

Inscriptions

VOLUME 13, NO. 1

SPRING 2017

Buried at Oakdale

Fallen Wilmington Streetcar Motorman

"Clanging, swaying, grinding along; the streetcar created the modern city," writes William D. Middleton in *The Time of the Trolley*.

Wilmington joined the growing streetcar trend in North Carolina's largest cities during the late 1800s. The Wilmington Street Railway Company (W.S.R. Co.), converted its rails from animal-powered horsecars to electrical-powered streetcars in 1892. The streetcars represented great progress in Wilmington and many cities around the state, nation, and world during this era, but this new mode of transportation, like all others, was not without its dangers.



FRIENDS
of
OAKDALE
CEMETERY

Thomas Day Rittenhouse, a 40-year-old foreman for the Wilmington Street Railway, who is buried in the Knights of Pythias lot in Oakdale Cemetery, lost his life, October 14, 1895, from injuries incurred in a tragic accident when one of

the streetcars, Car No. 12, on which he was serving as motorman, derailed just as it reached the bridge over the Carolina Central railroad track



Continued on page 2



Calendar of Events



Friends of Oakdale Board Meetings

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



March 31, 2017 – Deadline for ordering Easter Lilies

Easter is April 16, 2017. The Friends of Oakdale Cemetery are offering for sale full, fresh Easter lilies for the graves of loved ones. Easter lily details on page 4 of this newsletter.

Horticultural Tour with Eric Kozen and Mary Hultman Saturday, April 1, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

Combined, these two plant enthusiasts have over 40 years of horticultural experience and will delight you with their knowledge of the flora of Oakdale. There are truly magnificent specimens found in Oakdale and both Eric and Mary will tour the grounds showing off the true gems of a rural garden cemetery. \$10.00 for non-members; FREE for members.

Easter Sunday Funerary Art Tour

Sunday, April 16, 2017, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Oakdale Cemetery Funerary Art Tour will be led by architectural historian, Ed Turberg, who will explain the evolution of the rural garden cemetery and the opening of Oakdale Cemetery in 1855. Ed Turberg will focus on the symbolism of Victorian funerary art. \$10.00 for non-members; FREE for members.

Summer Walking Tour Series

Saturday, May 20, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Historical walking tour of NC's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historian, Janet Davidson. Mrs. Davidson will take you on a journey through time and delight you with the history of World War I and some interesting tales of those who are interred at Oakdale Cemetery. \$10.00 for non-members and FREE to members.

Summer Walking Tour Series

Saturday, June 17, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Historical Angel walking tour of NC's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historian, Jan Wessell. Mrs. Wessell will take you on a tour of the many angels in the cemetery and explain the different meanings that adorn each beautiful sculpture. Tour is \$15.00.

Flashlight Tours – Sat., July 15, 2017, 8:00 p.m. until 10:00 p.m.

Sat., August 19, 2017, 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Historical walking tours of NC's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historians, Chris Fonvielle, Robin Triplett and Superintendent Eric Kozen. Each historian 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 for each tour is \$15.00 per person and you must supply your own flashlight.

Music and Mausoleums Tour

Sunday, Sept. 17, 2017, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Historical walking tour will be given by local architectural historian, Ed Turberg who will lead you to those interesting mausoleums in Oakdale and tell the history of these prominent structures. You will also be delighted to experience a musician at some of the mausoleums providing enjoyable melodies (bagpiper, harper, flutist and violinist). Cost is \$15.00 per person.

Summer Walking Tour Series

Sunday, Oct. 22, 2017, 2:00 – 4:00 pm

Historical walking tour of NC's oldest rural cemetery will be given by local historian Kenneth Newland. Enjoy your stroll in Oakdale and hear the tales of some of the Civil War notables in Oakdale Cemetery. \$10.00 for non-members and FREE to members.

ALL TOURS ARE CANCELLED IN THE EVENT OF INCLEMENT WEATHER.

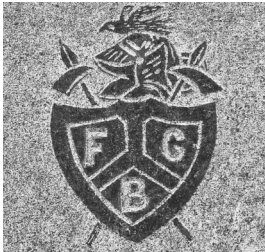
A NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF OAKDALE CEMETERY, INC.
520 NORTH 15TH STREET, WILMINGTON, NC 28401 ♦ 910-762-5682
EMAIL: FRIENDS@OAKDALECEMETERY.ORG ♦ WWW.OAKDALECEMETERY.ORG

Knights of Pythias

Thomas Day Rittenhouse's gravestone in Oakdale Cemetery reads, "T.D. Rittenhouse, Died Oct. 14, 1895, Clarendon Lodge."

Rittenhouse was a loyal and faithful member of Clarendon Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, and his fellow Knights were faithful and loyal to him as he lay dying after a tragic accident of October 13, 1895, on the streetcar he was operating in Wilmington.

The Knights of Pythias is an international, non-sectarian fraternal order, established in 1864 in



Washington,

D.C., by Justus H. Rathbone. It was the first fraternal order to be chartered by an act of Congress. The organization's website states that "The Order bases its lessons and builds its ritual largely on the familiar story of the friendship of Damon and Pythias, who were historical characters living about 400 or more years before the beginning of the Christian era. They were members of a school, founded by Pythagoras, who was known as the father of Greek philosophy. The Order began during the Civil War, and its founder believed that it might do much to heal the wounds and allay the hatred of civil conflict."

It was President Abraham Lincoln - who admired the Knights' benevolent purposes and their founder's hope to heal and unite the country - who suggested that the organization ask Congress for a charter.

While Rittenhouse's gravestone lists the lodge by name, gravestones of fallen Knights of Pythias often bear a wide variety of heraldic shields, sometimes bearing the letters F, C, and B, for their commitment to the traits of "Friendship, Charity, and Benevolence."

Streetcar Motorman Buried

Continued from front page

at the intersection of Fourth and Taylor Streets on the afternoon of October 13, 1895.

A news article chronicling the accident that day reported that the car, recently repaired and put in order for winter service, left the station that day for a trial run, with no passengers on board - only three employees, including Rittenhouse, a conductor, and a workman. Their car travelled at average speed until it neared the bridge, when Rittenhouse increased the speed to give it a good testing.


Those traveling in Car No. 8, behind Car No. 12, including conductor John Sheehan; motorman George Bishop; and passenger Superintendent Kinney of the Oil Mills; witnessed Car No. 12 leap from the track, run a short distance on the bridge, and turn over. The men in Car No. 8 hit the brakes, embarked from their car, and ran to the assistance of their colleagues in distress. To their surprise, all three men involved in the accident were alive, although injured to varying degrees.

Rittenhouse was lying in the ditch below, near the overturned car, which was "smashed to pieces." A call for physicians was sent immediately, while those gathered attended to the injured. Rittenhouse, who was the most seriously injured, was carried to a nearby house for care until doctors arrived, and ultimately transported to his own home on Fifth Avenue at 6 p.m. Rittenhouse appeared to be resting comfortably until 10:30 that night, when he began to fail. A team of physicians, including Drs. Schonwald, W.J. Bellamy, T.S. Burbank, and W.E. Storm, determined that his injuries were internal and feared heart failure from the shock. Throughout the long night, the doctors attended to and watched over Rittenhouse in shifts, along with friends, representatives from Wilmington Street Railway Company, and Knights of Pythias lodge, until his death.

His obituary reports that a post mortem examination revealed that his kidneys and liver had been so seriously injured that it was a "wonder he lived as long as he did."

Rittenhouse had resided in Wilmington with his family for five years, having moved from Staten Island, New York. He left behind a widow and five young children - four girls and a boy - the oldest being only 13 years old. He was described in his obituary as a "quiet, easy-going man, respected by all who knew him."

His funeral, conducted by the Rev. W.C. Norman, pastor of Grace M.E. Church, was held at the family's home near the corner of Fifth Avenue and Campbell Street. A large gathering of friends was present including those from the Clarendon Lodge of the Knights of Pythias. Rittenhouse was interred at Oakdale Cemetery. All expenses related to the sickness and funeral were paid by the Knights of Pythias and the Wilmington Street Railway Company.

"Mr. Rittenhouse was one of the most careful men in the employ of the company, but probably did not realize the risk he was running in going at so brisk a rate of speed which crossing a bridge," said A.B. Skelding, manager of W.S.R. Co. 

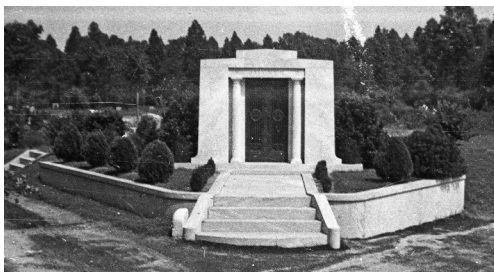
Sources:

New Hanover County Obituaries, Thomas Day Rittenhouse
Development of Streetcar Systems in North Carolina, Walter R. Turner
The Time of the Trolley, William D. Middleton

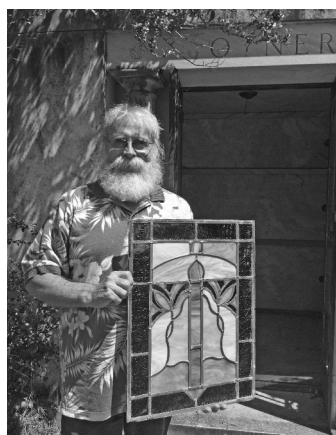
Stained Glass Repair

Joyner Mausoleum

Recently the Friends of Oakdale funded the repair and restoration of the Joyner Mausoleum stained glass windows and



front door glass. It was apparent that many years ago these windows had been shot and tampered with by



Mr. Jim Shapley

vandals. Some of the stained glass pieces were broken as a result. Mr. Jim Shapley assisted with finding a match to the broken and missing stained glass pieces and was able to recreate the original design. Not much is known of the Joyner family other than Dr. Claude Joyner was born in Duplin county and served many years as a public health officer and eventually became President of the Board of Health in

Jacksonville, FL. He was interred in the Bear Mausoleum until his mausoleum was constructed in late 1932. ♦

Ed Turberg to lead Music and Mausoleums Tour

Since times of the ancient Romans and Greeks, mausoleums have referred to large free-standing tombs. Mausoleums, which can be traced back to Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, represent some of the most beautiful architecture and funerary art in cemeteries. Oakdale Cemetery boasts nine large walk-in mausoleums, which will be featured on a special Music and Mausoleums Tour, Sunday, Sept. 17, at 2 p.m., led by Wilmington architectural historian Ed Turberg. The walking tour, which will explore the history of Oakdale's mausoleums and their families, will feature musical pieces performed on harp, flute, bagpipe, and violin. The cost of the tour is \$15. ♦

NEW & IMPROVED WEBSITE!

For those interested in Oakdale Cemetery, the new 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. Check it out!

www.oakdalecemetery.org

BOARD MEMBERS UPDATE

Oakdale Cemetery is proud to welcome three new members to the Board of Directors: Edward H. Hawfield, Chris Nelson, and Cece Snow. We thank Ed Gibson and Hans Westermarck, who are both going off the board, for their loyal service to Oakdale.

Edward H. Hawfield

Ed Hawfield spent his 35-year professional career primarily in the health care products industry in the Chicago area. This career started after attending N.C. State University, working for E.I. DuPont, and then receiving an MBA from the Darden School at the University of Virginia. Outside the work environment, Ed spent 10 years with the United Way of Lake Forest, Ill. He also taught for 15 years in the executive MBA program at the Lake Forest Graduate School of Management.

Since Ed and his wife, Nancy, both retired in 2007 to Williamsburg, Va., and then re-retired to Wilmington in 2014, they have remained busy. Ed's hobbies and interests include annual scuba diving trips, family genealogy, continuing education classes through Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, playing the guitar, water aerobics at the YMCA, cooking, and volunteering. His family roots are deep in Wilmington and the surrounding area. Ed's maternal grandparents and great-grandparents, as well as a large number of extended family members going back generations, are interred at Oakdale Cemetery. Much of his genealogy work includes visits to Oakdale.

Chris Nelson

Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Chris Nelson has lived in Wilmington since he was three months old, when his family moved to the Port City. Chris recently retired from the Wilmington Fire Department as a battalion chief. He spent 34 years in the fire service; the first 19 years with the Wrightsville Beach Fire Department and 15 years with Wilmington Fire Department. He currently works for Cape Fear Community College as the coordinator for fire/rescue training. He has led walking tours at Oakdale honoring Wilmington firefighters who have died in the line of duty. He and his wife Sherri, a Wilmington native, have two sons and a daughter: Mason, Michael, and Olivia. Chris is a member of Scotts Hill Baptist Church, co-founder of the Wilmington Fire Historical Society, and Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 234.

Cece Snow

Cece Lippitt Snow grew up in New Bern, attended high school at Chatham Hall in Chatham, Va., and graduated from the UNC at Chapel Hill. She moved to Wilmington in 1984, where she raised her daughter Ellie Snow and son Ricker Snow. Cece has worked for 20 years as an early intervention speech language pathologist. For the past decade, she has been sole proprietor of Theraplay Speech and Language Services. Cece became familiar with her family plot at Oakdale in 2007. Her mother and father were interred at Oakdale, in 2007 and 2011, respectively. Cece loves the beauty of Oakdale and feels strongly connected to her family when she stands on the Lippitt family plot. Thirty-two of her Lippitt family members are buried in Oakdale, including her great-grandfather, Devereux Haigh Lippitt and wife Margaret Walthour, an artist from whom the family has many beautiful paintings. Other family members buried in Oakdale include her great-great-grandfather and great-great-great grandfather, along with their wives, as well as a great-great-great uncle and Wilmington merchant, Jeremiah Lippitt, buried in 1846. Cece feels a special connection to Oakdale and is excited to be a part of helping to maintain and perpetuate the cemetery so that future generations can experience a meaningful connection to their ancestors.

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery, Inc.

520 North 15th Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

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Volunteer Coordinator
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Oakdale Cemetery Company

Inscriptions is published periodically.
Mary Virginia Swain and Catherine F. Halligan, *Editors*

Order Your Easter Lilies NOW!

ORDERS MUST BE PLACED BY FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2017

Friends of Oakdale Cemetery are offering
for sale full, fresh Easter Lilies for graves of loved ones.

**\$35 for members & non-members of
Friends of Oakdale Cemetery.**

These lilies are **beautiful, substantial two-stemmed plants**
with foil and a bow.

(NOT THE SINGLE-STEMS THE DISCOUNT STORES SELL.)



Easter is April 16.

*The lilies will be placed on
the graves starting April 14,
and will be removed
when they wane.*

**PLEASE MAIL THIS
FORM WITH
YOUR CHECK
MADE PAYABLE TO:**

**Friends of
Oakdale
Cemetery, Inc.**

520 North Fifteenth St.
Wilmington, NC 28401

(910) 762-5682

Please provide the name of the person(s) buried on the lot:

NAME OF DECEASED: _____ NAME OF DECEASED: _____

NAME OF DECEASED: _____ NAME OF DECEASED: _____

Please provide your name, address, phone number in case we need to contact you for further information.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____ E-MAIL _____