

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc.

520 North 15th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

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Oakdale Cemetery Company

Inscriptions

VOLUME 16, NO. 1

SPRING 2020

Suffragettes

Written by Ann H. Hutteman

In this political year, 2020, it is hard to imagine that as recently as a hundred years ago, women were not permitted to participate in the election process in most of the United States. There were a few states that did allow women to vote. The ratification of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in August, 1920, changed the gender requirements for voting throughout the country. It was long overdue.

The National Women's Suffrage Association was founded in the 1870s to promote the idea of women's voting. Over the next 50 years, several attempts were made in Congress to pass the amendment, all of which failed. In the 1910s

in North Carolina, a movement was spearheaded by Gertrude Weil of Goldsboro, who was related by marriage to Wilmington's Bluethenthal family. Nationally, the women's movement split in the 1910s as more militant women like Alice Paul began picketing the White House. *Continued on pg. 2*



Calendar of Events

Friends of Oakdale Board Meetings

Second Tuesday of every month, 12:00 noon. Kenneth Sprunt Office Building, Oakdale Cemetery



Deadline for ordering Easter Lillies Monday, March 30, 2020

Easter is April 12, 2020. The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery are offering for sale full, fresh Easter lillies for the graves of loved ones. See details on insert sheet of this newsletter.

Horticultural Tour with Eric Kozen, Superintendent Saturday, April 25, 2020, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Mr. Kozen has decades of horticultural experience and will delight you with the knowledge of the flora of Oakdale. There are truly magnificent specimens found in Oakdale and Mr. Kozen will tour the grounds showing off the true gems of a rural garden cemetery. \$10.00 for non-members; FREE for members.

Summer Flashlight Tour Series

Saturday, May 16, 2020, 7:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Historical walking tours of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historians, Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and Superintendent Eric Kozen. Each of these historians will lead you through the cemetery and speak about the history of Oakdale, Civil War veterans, Funerary Art as well as a taste of Oakdale's prominent citizens. Cost is \$15.00 per person and you must supply your own flashlight.

Summer Walking Tour Series

Saturday, June 20, 2020, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

Historical walking tours of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local businessman, Bob Warwick. Mr. Warwick will lead you on a journey through Oakdale and will delight you with many tales of those movers and shakers in the business industry who helped shape Wilmington. Learn some local history from a long time Wilmingtonian. Cost of the tour is \$10.00 per person.

Summer Walking Tour Series

Saturday, July 18, 2020, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon.

Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery will be given by the Cemetery Superintendent, Eric Kozen who will take you on a journey of the past. He will focus on the beginnings of the cemetery as well as explain some of the funerary art and some tales of those who are laid to rest here. \$10.00 for non-members; FREE to members.

Summer Flashlight Tour Series

Saturday, September 19, 2020, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Historical walking tours of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historians, Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and Superintendent Eric Kozen. Each of these historians will lead you through the cemetery and speak about the history of Oakdale, Civil War veterans, Funerary Art as well as a taste of Oakdale's prominent citizens. Cost is \$15.00 per person and you must supply your own flashlight.

ALL TOURS ARE CANCELLED IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.

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

TITLE / FIRST NAME(S) / LAST NAME
STREET ADDRESS / CITY / STATE / ZIP
PHONE / EMAIL

Membership is for one year ❖ Many volunteer opportunities!

Please contact me about volunteering!

A REMINDER

To all the Friends of Oakdale, when receiving this periodic publication, 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.

Suffragettes

Continued from front page

The local chapter of the Equal Suffrage League very rapidly declared themselves respectable not radical. A notice in the Wilmington Morning Star in December 1916, announced the founding of the League and assured the public that there would be “no militant demonstrations.” By April 1917, there were approximately 100 members of the group.

Bessie Lodor Wiggins (1888-1972) was the founding chair of the New Hanover Equal Suffrage League. A native of Wilmington, she was a teacher at Hemingway Graded School. In 1915, she married Octavius Augustus Wiggins (1879-1934). She was also active in the United Daughters of the Confederacy. After the suffrage amendment was approved, she was a founding member of the New Hanover County League of Women Voters, organized November 30, 1921 and an officer in The Farmers and Consumers League. Mrs. Wiggins retired as a secretary from the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. She died on



January 2, 1972 and is buried in Oakdale Cemetery. Her obituary does not mention her activities in the Women’s Suffrage Movement.

Another lady buried in Oakdale, is Bessie Ledford Gore Martin (1867-1934). A noted civic and social leader, Mrs. Martin ran for the New Hanover County Commission in 1922, barely two years after she got the vote. She did not win, but was a pioneer in starting to fulfill the promise of the 19th Amendment. ❖

Special thanks to Jan F. Davidson, Historian, Cape Fear Museum, for sharing her research on the local suffragette movement.



Another Eagle Takes Flight

Walker Powell and Troop #13 worked on a fascinating Eagle Project, Bat Houses!!! They installed four bat houses in various places in the cemetery near the watershed of McCumbers Ditch. Since there is no pesticide spraying done by the city for mosquitos on the grounds of Oakdale, bats are a natural predator for mosquitos. With Walker’s help and research he mentioned that a single bat could consume 600 - 1,000 mosquitos an hour and each of his bat houses could hold up to 50+ bats. ❖



Restoration Efforts Continue to Save Cast Iron Fences

Recently the Parsley fence was restored to its glory. Thanks to the Parsley Family, Cape Fear Chapter # 3, United



Daughters of the Confederacy and some help from The Friends of Oakdale, this fence was brought back to life. For decades, this fence has been embedded seventeen inches below the ground and falling apart. Recent fundraising efforts and a sesquicentennial celebration of the UDC helped get this project completed. ❖



Bluethenthal Palm Re-Created

For many years, a palm on top of the tombstone on Arthur Bluethenthal’s grave has been missing. There are very few photos of the original palm. The Temple of Israel worked with Eric Kozen, Superintendent, to design a new palm as well as partially fund the project. Some history behind the palm is quite fascinating and honors Arthur’s bravery. In 1916, Arthur enlisted in the French Foreign Legion and was awarded a Croix de Guerre with a star for his bravery at the Battle of Verdun. In 1917 Arthur joined the Lafayette Flying Corps and was the only American in the squadron. He was killed in an aerial combat battle on June 5, 1918, just north of Paris. Arthur was the first North Carolinian killed in World War I. France posthumously awarded Arthur Bluethenthal a second Croix de Guerra with palm. ❖



Drawings Capture the Beauty of Oakdale

A recent outing by the Urban Sketchers of Wilmington allowed these artists to immerse themselves in the beauty of Oakdale. They captured the essence of Oakdale through their pencils and pens drawing what was before them. This group meets around town on various outings and they mentioned that this was their largest turnout with nearly 20+ artists combing the grounds on a beautiful fall day. ❖



www.oakdalecemetery.org

For those interested in Oakdale Cemetery, the website provides spectacular photography by Kenneth Newland. Featuring a fresh updated look and offers a more user friendly experience, improved navigation, and more interactive resources including maps, burial database, the ability to purchase items online, history, news, calendar of events, comprehensive cemetery information, newsletter archive and much more.



PLEASE FOLLOW US



**VOLUNTEERS
WELCOMED!**

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

910-762-5682