

# Monuments & milestones

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## Life & Death In The 19th Century

by Kathy Lauder, Nashville City Cemetery Board Member

As you explore the Nashville City Cemetery website, you will come across a link to 19th century City Cemetery burial records that have been made available through the Nashville Public Library. Not only do the records list the name, age, gender, race, and date of death of most individuals buried in the cemetery, but they may also include the cause of death – data that can prove both startling and informative.

A careful reader will notice how profoundly medical terminology has changed since the 19th century, largely because of improved diagnostic procedures. Many older terms (some of which were sublimely imprecise!) have simply fallen out of fashion. For example, among the more frequently listed causes of death in the mid-1800s are apoplexy, or softening of the brain (cerebral hemorrhage or stroke); dropsy (edema or congestive heart failure); catarrh (influenza, the croup, or even a common cold); consumption (tuberculosis); marasmus (a general term for diseases of infants and children, including malnutrition, rickets, and tuberculosis); flux or dysentery (intestinal inflammation); scrofula, or the King's evil (tuberculosis of the lymphatic glands, particularly those in the neck); la grippe (influenza); mortification (gangrene, which killed an alarming number of small boys); and erysipelas, or St. Anthony's Fire (a streptococcal infection typified by severe inflammation of the skin or mucous membranes).

A few illnesses appeared so frequently at certain times of the year, they were named for the associated seasons: winter fever was simply pneumonia. The summer complaint (Cholera infantum) was food poisoning caused by improperly stored food, especially milk and meats.

Many once-fatal diseases have largely been eliminated. Today's children are routinely vaccinated against the childhood diseases of their parents and grandparents: measles, mumps, and chicken pox. Other deadly diseases swept through 19th century communities in frightening epidemics.



Five thousand Memphis residents died of yellow fever in 1878, but vaccination has proved greatly effective against it in recent times. Cholera, spread by contaminated water and poor hygiene, killed nearly 1,500 people a year in New Orleans alone in the early 1850s but can now be successfully treated if diagnosed early. (Hundreds of people in the Nashville City Cemetery died of cholera.) As many as 17,000 American children died of diphtheria each year before a vaccine was developed in the early 1900s; today, however, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), and tetanus (lock-jaw) are seldom found anywhere in the industrialized world, thanks to infant vaccination programs. Smallpox, which killed up to 500 million people during the 20th century, is now considered to be completely eradicated. Polio, which peaked in the 1940s and 1950s, paralyzing and killing over

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

AS WE CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS THE PRESERVATION of the old cemetery, the Nashville City Cemetery Association (NCCA) has benefited during the past year from an infusion of new leadership. In mid-2009, following the 2008 retirement of Ann Roberts, Tim Walker was promoted to Executive Director of the Metro Historical Commission (MHC) and will take an ex officio position on our board. Filling Tim's former position as Metro Historic Zoning Administrator is native Nashvillian Robin Zeigler, who most recently served in a similar capacity for the City of Bowling Green, Kentucky, and the City of Salt Lake City, Utah. Last month we also welcomed the following new members to the NCCA Board of Directors: Allison Auerbach, Jack Benz, Jill Meese, and Clyde Thompson. We congratulate Tim and Robin on their new jobs, and thank Allison, Jack, Jill, and Clyde on for their willingness to volunteer in their community. We are excited about the ideas and energy that all of these individuals will bring to the NCCA, and we know we will all benefit from their participation in our organization.

As always, we have an exciting roster of annual activities scheduled for 2010, ranging from the Memorial Day 5K Dash to Special Saturday Tours to the Living History Tour. This year we will be adding extra significance to the Memorial Day festivities by including a flag installation within the cemetery -- this should be a wonderful addition to our new look!

Lastly, we began a very successful, person-to-person membership drive last year that resulted in the addition of quite a few new members to our organization. Many of you receiving this newsletter joined because of such a personal contact. Please help us continue this effort by encouraging your friends and family to support the NCCA. To learn more about how to join, or how to become more involved, please visit our website: [www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org).

See you again this year at the Nashville City Cemetery!



**Jason Holleman**  
NCCA President

## The Annual Memorial Day Dash

All runners and walkers are welcome to take part in this popular 5K Run/Walk. We begin at Greer Stadium (534 Chestnut St.) at 8:00 a.m., wind through Fort Negley and around the Adventure Science Center, and end at the City Cemetery. One of our major fund-raisers, this family-friendly event will benefit Cemetery restoration and repair. We are expecting 400 runners this year. Come early on May 31 to register, or register online. Entry forms and info are available at [www.nashvillestriders.com](http://www.nashvillestriders.com) or [www.active.com](http://www.active.com). 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.

At the conclusion of this year's Memorial Day Dash, eighty flags will be placed at the graves of all 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. Each flag will be appropriate to the conflict represented. This is the first time the Nashville City Cemetery Association has placed flags of remembrance at the cemetery on Memorial Day. Watch the NCCA website for further information.

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The Nashville City Cemetery Association is a not-for-profit organization founded to preserve and protect the history and memory of those who are laid to rest there.

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Newsletter Design: Jeff Thomeycroft

visit us at: [thenashvillecitycemetery.org](http://thenashvillecitycemetery.org)

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## James Thomas Callender

by Carol Kaplan, NCCA Board Member

Soldiers who died in the Civil War were, of necessity, almost always buried on the battlefield where they fell. After the war, however, a national movement arose to reinter them in a more honorable manner. Thus, national cemeteries were created for the Union soldiers who died so far from home; Confederate soldiers were more often buried in private burial grounds or brought home by their families. Young James Callender was one of the latter, returned to City Cemetery three years after his death in the War.

James Thomas Callender, born in Nashville in 1841, was named for his grandfather, a feisty newspaperman despised by Thomas Jefferson (for printing unpleasant truths about Jefferson's life!). James's father, Thomas, was a merchant and an alderman; his mother, Mary Sangster, had moved to Nashville from Virginia with her brother and sister. James had two sisters, Mary Catherine and Sarah, and two brothers, John Hill and William. He never knew Mary Catherine, who died in 1837 at 18 months, becoming the first of her family to be buried at City Cemetery. However, James lost his mother when he was six years old, and his father died of typhoid fever four years later. James, Sarah, and William were sent to live with their aunt Catherine Owen in Brentwood, who had no children of her own. Catherine and her wealthy husband James Owen lived at Ashlawn, a home which still stands on Franklin Road. Sarah married James Owen's nephew, but died at 21 in 1859. She was buried with her family at City Cemetery.

In 1859, when the Owen Chapel Church of Christ was organized, James and Catherine Owen, along with James and William Callender, became charter members. The building was located across Franklin Road from Ashlawn. The congregation still meets there today in a brick building built just after the Civil War on land donated by James Owen.

In 1861, with fears of civil war on everyone's mind, Christian Church ministers stood firm in their opposition to the war. Tolbert Fanning was jailed in Murfreesboro for speaking against slavery, and David Lipscomb was threatened with hanging for preaching that "Christians should not kill one another." Philip Fall, leader of Nashville's Christian Church (now Vine Street congregation), refused to pray for Jefferson Davis and, evoking his British citizenship, flew the Union Jack over his church, thus preserving its neutrality. However, their message had little impact on the young men who heard it. Fanning's Franklin College closed as his students rushed to join the fight, and Philip Fall's son Albert was killed at Fort Donelson, fighting for the Confederacy. When Confederate training camps were established on Franklin Road, James Callender, age 20, and William, three years younger, enlisted.



The tombstone of James Callender's father, Thomas Callendar, one of only two surviving markers in the Thomas family plot. (photo courtesy of NCCA)

On June 24, 1863, at the Battle of Hoover's Gap, James, a private in C Company, 20th Tennessee Infantry, was shot and killed. He was buried on the battlefield, and his funeral sermon was delivered at Owen Chapel, September 27, 1863. Brother William survived the war and returned home to Brentwood, where he married Mary Jane Zellner, whose sister Margaret was married to David Lipscomb. In 1869 Will and Mary Jane's first child was born, a son they named James Thomas.

On April 27, 1866, this notice appeared in the Republican Banner: "The remains of James Thomas Callender will be conveyed from the residence of his brother, Dr. J.H. Callender, no. 26 South Summer St., to the Nashville Cemetery today at 3:30 o'clock pm. Services at the grave by Rev. Dr. Bunting" Dr. Bunting, the pastor of First Presbyterian Church, lived next door to John Callender. James, remembered by his brothers, now rested with his parents, sisters, and Aunt Catherine Owen in the family plot in Section 8. Sadly, the only tombstones readable today are those of the parents, Thomas and Mary Callender.

# 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.

**Saturday, April 10, 2010, 10:00 a.m.**

## MASTER GARDENERS SERIES

We have been blessed for several years with the help of the Davidson County Master Gardeners, whose hard work and knowledge of both plants and history have created lovely and historically appropriate plantings throughout the cemetery. Their popular cemetery tours instruct and inspire amateur gardeners of all levels. **Free.**

**Monday, May 31, 2010, 8:00 a.m.**

## THE 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 and historic path that ends at the City Cemetery. Come early on May 31 to register, or register online. Visit the Nashville Striders website for registration forms and information. <http://www.nashvillestriders.com> or <http://www.active.com> **Entry fee required for all participants.**

### SPECIAL NOTE:

The flag now flying in the cemetery honors WWII veteran **Dean T. Brown** — it was draped over his casket when he died in 1969 and donated to the cemetery by his family.

**Monday, June 14, 2010**

## A CELEBRATION OF FLAG DAY

This celebration is sponsored annually by the Daughters of the American Revolution. **Check our website for time and other details.**

**Saturday, October 2, 2010 – 2:00-5:00 p.m.**

## LIVING HISTORY TOUR

This is one of our few events involving a small cost: \$5 for adults; \$10 for families. Come and meet some of Nashville's earliest settlers; uniformed soldiers; mayors, musicians, and other prominent citizens, as well as simple folk of all eras. This popular event makes a delightful outing for the whole family.

**Tickets are available only at the event.**

**Special Saturday Tour Series, November 13th, 2010 – 10:00-10:45 a.m.**

## CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS

"Civil War Soldiers," a tour of some of the military burial sites in the City Cemetery, has been led for the past several years 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. An annual highlight — not to be missed! **Free.**

**Thursday, December 9, 2010**

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

All members of the Nashville City Cemetery Association are welcome at this annual get-together. Join us to meet the Board of Directors and share in fine food and good conversation. Details will be announced in the Fall Newsletter. **Free.**

Have you seen our website lately?



View colorful photos of the Memorial Day Dash & the Restoration in Progress.

**READ ABOUT THE REMARKABLE 186-YEAR HISTORY OF CITY CEMETERY**

\* **Buy a Book or a T-shirt.** \* Find out about exciting upcoming events and tours.

LEARN MORE ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER BURIED AT CITY CEMETERY BY STUDYING THE RESOURCE MAPS, OBITUARIES, AND TOMBSTONE INSCRIPTIONS.

Connect to the 19,745 Interments on the Nashville Public Library website.

share your family history

...AND BE SURE TO JOIN THE NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY ASSOCIATION!

# 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.



Overgrown weeds and tomb vandalism plague City Cemetery in 1955. (Photo courtesy of the Nashville Public Library, The Nashville Room.)



Despite years of neglect, markers of marble and limestone have stood the test of time. (Photo by Jeff Thomeycroft)

## Life & Death (continued from Page 1)

half a million people throughout the world each year, has now been virtually eliminated from the Western Hemisphere.

Some of the "diseases" named in the burial registers tell their own sad tales: childbed; smothered (tragically common among infants, who often slept in beds with family members); found dead in a well (11-year-old); hung himself (12-year-old slave boy); kicked by a horse (young woman, 18); burned by accident (6-year-old girl); and found dead at wash landing (infant). Spelling can often be a challenge: dispepsey, feever, numonia, stabled, appoleptick, and dearhaera are all found in these records.

High on the list of common causes of infant death in the mid-19th century were teething and hives, where the diagnosis mistook a symptom for the illness. Other entries leave us wishing for just a little bit more information: complicated, died in Virginia, intemperance, cramp, and the blithely simplistic "died suddenly." And, of course, there are always a few items on the list that simply mystify us: worms, insanity, gravel in blades, found dead on Tower Island, and shot by Judson. Anyone who takes a look at the City Cemetery burial records will discover a compelling chronicle of life and death in earlier times.

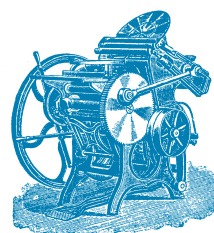


**Robert Mather**  
Davidson County Master Gardener



### GARDEN TIP 1

May is not too late to start that vegetable garden you wanted. Decide on a small space that gets good sun light. Turn the soil and amend with compost. Select tomato and pepper plants, onion sets, and maybe some squash. If space is a problem, use containers. Keep your plants watered, and enjoy your harvest.



## THE CEMETERY PRESS

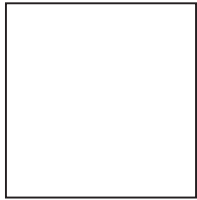
Old newspaper clippings and articles pertaining to City Cemetery from the 19th & 20th centuries

### NASHVILLE DAILY GAZETTE Sunday, March 6, 1859

**"THE CITY CEMETERY --- We observe that a great many ladies and gentlemen visit the Cemetery, and especially since the opening of spring, and the starting of an omnibus to run there every hour from the Square. As to-day is rest day, we doubt not there will be a large crowd out there. Comb's omnibus makes regular trips, to-day, to and from the Cemetery, thus affording a cheap and convenient means of visiting that part of the city."**

#### NOTE:

We are delighted to introduce a new feature in this edition. Master Gardener and NCCA Board Member Robert Mather will provide a seasonal gardening tip in each issue of the NCCA newsletter.



**Address Correction Requested**

# 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.

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Join</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Renew</b>	<b>NCCA Membership Levels</b> (circle one)				<b>I would also like information about:</b> <small>(check all that apply)</small>
	Individual \$20 Family \$35 Protector \$75 <small>(All members receive the newsletter and invitations to special events. )</small>	Preserver \$150 Conservator \$500 Restorer \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NCCA Membership</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Tax Letters</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Volunteer Opportunities</b>		

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

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



Fill out this form, clip out and mail to:  
 P.O. Box 150733, Nashville, TN. 37215-0733.