Nashville is about as far as one can get from salt water – so why is City Cemetery the final resting place of a Civil War Federal naval officer? That officer is Admiral Paul Shirley, who is buried in Section 28.52, just across the path from Captain William Driver’s monument.

Paul Shirley was born in Glasgow, Kentucky, on December 19, 1820, the son of transplanted Virginians Paul and Sarah Caperton Gibson Shirley, who later moved to Nashville, where the elder Mr. Shirley died on April 16, 1834, and was buried in City Cemetery.

At the age of 19 the younger Paul Shirley was appointed a midshipman in the United States Navy, the conventional route to becoming a naval officer in those days. (The Naval Academy was not established until 1845, six years later). Although promotions in the peacetime Navy came slowly, by 1863 Shirley had been promoted to Lieutenant Commander and was the commanding officer of the U.S.S. Cyane, a sloop-of-war based in San Francisco Bay, where he would play an important role in the capture of the Confederate privateer J. M. Chapman.

In late 1862 Confederate sympathizer Asbury Harpending had travelled from California to Richmond, Virginia, where he received a letter of marque, a license from the Confederate government to act as a privateer. When Harpending returned to San Francisco, he joined Alfred Rubery and Ridgley Greathouse in buying the 90-ton schooner J. M. Chapman and outfitting her as a Confederate privateer. They purchased guns, ammunition, and uniforms and packed them in cases labeled as oil, merchandise, machinery, and quicksilver. William C. Law, who had a somewhat erratic history as a packet captain, was hired to captain the J. M. Chapman, with its crew of sixteen.

The Confederates’ plans were ambitious. First on their agenda was the capture of one of the Pacific Mail steamers sailing from California to Panama carrying gold bullion to finance the Federal war effort. After the successful capture of the steamer, they proposed to cruise across the Pacific to the China Sea and Indian Ocean, seizing American ships as they went.

The Federal authorities learned of the plan through an informer and set up a 24-hour watch on the J. M. Chapman. A nearby steam tug kept her steam up and fires banked, ready to

See “Paul Shirley” on Page 3)
**President’s Message**

The Nashville City Cemetery Association has accomplished much since our last newsletter. First, the October Living History tour was a spectacular success. Over 1,200 persons attended, nearly tripling the previous attendance record. The weather was absolutely perfect. Association officers, board members, and volunteers made sure that the event went as smoothly as possible – nothing that we could do about those lines! From an educational standpoint, the many presenters did an excellent job of informing the public about who are buried (or in my case, used to be buried) in our beautiful historic Cemetery. Board members Bill McKee and Terry Jackson did a tremendous job putting this event together, and they were honored as the Association’s Volunteers of the Year at our December annual meeting. I was very pleased when Bill agreed to head up this year’s event, which will be held on September 24. Yes, we checked – no conflict with Tennessee, Vanderbilt, or Tennessee State, or (in deference to Bill) Auburn football. He’ll be looking for volunteers to help out again this year.

New officers were installed at our annual meeting in December. I moved up from President-Elect to President, and Winder Campbell, a retired banking executive, has succeeded me as President-Elect. Jill Meese will serve as Secretary, and Lyn James is our new Treasurer.

On April 9 we celebrated our first ever Mayors’ Day to honor the fifteen former mayors of Nashville who are buried in City Cemetery. (Our current mayor, Karl Dean, had not been to the Cemetery prior to the Living History Tour, but that one afternoon made him our biggest fan!) We placed docents at each of the mayors’ graves to tell their stories, and we dedicated a new grave marker for Thomas B. Coleman, who was mayor during the early 1840s. When Mayor Coleman – the second Mayor Coleman, by the way – was buried, he had a cedar board as his grave marker, but that marker disappeared long ago, due to the ravages of time. Recently your Association has had a cedar headboard made and hand-carved for him, which, while not an exact replica, is in keeping with what was originally there.

And we have many more events scheduled through the rest of the spring and summer! Take note of our calendar on page 4, and join us as often as you can.

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**12th Annual Memorial Day Dash**

All runners and walkers are welcome to take part in this popular 5K Run/Walk – participants traditionally include serious runners in many different age groups, as well as walkers with dogs and baby carriages out to enjoy a pleasant walk on a beautiful spring morning. We expect to see 400 runners this year. The race begins on Monday morning, May 30, at Greer Stadium (534 Chestnut St.) at 8:00 a.m. The course winds around the stadium, through Fort Negley, past the Adventure Science Center, and along the paths in the lovely City Cemetery. Volunteers and direction signs will help you find your way through the course. One of the major fund-raisers of the Nashville City Cemetery Association, this family-friendly event will help fund cemetery restoration and repair. The registration fee is $25 ($30 on race day). Pick up a registration form at local running stores, register online at www.active.com, or come early on the morning of the race to sign up. Awards will be given in 5-year increments from 9-and-under through 80+.

We are grateful for the assistance of the Nashville Striders, who partner with the NCCA for this event. Free T-shirts for all runners, with food, awards, and door prizes at the finish. There are eighty veterans buried in the City Cemetery — soldiers from the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and the two World Wars. This is the second year the Nashville City Cemetery Association has placed flags of remembrance on the graves of our fallen soldiers. Watch the NCCA website for further information (www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org).
stop the privateer the moment she set sail. Not far away, the Cyane kept careful watch as well.

The J. M. Chapman raised anchor at dawn on March 15, 1863, and sailed slowly out from the wharf. Only two officers were visible on deck, and the vessel looked as innocent and harmless as any craft that ever left the port of San Francisco. When she was about 300 yards from the dock, however, two boatloads of armed seamen from the Cyane drew even with the schooner and boarded her without resistance. The steam tug had held back because the undependable Captain Law, having arrived too late to catch the ship after a night of drinking, was still on the wharf calling for the J. M. Chapman to come back for him.

The Confederates, placed in solitary confinement at Alcatraz, were tried for treason before Judge Stephen J. Fields, later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice. The jury found Harpending, Greathouse, and Rubery guilty as charged, sentencing each to ten years in prison and a fine of $10,000. The unreliable Captain Law and his crew were acquitted.

President Lincoln quickly pardoned Rubery based on his age, his citizenship, and a request for his release from pro-American British parliamentarian John Bright. Harpending and Greathouse were released in February 1864 after taking an oath of allegiance to the United States.

The J. M. Chapman was sold and the money divided between the U.S. government and the informer. Lt. Shirley and the crew of the U.S.S. Cyane objected and brought suit for a share of the prize money, contending that the J. M. Chapman was a pirate ship and thus a prize of war. However, the court ruled that the J. M. Chapman was not a pirate ship as defined by the laws of nations. The vessel was seized pursuant to the First Confiscation Act of 1861, which provided that any person who supplied information leading to the arrest and conviction of traitors would be entitled to share equally with the United States in any property so acquired. (This case was cited in a 2010 case dealing with Somali pirates.)

Lieutenant Commander Shirley was commended for his actions by the commander of the U.S. North Pacific Squadron. In 1863 he was promoted to Commander and given command of the U.S.S. Paul Jones. This ship served in the area of Ossabaw Island, Georgia, patrolling the Georgia littoral zone for smugglers and blockade runners.

In the fall of 1864 Shirley was given command of the U.S.S. Suwannee, an ironside wheeler gunboat then under construction at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Once commissioned, the Suwannee was ordered to find and destroy the C.S.S. Shenandoah, currently wreaking havoc with American shipping in the South Atlantic. Informed that the Shenandoah was headed to the Pacific, Shirley sailed the Suwannee down the coast of South America and through the Straits of Magellan in pursuit.

The intelligence was half right. The Shenandoah was headed to the Pacific, but by a different route, around the Cape of Good Hope to Australia and thence to the whaling grounds in the Sea of Okhotsk, the Bering Sea, and the Arctic Ocean. The Suwannee, reaching Acapulco in July 1865, was ordered to find and destroy the Shenandoah. However, by that time the Confederate raider had learned that the Civil War was over, and that it might be treated as a pirate vessel if caught on the high seas. The Shenandoah, carrying a crew of Southern officers and British and Australian sailors, completed her circumnavigation of the globe without further landfall until she docked in Liverpool, England, in November 1865. The Southern Confederacy came to an end at the moment the Shenandoah lowered her flag.

Shirley remained in the Navy after the war and was promoted to Captain in 1870. He died "as the result of a severe cold" on November 26, 1876, on a train from his home near Philadelphia to Memphis. According to his grave marker in City Cemetery, he had evidently been brevetted as an Admiral. Before his death he resided in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, with his wife, Margaretta Guinn Stanley.

In addition to the elder Paul Shirley, three other family members are buried in the Shirley plot. Paul’s mother, Sarah C. Shirley (79), a resident of Kentucky, died in 1876 of “old age”; Paul’s brother James Shirley, “a son of Temperance,” died at 22 from diarrhea and was interred in 1847; and his sister Camilla J. Shirley, listed as a resident of Arkansas, died at 90 “of old age” in March 1918.


Paul Shirley (continued from Page 1)
UPCOMING EVENTS

The Nashville City Cemetery is open to visitors every day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

General information: The free tours begin at 10:00 a.m. on the dates listed below and last about 45 minutes. In case of unfavorable weather (i.e., tornado, drenching rain, hail, or piles of snow!), a cancelled tour will take place the following Saturday.

Friday, April 29, 2011, 4:00 p.m.
HIGH TREE PARTY
The 24th annual awards ceremony for the Nashville Tree Foundation’s Big Old Tree Contest will be held at the Nashville City Cemetery. Foundation president Pat Wallace finds “The 189-year-old cemetery with its majestic trees – some more than 200 years old” to be “an ideal location for a celebration of trees in the Foundation’s 25th anniversary year.” Judges will describe the winning trees in each category before awarding certificates to the owners and nominators of each winner. The Victor Johnson Award, named for the late CEO of Aladdin Industries who helped set the standard for tree-friendly developers, will be presented to an individual or business demonstrating a special reverence for trees. Everyone is welcome at this charming event, which includes a reception featuring tree-related foods.

Saturday, May 14, 2011, 10:00 a.m.
MASTER GARDENERS’ TOUR
The Davidson County Master Gardeners have created those lovely, historically appropriate plantings you see throughout the cemetery. Their popular cemetery tours instruct and inspire amateur gardeners of all levels. Come and celebrate the arrival of spring. Free.

Saturday, May 30, 2011, 8:00 a.m.
12TH ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY DASH
This annual 5K Run/Walk has drawn more runners and walkers every year. The race begins at 8:00 a.m. at Greer Stadium (534 Chestnut St.) and follows a lovely historic path that ends at the City Cemetery. Come early on May 30 to register, or register online. Visit the Nashville Striders website for registration forms and information. www.nashvillestriders.com. Entry fee required for all participants.

Saturday, July 16, 2011, 10:00-11:00 a.m.
CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL TOUR
“What Were They Thinking?” – Join us for a fascinating excursion through City Cemetery lore that examines some of the odd military decisions we have always wondered about. Free.

Saturday, September 17, 2011, Time TBD (afternoon)
CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL TOUR
“African Americans in the Civil War” – Black Southerners played an active role in gaining their own freedom. Learn about their many contributions on this inspiring tour. Free.

Saturday, September 24, 2011, Time TBD (afternoon)
LIVING HISTORY TOUR
Make plans now to attend our most popular City Cemetery event, where costumed reenactors bring the history of Middle Tennessee to life. $5 for adults; $10 for families.

Saturday, November 12, 2011, 10:00-11:00 a.m.
CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL TOUR
This annual tour of military burial sites in the City Cemetery is led by John Allyn, battlefield preservationist and NCCA Board member. No matter how much you know about the Civil War, you will always learn something new on these tours. Not to be missed! Free.

Volunteer Clean-Up Days at the City Cemetery
9:00-11:00 a.m.
(Visit Hands On Nashville: http://www.hon.org/)
May 21 July 9 September 1
June 16 August 20 October 15

Have you seen our website lately?
www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org

View photos of our events!

READ ABOUT THE REMARKABLE 186-YEAR HISTORY OF CITY CEMETERY
LEARN MORE ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER BURIED AT CITY CEMETERY
BY STUDYING THE RESOURCE MAPS, OBITUARIES,
AND TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS.

AND BE SURE TO JOIN THE NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION!
Living History Tour Brings Record Crowds

Saturday, October 2, 2010, found the City Cemetery bubbling over with visitors, as the largest crowd in history—1245 people!—lined up for the annual Living History Tour. They were greeted by reenactors portraying significant individuals in Nashville’s history, from Major Jeffrey Lockelier to the Reverend Nelson Merry, from Charlotte Robinson to Charles Dickinson.

Whether first-time guests or frequent visitors, everyone who came expressed their delight with the event. Mayor Karl Dean, intending to stay for half an hour, was still there two hours later, assuring the crowds lined up along the Oak Street that the Tour was well worth the wait.

Many people stopped along the paths to chat with craftspeople working beneath the stately trees or to admire the restoration work that has revitalized the cemetery in recent years. Even the weather cooperated, remaining pleasant and warm until late in the day.

The NCCA Board is grateful for the community’s willingness to support our efforts to preserve this beautiful symbol of our past.

Then & Now

From the Nashville Room photo archives at the Nashville Public Library, a glimpse of the City Cemetery from the past and how it appears today.

1955

Fallen trees and overgrown weeds made City Cemetery a sad and unwelcoming place in 1955. (Photo courtesy of the Nashville Public Library, The Nashville Room.)

2008

Damage to the obelisk on the right is significant and holes in the posts prove that iron railings have been missing for years. (Photo by Jeff Thorneycroft)

Former Mayors Honored at City Cemetery

Saturday, April 9, 2011, was the date of our first Mayors’ Day celebration, organized to honor the 15 former mayors of Nashville who rest in City Cemetery. A lovely ceremony to dedicate a new grave marker for Mayor Thomas B. Coleman (1842-1843) saw the placement of a hand-carved cedar head-board on Coleman’s grave, replacing a marker that was lost many years ago. [Visitors to the Living History Tour in October may have watched a local craftsman carving the Coleman grave marker that very day.] Guests were given maps of the cemetery so they could visit the graves of all 15 mayors at their leisure to hear a brief biographical sketch of each man. Thanks to Mayor Karl Dean, the musicians, historians, descendants, and all who joined us to honor these former Nashville dignitaries.

SPRING GARDEN TIP

Spring has arrived and there are lots of projects waiting for you in the yard and garden. Now is the time to prune those spring-flowering shrubs like forsythia, weigela, Japanese quince, and lilac, but only if they need shaping. Fertilize and prune azaleas and camellias after they have finished blooming. You should also prune any semi-woody perennials like Salvia, lavender, and sage. You can begin to stake tall perennials that tend to fall over. Add well-rotted manure, peat moss, or compost to your annual plant beds. Remember to wait until after April 15th to plant your annuals!

Master Gardener and NCCA Board Member Robert Mather provides a seasonal gardening tip in each issue of the NCCA newsletter.
JOIN OR RENEW YOUR NCCA MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Please take the time to become a member of the Nashville City Cemetery Association this year. Your membership is valuable to us and helps the NCCA offer such programs as Descendants’ Day, the Memorial Day Dash, and the Living History Tour. So sign up today and help support our effort to restore and preserve this invaluable historic resource.

NCC Membership Levels (circle one)

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I would also like information about:

(check all that apply)

- NCCA Membership
- Tax Letters
- Volunteer Opportunities

Name ____________________________________________

Address _________________________________________
City ____________________________ State __________ Zip Code __________

Email __________________________________________ Phone Number ( ) __________

Names of ancestors buried at Nashville City Cemetery (if applicable):

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Fill out this form, clip out and mail to:

P.O. Box 150733, Nashville, TN. 37215-0733.