

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc.

520 North 15th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Wilmington, NC
Permit No. 1

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nell Hooper Graham, *President*
Chris Nelson, *Vice-President*
Nancy Scheunemann, *Secretary*
Ed Hawfiled, *Treasurer*
Barbara Bush
Hunter Ingram
Ray Kozen
Paula Sneeden

Ex-Officio:

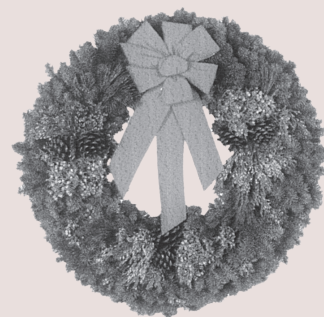
Sylvia Stoudenmire, *President*
Oakdale Cemetery Company & Friends
Volunteer Coordinator
Eric Kozen, *Superintendent and Editor*
Oakdale Cemetery Company

Holiday Wreaths Available

ORDERS MUST BE PLACED BY NOVEMBER 26, 2024.

The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery offers Christmas wreaths. This year the fresh live wreaths will be identical to last year's - 25 inches across with a waterproof red bow. The wreaths will be placed on the grave site of your loved ones during the second week of December.

Wreath, 25 inches \$35.00 each. (\$2.00 OFF EACH FOR MEMBERS)



Provide the name of the person BURIED on the lot.

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

NAME: _____

Record YOUR contact information should we need clarification on your order.

NAME: _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ EMAIL _____

If you need assistance with your order, please call the cemetery office at 910-762-5682.

**ORDERS MUST BE
PLACED BY
November 26, 2024.**

Make checks payable to:

**Friends
of Oakdale Cemetery**

520 N 15th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

Inscriptions

VOLUME 20, NO. 2

FALL 2024

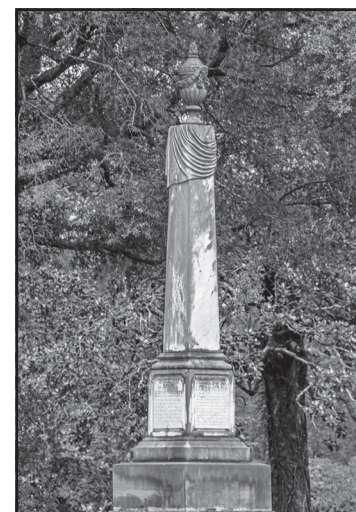
Buried at Oakdale Dr. William Wilkings

by Hunter Ingram

In centuries past, political disputes weren't settled with nationally broadcast debates or mud-slinging social media posts. In those days, if you found yourself embroiled in a political spat, it might end with you facing your opponent in a duel.

It should be noted that dueling was never as cool as history and movies have made it out to be. In America, the victor of a duel, especially one where their opponent died, may have found themselves slapped with a murder charge rather than congratulatory high fives. Dueling avenged something the law couldn't — a man's ego. It was a personal vendetta executed at 10 paces and with two witnesses. It wasn't a badge of honor.

It certainly wasn't for Joseph Flanner, who, during the spring of 1856, will end up killing a man he previously considered a friend — a tragedy and a cross he will bear the rest of his life. Today, the last vestige of that incident is an obelisk standing a towering 20-feet high near the center of Oakdale Cemetery atop the final resting place of Dr. William Wilkings.



In April 1856, the Commission of Navigation, the purveyors of the regulations that governed the port in Wilmington, was beefing up its ranks with an election for seats at the table. Wilkings was a prominent physician in town and the rising star of the local Democratic Party. Flanner was a successful businessman and respected voice in the Know Nothing Party, which rose from the ashes of the Whigs.



In a pair of debates on April 30 and May 1, each side made their case that they were better suited to steer the next era of the port — an era that would end up including the Civil War. During the debates, Willkings allegedly charged the Know Nothings with a willingness to put the promise of profits over the public's safety. Flanner was enraged by the claim, which he called a lie. As the bad blood further boiled between the two men, who were said to be friends before the political divide, Wilkings issued a duel card that Flanner accepted.

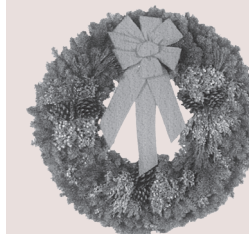
When neither man backed down from the challenge, they went across the South Carolina border into Marion on May 3 to meet each other with guns in hand. Oftentimes, duels were just about showing up. You shake hands or shoot your pistols in the air to prove you were willing to do it. On this day, according to accounts, Flanner seemed to be willing to call it a draw by shooting to the heavens rather than at his opponent. Unfortunately, he didn't tell Wilkings of his plan.

After Wilkings' first shot grazed Flanner's arm, he saw the man across from his was out for blood and he didn't waste a bullet on any further leniency. One of Flanner's shots knocked Wilkings' hat off his head and the next pierced his heart, killing the promising 30-year-old politician instantly.

Continued on page 2



Calendar of Events



Christmas Wreath Sale
Deadline will be Tuesday, November 26, 2024 for ordering Christmas wreaths, which will be placed on the graves of loved ones during the second week of December. See back page for more details and ordering information.

**ALL TOURS ARE CANCELED IN THE
EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.**

Message from the President

Kudos to the Loblolly Garden Club for maintaining the landscaping and plantings of the 15th Street corridor just outside the main gates. The club also continues to take care of a beautiful butterfly garden which they established in 2020.

The Tidewater Camellia Club continues to take care of numerous old camellias as well as identifying their cultivars. The club offers pruning and propagation workshops as well as volunteer workdays throughout the year. As a bonus, once established, the propagated plants are returned to Oakdale and planted around the Cemetery.

The self-guided tour will also be expanding and experiencing a new look. Keeping up with technology, the QR Codes are being updated for the self-guided tour and will be available soon.

On behalf of the Friends Board, we appreciate the generosity and support of our donors, the hard work of all our volunteers and Oakdale's dedicated staff.

Thank you
Nell Graham

Dr. William Wilkings

Continued from front page

The mood on the field of battle must have been somber from this point on. After Wilkings' body was taken back to Wilmington, word spread of the duel and the tragic results across the state. "This sad affair affords a fitting opportunity for the press to speak out in bold terms upon this time honored, yet barbarous and unchristian practice; and we shall do this without any reference to the particulars of this case, and without fear or favor towards the parties, or any one, alike offending against the laws of God and man," wrote The Greensboro Times.

In a bit of irony, when the election was held a few days after the duel, Flanner still won a Commissioners of Navigation seat over the Democratic candidate, Miles Costin – but he only won by one vote. That vote is said to have been cast mistakenly by a Democrat.

Flanner wouldn't stay in Wilmington long after the duel, eventually going to Europe during the Civil War and living out his days in New Bern, far from the reputation he etched for himself in blood in May 1856. Wilkings, meanwhile, was mourned as a martyr for the cause, his grave marker never mentioning the duel but rather a life that was "suddenly closed."

As the nation descends into another presidential election this fall, when cooler heads are not likely to prevail, it is always good to remember the lessons of the past. No one wins in a vicious duel, even the person left standing at the end. As Americans, we have the privilege of settling our political differences at the ballot box.

NEED A FEW GOOD PEOPLE!
Ever want to serve on the Friends of Oakdale Board???
Let us know, we are looking for a few good people to include on our Board.
Call the Superintendent, Eric Kozen 910-762-5682

www.oakdalecemetery.org



PLEASE FOLLOW US

Hootie the Owl



For the past several years, Hootie the owl has been making Oakdale home and as their place to raise their young owlets. This year, Hootie was a bit more visible to visitors and seemed to delight those on their walks through Oakdale. Hootie is a barred owl that generally prefers areas with water or marshy areas with an abundance of food such as: frogs, mice and snakes. Owls generally seek out old growth trees that may have hollowed trunks to nest in.

Have a Seat

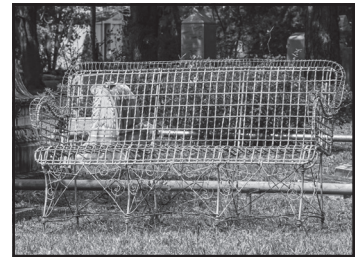
Near the turn of the Century in 1895, Sears and Roebuck began offering mail-order monuments for families and cemeteries. Their marketing strategy opened up a new era for families and cemeteries as they advertised monuments "direct from the quarry to the cemetery" which gave the customer assurance of a fine and detailed monument for their loved one. Then, a decade later, they become more involved with offering all sorts of items such as grave protectors, fencing and settees/benches. As one meanders around the historic portion of Oakdale you will find most of what Sears had to offer when it comes to "Settees" as families adorned their lots with a place to sit and reflect. The word Settee seems to come from an old English word setl or settle. A general description of a Settee is a smaller version of a sofa/couch with a high back on raised legs and is not meant for lounging.

WONDERFUL VALUES IN ALL STEEL SETTEES AT \$4.35 AND UPWARD.

WOVEN WIRE SETTEES.

All Cast Iron Gothic Pattern Settee, \$9.27

Send Us Your Order



Working on a Building

Oakdale has a newly renovated office building!!! The project began last December around the Christmas holiday and finished this past July. The renovation included an expansion of the rear of the building which made it possible for more storage, a larger meeting room, and a public restroom for when the Friends Group does tours, etc. The office was originally built around 1949, when land was recently acquired from the Rehder Family and designated as the new location for an office. Prior to this, the Cemetery had been using the Lodge which was built in 1896 and served as its office and administrative facilities, but that building fell into disrepair and was torn down in 1947. Temporarily, the Superintendent's cottage was converted into an office and was located just inside the 15th Street entrance in what is now known as Section V. This was also the same time when the Cemetery closed the western entrance where the bridge crossed over McCumber's ditch, just below the Confederate Mound and where the old Lodge was located. At this time is when the Cemetery reverted back to the original entrance off 15th Street which is currently used today.

