

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc.

520 North 15th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

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Inscriptions
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The Burgwins
Written by Christine Lamberton,
Museum Director
Burgwin-Wright House and Gardens

For over 250 years, John Burgwin’s townhouse has stood at the center of downtown on the corner of Third and Market streets -- the busiest intersection in town. Built when Wilmington was in its infancy, on the remains of the first city jail walls (circa 1744), the house (circa 1770) witnessed social changes, fires and war, but also love, laughter, heartbreak and death. These are the stories that the Burgwin-Wright House museum staff wonder about, not the details of John’s well-documented public life, but the family secrets, chief among them where is John Burgwin today?

Lost to time and development, we may never find out where John, and nine others, are buried at Castle Haynes Plantation graveyard. However, the Burgwin legacy in the



Lower Cape Fear does not send with him. His youngest son, George William Bush Burgwin (1784-1854) was born and raised at the Hermitage, his father’s plantation home off Prince George Creek. He died after a long successful life in the same room he was born in. George married Maria Jones Nash (1786-1848), the daughter of Governor Abner Nash and together they had eleven children. Today, they are both buried at Oakdale Cemetery in the family plot, along with several of their children, and other family members.

The centerpiece of the plot, a large obelisk is both a grave marker and a memorial to George and Maria’s beloved oldest son, Captain John “Jack” Henry King Burgwin (1810-1847), whose death family claim led to Maria dying of a broken heart. Like his father, Jack was born at The Hermitage and grew up in the flourishing port city of Wilmington. *Continued on page 2.*



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
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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.

Calendar of Events



Deadline for ordering Easter Lillies
First Come, First Served
Easter is April 20, 2025. The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery are offering for sale a limited number of full, fresh Easter lillies for the graves of loved ones. See details on insert sheet of this newsletter.

Summer Walking Tour Series
Saturday, May 17, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Historical walking tours of North Carolina’s oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historian Hunter Ingram who created Burgwin-Wright Presents and Cape Fear Unearthed Podcasts Mr. Ingram will lead you on a journey through Oakdale and will delight you with many tales of those who are interred in the cemetery. Tour is from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Cost of the tour is \$10.00 per person.

Summer Walking Tour Series
Saturday, June 21 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Historical walking tours of North Carolina’s oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historian, Robin Triplett. Ms. Triplett will lead you on a journey through Oakdale and will delight you with many tales of those interred in the cemetery. Learn some local history

ALL TOURS ARE CANCELED IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.

from a long time Wilmingtonian. Tour is from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Cost of the tour is \$10.00 per person.

Flashlight Tour
Saturday, September 20, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
Historical walking tours of North Carolina’s oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historians, Dr. Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and Hunter Ingram. 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. Tour is from 6:30 pm till 8:30 pm. Cost is \$20.00 per person and you must supply your own flashlight.

Fall Walking Tour Series
Saturday, October 18, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Historical walking tours of North Carolina’s oldest rural cemetery will be given by Superintendent, Eric Kozen. Mr. Kozen will lead you on a journey through Oakdale and will delight you with many tales of those interred in the cemetery. Learn some local history and interesting facts from the Superintendent who knows every square inch of Oakdale. Tour is from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Cost of the tour is \$10.00 per person.



Burgwin-Wright House, courtesy of Burgwin-Wright House and Gardens

born and raised at the Burgwin-Wright House, the townhouse built by Jack's grandfather, John Burgwin, delivered the eulogy. His body was laid to rest at his childhood home, The Hermitage. Later, due to changed circumstances after the Civil War, the Burgwin family was forced to sell The Hermitage, and Jack's body was moved one more time, along with his parents and other family members,



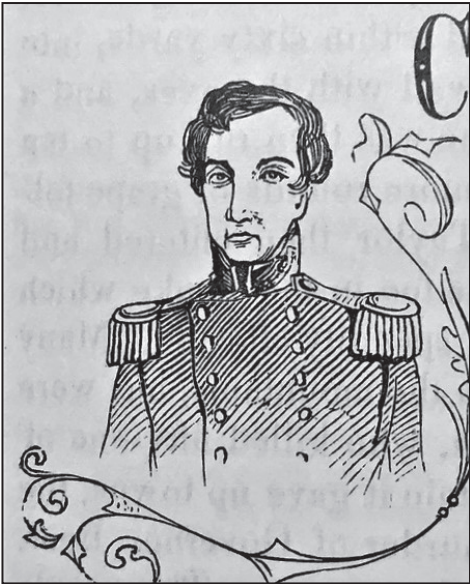
The Hermitage, courtesy of Burgwin-Wright House and Gardens

The Burgwins

Continued from front page

At 16, he was accepted to West Point, marking the beginning of a military career that led him out to the American West where he later suffered a fatal wound to the chest during the Taos Revolt in 1847. He was 36 years old, and buried on February 8, 1847, in Santa Fe, Texas. He was later exhumed and reburied on September 22, 1847, at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, one of the major U.S. Army bases in the Mexican-American War.

However, his story doesn't end in Kansas. At his family's request, Jack's body was transported to Wilmington where a large funeral parade took place on May 8, 1848. Joshua G. Wright, a family friend



John Henry King Burgwin, courtesy Burgwin-Wright House and Gardens

Today, the historic cemetery is a great place to learn about notable Wilmingtonians laid to rest there, but of note, the Burgwin plot is the only that boast a "Memory Medallion," a QR code easily affixed to tombstones that can be scanned with a cell phone allowing visitors to enjoy an expanded history of the Burgwin's who called the Lower Cape Fear home.

A Good Foundation



The past few months Master Craft Masonry has been busy restoring historic foundations on over 150 monuments. When Oakdale was in its infancy (1870-1910), the cemetery was responsible for surveying and laying brick foundations for incoming monuments that were to be installed by either local or out of state monument dealers. After more than 150 years, these foundations have been subjected to the outdoor elements and time has taken a toll on them. To keep with the original concept and to safely stabilize these monuments, it was time to do this work so they could be secured and enjoyed for many more decades and generations.



Anchors Weigh In

Often associated with ships and sea voyages, the anchor is much more than just a practical tool used by seafarers. It is a timeless symbol, deeply rooted in various cultures and traditions around the world. With its fundamental role of holding the ship in place, the anchor is widely recognized as a representation of stability, strength, and safety. In life's turbulent times, an anchor symbol can serve as a reminder of hope, a beacon signaling that we can weather the storm and come out stronger. The anchor also carries a multitude of spiritual and religious interpretations. In Christianity, the anchor is considered a symbol of faith, hope, and steadfastness. Early Christians used the anchor symbol to represent their faith during times of persecution, as it closely resembled the cross.



Treemendous Work



A recent study was performed over the past year to identify the existing tree canopy. After a few months of walking the entire historic portion of the cemetery (Sections A – Y), a graduate student using GPS was able to identify and map nearly 1550 trees with a caliper over four inches. Along with the grand total, the study also identified that there are currently 65 different species spanning the property providing a diversified landscape. As a direct result of the Capital Campaign, since 2018, the cemetery has received and planted over 800 trees throughout the grounds whereby continuing the process of re-foresting the landscape after so many devastating hurricanes like Florence from which Oakdale experienced a loss of 150 large, majestic trees.

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

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.



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