



The Grove Street Bulletin

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A Publication of the Grove Street Cemetery

Spring 2008

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The Grove Street Bulletin

Edward G. Williams,

Editor

Premiere of Grove Street Cemetery DVD Held on February 1



Premiere audience at Whitney Humanities Center

Although it was indeed “a dark and stormy” late afternoon on Friday, February 1, over 200 stalwart members of the Friends organization and invited guests braved the wind-whipped walls of water to attend the premiere showing of the Cemetery’s just-released DVD, “Grove Street Cemetery — City of the Dead, City of the Living.” Among those attending were several of the individuals shown in the DVD being interviewed at the Cemetery. The cost of the project was underwritten jointly by The Standing Committee of the Cemetery’s Proprietors and by the Board of The Friends of Grove Street Cemetery, Inc.

The first public presentation of the DVD, which was produced and directed by five-time Emmy Award winner Karyl K. Evans, was held at Yale University’s Whitney Humanities Center. The DVD was enthusiastically received by everyone who attended the documentary’s initial public showing and was followed by a reception under the guidance of Board Members Nancy Ahlstrom and Jean Kashgarian.

Dozens of copies of the DVD were sold following the premiere and during the reception. Since then, many more copies have been sold via (postage pre-paid) mail order. There are still more copies of the DVD available for purchase, at \$15 each, and can easily be ordered. (Please see the “How to Order YOUR Copy of the DVD” form on page 3 of this Bulletin.)



Peter Dobkin Hall, Karyl K. Evans, James C. Niederman



Reception following premiere showing of DVD

A Master’s Tea, held on May 12 at Yale University’s Jonathan Edwards College, featured a special presentation by Karyl K. Evans of the Grove Street Cemetery DVD. The attending residents of the College and their many invited guests were excited to learn about the historical significance and horticultural beauty of the Cemetery, which is virtually in their back-yard.

Save the Dates: October 16 and 17, 2008

Thursday and Friday, October 16 and 17, 2008, are important dates to reserve on your calendar. Yale University will sponsor a major two-day event on those days to celebrate the **250th birthday of Noah Webster**. Plans for the several programs include symposiums, special tours at the Grove Street Cemetery highlighting Webster’s gravestone as well as some of his contemporaries (“Noah and Friends”), exhibits, events of interest to children in addition to their participation, and a special anniversary dinner to be held on Friday evening, October 17. The programs and events of this celebration to honor Noah Webster will be open to the public. So – make a note on your calendar and be prepared to receive an invitation to attend and to participate in these festivities.

Grove Street Cemetery Receives Noteworthy Publicity

During February of this year, Grove Street Cemetery was featured in two publications. The New Haven Register's columnist Randall Beach wrote a lengthy article, including a gravestone photo, about the Cemetery and the DVD which had just been released. Goodcopy Printing and Digital Graphics, which provides us with incredible professional assistance in publishing and mailing the Bulletin, included an article with pictures about the Cemetery in the company's February Newsletter sent to hundreds of its customers. And several times on a day in mid-May, New Haven's WTNH-TV, Channel 8, gave viewers 'quickie tours' of the Cemetery.



Board Members Study Horticulture Needs
I. to r., Paul E Waggoner, Judith A. Schiff, Gerald E. Gaab, Patricia Illingworth, Herrick Jackson, E. Robert Gregan, and John Edwards

Horticulture Committee Begins New Study of the Cemetery's Needs

The Board of the Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery's Horticulture Committee, chaired by members E. Robert Gregan and Paul E. Waggoner, is embarking on a major project to study the horticultural needs and future 'planting plans' of the Cemetery. A thorough overview coupled with careful scrutiny of all the Cemetery's current plantings — trees, shrubs, bushes, hedges, groundcovers, etc. — will be conducted to evaluate their size, appropriateness of type, location, health, placement, condition, and other considerations. A recent walk-through for Committee and other Board members, led by Messrs. Gregan and Waggoner, pointed out numerous areas of uncontrolled growth of ivy and other 'creepers' on the ground and walls; tree-root damage to gravesites, gravestones and roadways; tree-trimming and tree removal needs; areas of encroachment by bushes and hedges beyond burial plot lines; plus other matters of concern which hinder a renewal of the Cemetery's significant and historical display of horticulture. When completed, the Committee's report with its conclusions and recommendations of what should and could be done in phases over a period of time, as well as the estimated costs of such a program, will be presented to the Board of the Friends organization and then to the Standing Committee of the Proprietors for its consideration.

July 4 Celebration will Honor Signers of Declaration of Independence

The annual Independence Day commemoration in Grove Street Cemetery, sponsored by the General David Humphreys Branch Number One, Connecticut Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, will start promptly at 9:00 a.m., rain or shine. With participation by a local Boy Scout troop, ceremonies will be held at the gravesites of **Roger Sherman** and **David Humphreys**. The public is invited to attend and to participate in this patriotic event, which starts just inside the Cemetery's Gate on Grove Street. The Fourth of July Ceremony is, in part, significantly recorded in the Cemetery's DVD.



July 4 Celebration



Dean Orser, former Grove Street Stonemason

Retired Stonemason Revisits Former Haunts

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, when Malcolm Munson was still Superintendent of Grove Street Cemetery, the D. F. Warner Co., stone mason contractors, was hired each summer for several weeks of maintenance and repair work. Foreman of the work parties each year was Dean Orser, now enjoying retirement. The stonemasons made repairs to the Cemetery's wall, to many of the several burial crypts, to some of the sandstone grave-markers as well as to stones in the Henry Austin Gate. On one occasion, when his crew of stonemasons was working in the extreme northwest corner of the Cemetery, a car came crashing through the wall at a high rate of speed – fast enough to break through the wall, land inside and spread some of its stones over nearby gravesites. The driver had failed to negotiate the turn from Ashmun Street into Lock Street.

On a recent visit to his former work site, Mr. Orser reminisced about locations where he had plied his trade and commented on how much better the Cemetery looks today than it did 40 or more years ago. He also mentioned his familial association with a well-known cemetery in Sleepy Hollow, New York. One of his ancestors was the wife of the man who rode through the countryside as "The Headless Horseman!"

Tour Season off to a Busy Start

Free one-hour tours of Grove Street Cemetery are offered every Saturday morning at 11:00 a.m. and on the first and third Sundays at 12:00 noon from early May until late November. Private tours are available by arrangement with our head Docent, Patricia Illingworth, who may be reached at (203) 389-5403 or at p.b.illingworth@worldnet.att.net. Schools, families, club groups, historical associations and other organizations should contact Patti Illingworth to reserve a tour time and indicate any special interests of the group. This year's first private tour was for "Round the World Women," who hailed from Israel, Japan, Russia, Germany, France, and Peru – among other locations. Many Cemetery visitors prefer a self-guided tour. Maps and other materials are available at the gate house, just inside the Grove Street entrance, from Mr. or Mrs. William Cameron, the Cemetery's Superintendents.

Please Note: The Cemetery is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (sharp!).

How to Order YOUR Copy of the Grove Street Cemetery DVD

Copies of the Grove Street Cemetery DVD are available for purchase at \$15.00 (postage pre-paid) per copy. Please complete the form below to receive your copy. You should also consider purchasing copies for family members and for friends.

Name _____

Address _____

No. of DVD copies _____ @ \$15.00 = \$_____ sent to me at the above address.

No. of DVD copies _____ @ \$15.00 = \$_____ sent to the individuals whose names and addresses appear on the separate enclosed list.

How to Join Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, Inc.

Individuals, organizations and corporations interested in Grove Street Cemetery and the objectives of the Friends are encouraged, to become members. Annual membership dues are shown below. The membership year is October 1 to September 30. Membership Dues and other Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Contributions in excess of Membership Dues are welcome and, unless otherwise specified, will be allocated to the Landscape or Landmark Funds which have been created to support the on-going horticultural programs of the organization and the ever-present need for support of the Cemetery's renovation and restoration efforts.

Name _____

Address _____ Tel.: _____

Dues: Individual \$35 _____ Couple \$50 _____ Not-for-profit \$50 _____ Corporation \$100 _____

Please check areas of participation that interest you:

Preservation _____ Program _____ Publication _____ Horticulture _____ Docent _____ Fund Raising _____

Checks for DVD orders, Dues and Contributions should be made payable to Friends of the Grove Street Cemetery, Inc. and mailed with this completed form to: P. O. Box 9238; New Haven, CT 06533-0238.

Interested in Becoming a Docent?

The Cemetery needs more docents to maintain its scheduled program of tours in 2008. Several of our present tour guides would be happy to provide you with the training necessary to become a docent and they would lend you an on-site helping hand before you embark on a 'solo flight.' It is not a difficult volunteer assignment and, in fact, you would find the interaction with the Cemetery's 'tourists' to be stimulating. Please contact Patti Illingworth at (203) 389-5403 or at p.b.illingworth@worldnet.att.net for more information.

How to Reach Us

Grove Street Cemetery

Open daily from
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
227 Grove Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: (203) 787-1443



Friends of Grove Street Cemetery

P. O. Box 9238
New Haven, CT 06533-0238
Phone: (203) 230-9858
Fax: (203) 281-6886
e-mail: office@grovestreetcemetery.org
website: www.grovestreetcemetery.org



Noah Webster's Monument
250th Birthday Celebration
October 16 & 17, 2008

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P.O. Box 9238
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