

Rockville Cemetery Association

DECEMBER 2017



President's Message

I am pleased to report another successful year for Rockville Cemetery Association in 2017. Our non-profit organization continues to be blessed with a group of devoted, hard-working board members and other volunteers. Our long-time partnerships with a cadre of outstanding contractors also continue to reap many benefits. These include our grave digger, Scotty Combs; Solar Gardens, which maintains the grounds; Pogo Tree Experts; Mosko Monument Services and Lough Memorials, two companies that perform gravestone conservation and repairs; Dick Stoner, our house manager; and Joe Deniker, who handles house repairs and many other jobs around the property.

The cemetery grounds are in fine shape. Our upgraded website and

Facebook page appear to be doing the job we anticipated, providing information to families, generating interest, and responding to many more inquiries. Sales of grave sites and columbarium niches in 2016 were higher than any previous year, and 2017 sales have substantially exceeded those levels. Burials and inurnments are steady, month after month.

Volunteer board members continue to give time and talent to serve the community in so many ways, handling grave site sales and supporting burials, enhancing the website and other key publicity pieces, working diligently on improving the landscape, and more. Have you noticed that many monuments in the Upper Cemetery have been lovingly cleaned? It's hard to miss them!

A major accomplishment completed this year was the hook-up of the Caretaker's Cottage to the Rockville public water system. The house had operated on a well since 1889. This \$15,000 project was completed with the assistance of the City of Rockville, as part of Rockville Cemetery's agreement related to public improvements to Baltimore Road. The Baltimore Road project should begin in earnest during 2018 and will generate some changes to the Lower Cemetery primarily. The west entrance will be relocated farther east on the other side of the creek, and the vehicle bridge over the creek will be removed. In the future, RCA plans to construct a pedestrian bridge to re-connect the Lower Cemetery road to the Upper Cemetery grounds.

In October this year, RCA staged a

"Ghost Tour," successfully partnering with Peerless Rockville for enthusiastic attendance and substantial fund-raising. Thanks to our newest board member Hanne Quigley, along with Eileen McGuckian and Mike Grant for their work on this event. Appreciation also goes to Tim Mertz, invaluable RCA Treasurer 2003-2017, and to Steve Edwards, who is implementing enhancements to our financial management and reporting.

Another initiative this year was the development of a formal tree improvement plan for both the Upper and Lower Cemetery sections. We are grateful to have the highly capable assistance of Elise Polydoroff, who is the Assistant City Forester. The plan will begin with removals of trees that have been identified as in poor condition. A first round of planting many dozens of new trees will begin in spring 2018. Some of the trees will be provided as part of the Baltimore Road project, which requires a significant number of removals along Baltimore Road.

Rockville Cemetery is thriving, and still work remains to be done. The Board of Directors has an open position for anyone interested in becoming involved. I hope you will be generous with gifts this year. Your donations will help fund the tree plantings, pedestrian bridge, and other needed improvements.

Please contact me with questions, suggestions, concerns, or to volunteer to help Rockville Cemetery. I can be reached at

rockvillecemeterymd@gmail.com
Burt Hall, President,
Rockville Cemetery Association

2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Annual Meeting

& Election Tuesday, April 10
Rockville City Hall

Conservation

Workshop April 21
(Rain Date April 28)

Veteran Flags

Placed Memorial
Day through
Independence Day

Baltimore Road

Construction Summer 2018

Ghost Tour October 2018

Tours of Rockville

Cemetery Contact
Eileen McGuckian
301-468-7331

To Schedule a

Work Day Contact Margy Hall
301-294-6396

A NEWSLETTER OF ROCKVILLE CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 4318, ROCKVILLE, MD 20849 • WWW.ROCKVILLECEMETERYMD.ORG • RCA@ROCKVILLECEMETERYMD.ORG • 301-309-0191

Allen Bowie, Jr.

1737-1803 • Upper Cemetery, Section C-2, Lot 7, Site 7

Allen Bowie, Jr. is one of two known Revolutionary War patriots buried at Rockville Cemetery. Born in Prince George's County, he was the third generation of his family in Maryland.

When he came of age, Bowie inherited considerable acreage and a brick dwelling house at "The Hermitage," in lower Frederick County, which in 1776 became Montgomery County. In 1766, Bowie married his step-sister Ruth Cramphin (1742-1812). They had eight children, one of whom was Col. Washington Bowie (born in 1776), whose son was Richard Johns Bowie, owner of Glenview farm. Allen and Ruth Bowie belonged to the Anglican/Episcopal Church, in Prince George's Parish, which included the area of Rockville. By 1790 they owned 30 slaves and controlled hundreds of acres of land.

Allen Bowie, described in the census as a "planter" (farmer), and his step-brother Thomas Cramphin, Jr. participated in actions leading to the American Revolution. Both men protested British wrongs against the colonies by signing the Hungerford Resolves on June 11, 1774, and were elected to attend the First Convention soon thereafter. In the Maryland Militia, Bowie served as First Lieutenant in the 2nd Company, 29th Battalion, was commissioned Captain in 1776, and raised to Colonel in 1780.

During this time Bowie entered into business with Cramphin and others. The firm of Allen Bowie and Company used its substantial financial resources to lend money and deal in real estate during the Revolution. Bowie provided wheat for the military. In 1777, he helped to select the site of Montgomery Court House. Between that



year and 1800, at various times he served as one of the new county's first Justices, a Tax Commissioner, on the Levy Court, and as a County Commissioner in 1799.

Allen Bowie died testate in Montgomery County at the age of 66. Ruth passed away in 1812.

A century later, Janet Montgomery Chapter of the NSDAR marked the Bowie graves at Rockville Cemetery. *The Washington Post* described the program as "impressive, the autumn tints and falling leaves adding much of appropriateness and solemnity to the outdoor ceremony. An American flag covered the grave of him who did so much to help bring it into being. A large gathering of Montgomery County people were present, including descendants of Col. Bowie."

Interestingly, the handsome granite Bowie gravestone is not the original. It is of a more modern early 20th century design, and is inscribed on the front by "HEAGY." John M. Heagy operated a stone-cutting and monument business on East Montgomery Avenue in Rockville until his death in 1928.

Sources: *Montgomery County, MD Patriot Grave Registry* www.marylandsar.org/william-smallwood/patriot_graves.htm *The Bowies and Their Kindred* by Walter Worthington Bowie, 1971; *Revolutionary Patriots of Montgomery County, MD* by Henry C. Peden Jr., 1996; "The Men of the Hungerford Resolves" by Mary Charlotte Crook, *The Montgomery County Story*, Vol. 19, No. 2, May 1976; *Montgomery County Sentinel*, Nov. 3, 1922, and *The Washington Post*, Nov. 5, 1922 (*ProQuest Historical Newspapers*)

Volunteers Keep Rockville Cemetery Alive

Throughout its long history, Rockville Cemetery has relied upon the interest, contributions, and hands-on participation of volunteers to preserve and maintain this revered burial ground. During 2017, several dozen citizens generously offered their knowledge and unique skills in support of key cemetery activities:

- **Rockville Cemetery Association Board:** Meeting monthly, the all-volunteer Board of Directors continues to provide



Memorial Day Decorations

core services necessary to ensure that burial services continue for families experiencing loss and grounds are well maintained. Email us if you are interesting in serving.

- **Memorial Day Decorations:** Volunteers joined Board members in placing flags on the graves of several hundred known veterans from wars dating back to the American Revolution.
- **Grounds Clean-up:** Such tasks as shrub pruning, minor tree, limb and vine removal, and removal of abandoned decorations were completed throughout the year, helping to maintain acceptable visual quality in all cemetery areas.

(continues bottom of page 3)

Friendly Spirits Haunt Rockville Cemetery on Moonlit Ghost Tour

On the beautiful moonlit night of October 7, Rockville Cemetery and Peerless Rockville hosted “Rockville Cemetery Comes Alive! Rockville Cemetery Ghost Tour.” Two guided tours in the historic Upper Cemetery featured congenial local apparitions.

Dozens of visitors, treated to two all-terrain tours in a rare night-time foray by moonlight, followed the ghost of Martha McGaha to hear costumed actors tell stories of nine memorable individuals who appeared by their gravestones. Mrs. McGaha once maintained the sanctity of the caretaker’s house while her husband Thomas was cemetery superintendent.

Friendly spirits included Margaret Johns Beall, who welcomed visitors with a history of the cemetery, and Zelda Fitzgerald, who picnicked under the stars on the site of F. Scott Fitzgerald and her former graves.

Charismatic Judge Richard Johns Bowie entertained attendees, walking among the crowd urging citizens to public service, and the formidable Dora Higgins shocked and delighted visitors as she rocked in her chair and told how she protected her husband’s store through JEB Stuart’s stop in Rockville in 1863.

Visitors also met brave aviation pioneer and contemporary of the Wright Brothers, Col. Paul Peck, who told the poignant

story of his family who all perished tragically. Baseball Hall of Famer Walter “Big Train” Johnson came to talk about his life and stats (and grumble about the state of modern baseball!), enthraling the audience.

Folded flags and cardboard cutouts of Guy and John Carter adorned their grandfather’s grave, as their nephew spun the sad tale of their ships sinking within five months of each other during WWII.

Local educator and Confederate naval officer William Pinckney Mason thrilled the crowd with a personable account of his life. And each tour closed with readings from letters by captured Rebel soldier



RCA President Burt Hall as William Pinckney Mason

Capt. James Anderson, who shared an eerie recording of “Rock Me to Sleep, Mother,” a favorite song on both sides during the Civil War.

With a delightful, talented group of volunteers, the tours were a smashing success! Rockville Cemetery Association sends a special thank you to all of the animated actors and brave visitors who made this such a memorable event! Stay tuned for next year.

Volunteers Keep Rockville Cemetery Alive *(continued from page 2)*

- **Monument Cleaning:** Grave stones marking dozens of burial sites were successfully cleaned using prescribed methods, including many monuments cleaned by RCA board members, several enhanced by members of the Chevy Chase Chapter of DAR, and five monuments from the early 1800s cleaned by local Brownie Scouts.



Members of Brownie Troop 373 cleaning cemetery gravestones

- **Interpretive Tours:** On several occasions, RCA provided guided tours to interested community, school, and professional groups, highlighting cemetery history and biographies of notable burials. Our Ghost Tour is described above.
- **A Formal Landscaping Plan:** Significant time and expertise were donated to develop a formal plan

that provides a systematic process for the removal of unhealthy trees and shrubs in addition to the planting of appropriate native species, all in order to maintain appealing natural vistas throughout the cemetery.

- **“Unsung Heroes”:** Those unidentified individuals who – on several occasions - were observed removing trash from various areas while either visiting or simply passing through cemetery grounds. Their kindness is an example for all and an inspiration to a grateful Rockville Cemetery Association!

Volunteering will continue to be an integral part of Rockville Cemetery operations. There are endless opportunities to contribute to this noteworthy component of our local history, provide ongoing respects to families represented here, and support the preservation and function of these hallowed grounds. For further information on how to become involved and share YOUR unique capabilities, please contact us through our website at <http://www.rockvillecemeterymd.org/contact/>

Please include
Rockville Cemetery
Association when
making your end-of-
year gifts. *Thanks!*



Enclosed is my tax-deductible contribution:

Please make checks payable to Rockville Cemetery Association.

OR

Donate online using PayPal! Go to www.rockvillecemetery.md.org at the bottom right of each page hit the **DONATE** button. *Quick & Easy!*

IN MEMORY OF: _____

- To be used for:
- Tree Work (pruning old, planting new)
 - Road Repair
 - Gravestone Conservation
 - However funds are needed
- \$25
 - \$50
 - \$100
 - \$500
 - Other
 - \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Monument Cleaning

Over the years grave stones may become discolored, broken and even fall over. Part of our annual budget is set aside for stone conservation. We hire professionals to repair, straighten and upright fallen or broken stones. Volunteers, with a bit of training, can help stretch our budget with cleaning and some minor straightening of stones. To volunteer click "Contact" at top right of our website to leave your contact information and interests.

Ursula Wilcoxon

Section B2, Lot 21, Site 6



Before Cleaning



After Cleaning

**Historic
Rockville
Cemetery**

**Grave Sites and Burial Niches
For Sale — Reasonable Rates**



**Lots, Single Sites and
Columbarium Burial Niches
Available**

Additional information
including prices for
niches and grave sites at
www.rockvillecemeterymd.org.

**ROCKVILLE CEMETERY
ASSOCIATION**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Burt Hall, President
- Hannelore Quigley, Vice President
- Stephen Edwards, Treasurer
- Eileen McGuckian, Secretary
- Frederick R. Bird, Historian
- Anne C. Allnut
- F. Tom Claxton, C.C.E.
- Michael E. Grant