



The Grove Street Bulletin

Vol. 1, No. 14

A Publication of the Grove Street Cemetery

Spring 2013

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of Grove Street Cemetery**

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The Grove Street Bulletin

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New Haven's Thomas Phillips Monument Company, 1848–1988

The Friends of Grove Street Cemetery joined the New Haven Museum in presenting an illustrated talk by Professor Peter Dobkin Hall in October about this local firm. Subtitled, “Artisanship and Entrepreneurship in New Haven’s Monument Industry”, Hall recounted the personal stories and evolving tastes in monument designs, carving techniques and stone materials which the firm developed over its 140 year history. The Phillips Company created thousands of the carved memorials in Grove Street and other local cemeteries, serving a clientele as varied as the city’s diverse population. An interesting footnote: apparently New Haven tastes were somewhat more conservative and less extravagant, on average, than some other Northeastern cities. Many of the business records of the firm are now in the Museum, thanks largely to Mr. Hall.



Thomas Phillips advertisement from 1863 City Directory and a circa 1890 trade card of the firm. Note the High Street address: the company was for many years located where Yale’s Beinecke Library now stands.



Reproduced courtesy of Peter Dobkin Hall and the New Haven Museum

This edition of the Bulletin is dedicated to Henry H. Townshend, Jr. and Milton Devane, who both served as president of the Standing Committee of the Proprietors of the Grove Street Cemetery and who were dedicated to its management and care.

Henry H. Townshend, Jr. (March 27, 1920 – July 28, 2012)

As you walk through the cemetery today you will see many monuments and stones with the Townshend or Townsend, variations of the same family name, and Harry, as he was more generally known, was the seventh generation Townshend to live in New Haven. Harry's ancestor Martha Townsend and her two infant sons were the first interments at Grove Street Cemetery in 1797, and he joins many other ancestors and relatives buried there. His father, Henry Sr., was the former cemetery historian and whose paper on the subject is on the Grove Street Cemetery website. Harry's wife, Deb Townshend, is a writer of New Haven history including *The Streets of New Haven*, which references many of the famous people buried at the Cemetery.

Harry attended the New Haven's Hopkins School, Dartmouth College and served the U.S. Army in WWII, being honorably discharged as Captain. He was Supervisor at Marlin Firearms, Director of Union Trust Co. and Northeast Bancorp, Chairman of the Proprietors of the New Haven Green and President of Grove Street Cemetery's Standing Committee for many years. In this role, Harry guided the supervision of the cemetery, including overseeing upkeep and continued enhancement of the cemetery's grounds. He was particularly interested in the preservation of plantings and maintaining the condition of the historic brownstone walls.

In Karyl Evans' documentary film, *Grove Street Cemetery: City of the Dead, City of the Living*, Harry and other family members are interviewed, regaling the cemetery's history and culture. In a conversation with Harry a few years ago, he spoke at length to this writer about the cemetery and the Townshend family plots. He was proud to speak of where he would be buried, on Sycamore Avenue with his parents. Mrs. Townshend also related, "It tickled Harry that his burial site was near Walter Camp, the father of American Football [as a Yale player and coach], since Harry played football at Dartmouth!"

Darlene M. Casella

With special thanks to Margie Devane, Deb Townshend, Howard Lamar, and Jim Niederman.

News Notes

- Ben Sandweiss, arborist and Board member states the cemetery trees had good management (and luck!) regarding the several big storms the past year. Thanks to on-going pruning, relatively minor damage to trees was experienced in Hurricane Sandy of late October 2012, the blizzard of Halloween right after Sandy and the massive snows (approximately 30 inches) and high winds of the February 8th 2013 blizzard, which closed local schools for a week.
- Chief Docent Patti Illingworth has reported that last year tours were provided to over 1800 individuals, including groups from a

Milton Devane (June 20, 1929 – April 7, 2012)

Milton was an important lawyer in New Haven, known for his thoughtful intellect, decency and diplomacy, qualities which he brought to the management of Grove Street Cemetery. The son of William Devane, Dean of Yale College, who urged his students to "not waste a moment without reading," he inherited this trait and desire. He attended New Haven's Foote School, Phillips Exeter Academy, Yale College and Law School, Cambridge University and was a Naval officer in the Korean War. He rose rapidly in the New Haven law firm of Tyler, Cooper, Grant, Bowerman & Keefe where he became a partner.

Milton was known for his sense of civic justice and social fairness and his diplomacy extended beyond the legal profession. In addition to his work conducting many of the business affairs on the Standing Committee of the Cemetery, Milton sometimes brought together parties with disparate views to reach mutual consensus. He and his wife Margie were also involved in preserving the cemetery's historical aspects. He participated with others in obtaining National Register of Historic Places recognition for Grove Street and eventually achieving National Historic Landmark status. His vision for the cemetery was to maintain the 19th century design, working to preserve the walls in their original design, maintaining the trees and restoring the meeting house, which work continues.

After his passing, the Standing Committee issued a Memorium statement, which reads in part,

"...The greatest good is often that which is unnoticed and even unknown. Counting our blessings is too often saved for special occasions and taken for granted the rest of the time. One of those blessings was the time, effort and effectiveness of Milton's years of work for the cemetery. He was a visionary lawyer, respected colleague and generous mentor to those of us who followed him. We recognize that Milton was a very special person—decent, fun and caring, a good mix to which all of us might aspire..."

Upon meeting Milton at my first Board meeting of the Friends of Grove Street Cemetery, this writer was impressed with his warm welcome and soft-spoken manner, a true gentleman. He is buried on Sylvan Avenue with his father and mother, surrounded by *Arborvitae*, the "tree of life".

wide variety of organizations. Patti would welcome new docents to help guide visitors. See information on page 4.

- Major improvements have been made to the perimeter of the cemetery on Ashmun Street with new lights, sidewalks and tree pruning and along Prospect Street with a new brownstone-curbed planting bed with scarlet oak trees, groundcover and daffodil bulbs as well as new sidewalks. The improvements were designed by Towers|Golde, Landscape Architects, and were made possible by Yale University with cooperation from the City of New Haven.



Debbie Edwards

Group beginning tour inside Henry Austin-designed gateway.

Spring Horticultural Tours

A program titled “Flowers and Remembrance” was presented in May 2012, including tours and introductory remarks about the history of planting in Grove Street. A handout was created for the use of the docents covering some of the symbolic associations of trees and flowers related to cemeteries, death and mourning. Many memorials in the cemetery have symbolic floral and foliage decorative carvings. The program was well-attended and included a reception at Mory’s, the newly renovated Yale-affiliated club just down York Street from the cemetery.



Debbie Edwards

Docent Darlene Casella describing one of the many notable individuals memorialized here.

On April 24th of this year, coincidentally the 375th Anniversary date of the founding of New Haven, Friends of Grove Street have teamed with the New Haven Garden Club to present a well-researched tour focusing on the horticulture and notable trees within our grounds. Tree species have been documented and a detailed narrative has been outlined which may be developed into a walking tour brochure.



A coppice of old English yews.

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 _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

No. of DVD copies _____ @ \$15.00 = \$ _____ sent to the below address.

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 its General Fund. We also maintain two additional funds which may be of interest to donors. The Landscape and Landmark Funds were 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 _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

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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.

*Visit National Historic Landmark Grove Street Cemetery
Docent-led walking tours, May through November, Saturdays
at 11:00 a.m. and Sundays at Noon*

Join us as a Docent

The Cemetery welcomes inquiries and applications from prospective docents (tour guides). Training opportunities are available and current docents are happy to co-lead tours until new recruits are ready to “fly solo”. Being a docent is both intellectually stimulating and socially rewarding. It’s an opportunity to study and share important moments and monuments of New Haven and U.S. history. If interested, please contact Patti Illingworth at (203) 389-5403 or at P.B.I.newhaven@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
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Phone: (203) 782-0485
e-mail: office@grovestreetcemetery.org
website: www.grovestreetcemetery.org

**Pictured at right: Jane Trowbridge Fitch Monument in Grove Street Cemetery (1851).
This was the first major commission received by Thomas Phillips when he started
business on his own account.**



www.grovestreetcemetery.org

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