One hundred fifty years ago this fall, Wilmington became a “City of Silence.” Raging in the city of about 10,000 (1860 population) was an epidemic of yellow fever. When it was finally over the first of part of December 1862, it had killed over 600 people, approximately 400 of which are buried in Oakdale Cemetery.

On August 6, 1862, a blockade runner, the Kate, docked in the port of Wilmington, having several sick seamen on board. The illness with which they were afflicted was thought to be the deadly plague. A native of Germany, Lewis Swartzman, is considered to be the first fatality on September 3, 1862. He was a wood and coal dealer, whose business was on the wharf near where the Kate docked at the foot of Market Street. He is buried in Oakdale, but has no stone.

There is a debate about whether the fever was brought by the Kate to Wilmington. There are indications that the disease was already in the area before the date the ship came into the port, although it was not diagnosed. It was not until 1900 that Walter Reed identified that bites by the Aedes aegypti mosquito was the means by which the disease was transmitted. Newspapers of the time observed that the summer of 1862 was a particularly wet season and that mosquitoes were numerous. Standing water in ponds all over town fueled an abundant insect population. The day of the first frost usually occurred in late October or early November. This particular year the frost was later than usual.

Adding to the dreary atmosphere, pine rosin and lightwood fires burned all over the city. The smoke emitted from these fires served as an insect repellant, but produced a pall over the whole city. There were few people on the
### New & Renewing Members

(Recorded between January 1, 2012 and June 30, 2012)

If you joined or renewed your membership during this time and we failed to list your name, please phone the office and we will correct the listing in the next issue of Inscriptions.

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#### Student

- Ms. Ruth S. Clair
- $15

### For our Handicapped Friends

For any of the tours, a golf cart is available for those who have mobility challenges. The capacity of the vehicle is only 5 persons; therefore, registration is necessary to reserve a space on the cart by calling the Oakdale Cemetery office, 762-5682.

### A Reminder

To all the Friends of Oakdale, when receiving this periodic publication news and events of the Friends, this is not a reminder of your membership status. The Membership Committee sends out a specific letter. These letters are mailed to you annually when the time arrives according to the month you had renewed last or joined.

### Volunteers Welcome!

If you would like to become more involved with the Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc., we have lots of opportunities for you.

- **Tour Guides**
- **Research**
- **Newsletter**
- **Landscaping/Gardening**
- **Fund Raising**
- **Distribution of Educational Material**

Please call the Oakdale Cemetery office for more information. **910-762-5682**
Yellow Fever Epidemic
Continued from front page

September 13, 1862 and twelve days later, his wife, Barbara, succumbed to the disease. The superintendent of the cemetery, Charles Quigley, an Irishman, was also a victim. Many in the prime of life were felled. Infants ranging in age from 11 days to three and a half months were not spared as well as those over sixty, which was considered old age in the 1860s.

Not all of the interments in Oakdale are in the yellow fever section. A number were buried on their family plots throughout the cemetery.

A list of interments in Oakdale Cemetery from September 17, 1862 until November 27, 1862 survives in the cemetery's records. However, this list was done after the civil war by W. L. S. Smith and P. W. Fanning, the latter being the cemetery company’s secretary during the epidemic. Three hundred, forty-three souls are listed, but all indication is that there were many more than that. On the bottom of the list is the notation, “the true statement of interments will never be known.”

Sources: “Yellow Fever” folder in the North Carolina Room, New Hanover County Library.

List of interments, compiled after 1865 in Oakdale Cemetery archives.

Friend’s Projects

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery have recently funded several needed improvements in the cemetery. Vinca flowers were planted at the main gate and around the flag pole in late spring by Sylvia Stoudenmire and Bonnie Burriss. The on-going iron fence restoration will be restarted in late summer, replacing finials and piping on the fences in high profile areas. The fence on either side of the bridge to the annex will be replaced. A friend of Oakdale has contributed to this project and challenged the Friends to match the funds, which they did. Bumper rails will also be installed to increase the safety of vehicles crossing the bridge. As in 2011, the Friends have allocated money for the trimming, removal and replacement of trees all over the cemetery.

Quick Response (QR) Code Project

For those who have smart phones and other similar devices, QR barcodes have been placed at ten of the self-guided tour grave sites. The barcodes allow access to biographical information about these famous people. The barcode on the signage at the main gate contains a connection to a map and brief historical background of the cemetery.
BE a Friend of Oakdale Cemetery!

Please mail your tax-deductible contribution to:

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc.
520 North Fifteenth Street • Wilmington, NC 28401

Questions? Call us at 910-762-5682

Please check one:

[ ] Founder $2,500 & up
[ ] Benefactor $1,000-$2,499
[ ] Sponsor $500-$999
[ ] Patron $250-$499
[ ] Donor $100-$249
[ ] Family $40-$99
[ ] Individual $30
[ ] Student $15

Membership is for one year.  ◆ Many volunteer opportunities!

Please contact me about volunteering!  □