.

[Green-Wood Cemetery](#)

Article: Water park expansion tests Maine's cemetery protection law

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The article, linked below, is to boston.com. Thanks to the New England Anomaly Listserv for this article.

[www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com)

**Contact Information**

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email: info@gravestonestudies.org
phone: 413-772-0836
web: <http://www.gravestonestudies.org>
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