

Sweet Auburn

Newsletter of the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

Winter 2004 - 2005

Woodland Restoration Project at Consecration Dell

In 2004 extensive planting in Consecration Dell marked the latest stage of an on-going vegetation restoration project for this extraordinary 4.2 acre woodland site in the heart of the Cemetery. The project is part of a comprehensive program of improving the natural vegetation and wildlife habitat at Mount Auburn.

Some of this recent work in the Dell was part of a Cemetery-wide initiative to greatly reduce the number of a foreign invasive plant species Norway Maple (*Acer platanoides*) that threatened the health of this rare urban woodland enclave. Additional work included continuing our efforts to introduce a greater diversity of plant species, which leads to improving the quality of the bird habitat and the long-term ecological vitality of the site. Funding for the work came from the Fund for the Environment of the Boston Foundation and numerous individuals and the Cemetery.

Unlike the rest of the Cemetery, where intensive horticultural management has maintained the landscape over generations, the Dell had been minimally managed for more than a century.

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Participants at the Spring Donor Party viewing the new plantings in Consecration Dell. Photo, May 2004.

During this time Norway Maple trees had become co-dominant with the native Red Oak in the forest canopy. In woodlands where these maples become established, there is a conspicuous absence of understory vegetation, a phenomenon that is well documented and continues to be the focus of much research. In steeply sloped areas such as the Dell, this difficulty leads to severe soil erosion problems. The re-planting project in the Dell began more than seven years ago with hundreds of plants native to New England planted near the vernal pool at the bottom of the Dell. The recent plantings follow the original strategy by using only native woodland species. In 2003 our staff removed several hundred Norway Maple seedlings and a number of mature trees from the southern slopes of the Dell. In the last two years more than 400 new trees and shrubs were planted on the slopes where the trees were removed. In the spring of 2004 more than 3,400 herbaceous plants representing two dozen species were added to introduce carpets of ferns and woodland wildflowers.

Our overall objective is to make Consecration Dell a better natural habitat for birds and an ecologically

Plants added to the Dell in 2004

Shrubs:

<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Serviceberry (11 plants)
<i>Corylus americana</i>	Filbert (29 plants)
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Common Witchhazel (11)
<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Winterberry (7 plants)
<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	Mountain Laurel (5 plants)
<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	Rosebay Rhododendron (117)
<i>Rhododendron periclymenoides</i>	Pinxterbloom Azalea (24)
<i>Viburnum acerifolium</i>	Maple-leaved Viburnum (74)
<i>Viburnum lentago</i>	Nannyberry Viburnum (19)

Trees:

<i>Betula lenta</i>	Black Birch (6 plants)
<i>Betula papyrifera</i>	Paper Birch (5 plants)
<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	American Beech (8 plants)
<i>Ostrya virginiana</i>	Hop Hornbeam (3 plants)
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	Eastern White Pine (9)
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red Oak (11 plants)
<i>Quercus coccinea</i>	Scarlet Oak (4 plants)
<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Sassafras (7 plants)

Herbaceous:

<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady Fern (50 plants)
<i>Aster macrophyllus</i>	Large Leaf Aster (40 plants)
<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	Leatherwood Fern (400)
<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas Fern (300)
<i>Smilacina racemosa</i>	False Solomon's Seal (150)
<i>Waldsteinia fragarioides</i>	Barren Strawberry (2,300)
<i>Xanthorhiza simplicissima</i>	Yellowroot (175 plants)



Birders on Violet Path in Consecration Dell enjoying tree-top level views of spring migrants. Photo, May 2004.

sound plant community that will be sustainable long into the future. The new plantings include species that provide nuts, seeds and fruits that are attractive to a wide variety of birds. As it matures, the new understory vegetation, which was missing for so many years, will provide shelter and nesting materials for birds and other wildlife.

Additional work is needed in for the future to address comprehensively the severe erosion problems in the Dell caused by storm-water runoff. We also want to improve the condition of the rustic walking paths that traverse the steep slopes, removing exposed roots and washed out path surfaces. This work will be extraordinarily complex, however, due to the steep topography, the need to protect the ecologically valuable vernal pool and the remoteness of the site. We will be seeking additional funding to carry out this important work.

Long recognized by ornithologists as a precious refuge for birds in metropolitan Boston, Mount Auburn's landscape is a rich and diverse tapestry of vegetation. Consecration Dell, in addition to having special historical significance for the Cemetery, represents a unique ecological niche. As stewards of this landscape and a leader in the horticultural community of Greater Boston, we have a responsibility to remove invasive plant species and improve the wildlife habitat value of this site. Although the short-term visual effect of some of these efforts has been disruptive, the long-term results will be a dramatic improvement to the landscape.

-- Dennis Collins, Curator of Plant Collections



Can You Name That Plant?

More than half of the trees on the grounds now have "Display Labels." These are 3" x 6" anodized aluminum (black) engraved plates that are produced at the Cemetery by the staff of plant collections department. The labels contain the following:

- Botanic Name (in Latin, italicized)
- Common Name
- Date Planted (when known)
- Native Range (where the species comes from in the wild)

There are also display labels on some shrubs and herbaceous plants at a few selected areas on the grounds. These labels are made of a black plastic laminate material with a white core. Otherwise, they are the same as the tree labels.

The other type of plant label that can be seen on the grounds of Mount Auburn is a "Accession Tag" (also produced in-house). These tags are bronze-colored plastic embossed "credit card" style labels that have been installed in many sections of the Cemetery. Eventually every tree, shrub and massed planting will have its own individual accession tag. These bronze-colored labels contain the following information when it is known:

- Accession Number (an ID number for the tree or shrub in the plant collections database)
- Botanic Name (in Latin) and Common Name
- Date Planted and Size When Planted
- Native Range (where the species comes from)
- Botanic Family
- Original Source (name of nursery, etc.)

The labels pictured above are for a White Oak (Quercus alba) on Fir Avenue, planted in 1939.

Preservation of the Lodge Tomb

Visitors to Auburn Lake will notice the greatly improved appearance of the historic Lodge hillside tomb on Oxalis Path. With the interest and support of the Lodge family, the preservation staff of Mount Auburn was able to proceed with needed repairs to this tomb, a significant structure in the Cemetery's landscape.

Three United States Senators are entombed here and the structure is unique at Mount Auburn in both its design and choice of materials. The tomb was constructed in 1866. Although we do not know for certain, the tomb may have been designed by Boston architect Shephard S. Woodcock. He did other work for the Lodge family and the tomb is similar in detail to several churches designed by him. The gothic revival style favored by Woodcock is apparent in the pointed arch form of the tomb and door, the molded buttresses and the open tracery carved into the marble door. The "brownstone" chosen to clad the tomb is a type of sandstone quarried in Portland, Connecticut and was a fashionable material familiar to designers of funereal structures, ecclesiastical buildings and residences in the Boston area.

Unfortunately, long term deterioration of the brownstone compromised the ability of the structure to shed water. Gus Fraser, our Director of Preservation Services & Facilities Maintenance, worked with an architectural conservator and Lodge family members to determine a sensible course of action to stabilize and repair the tomb and reduce moisture infiltration while preserving its historic character. The project included removing and replacing fifteen of the most eroded stones on the front façade and one of the roof tiles. In addition the masonry joints were repointed with a hydraulic lime mortar. The exterior was gently cleaned to remove accumulated biological growth.



Lodge Tomb, Oxalis Path. Photo, Nov. 2004.

Piper Morris, New Vice President of Development at Mount Auburn

Priscilla (Piper) Morris joined Mount Auburn in April 2004 as Vice President of Development, a new position for the Cemetery. Although Mount Auburn has looked to philanthropic individuals for assistance from its earliest days, the establishment of this position underscores the importance of public support now and in the future. Piper brings a new level of experience and expertise to Mount Auburn's development efforts. Most recently she served as Senior Director of Development and Alumni Relations for the Tufts University Medical and Sackler Schools and previously she was first Director of Development and later Dean of Institutional Advancement at Noble and Greenough School in Dedham, MA for sixteen years. Piper is a graduate of Harvard and lives in Cambridge. She has two grown children: Sarah, who was recently married and lives in Cambridge, and Edward, who lives in New York City.

Piper welcomes the opportunity to get to know the many supporters of the Friends and to introduce the Cemetery to those who may be less familiar with its resources and needs. Piper can be reached at her direct telephone line 617-607-1919 or through e-mail at pmorris@mountauburn.org.

Annual Fund 2004-2005

Mount Auburn is one of the most beautiful and beloved landscapes in the country. It is also America's first garden cemetery, founded in 1831, and has been designated a National Historic Landmark. And, because it remains an active cemetery, Mount Auburn still fulfills its most essential purpose, that of providing a perpetual place of great natural beauty for burial and commemoration. Many value Mount Auburn for its magnificent trees, shrubs and garden plantings. Others seek out a sense of history from the monuments to the famous and not-so-famous who are buried here. Many come to walk in this quiet serene oasis or to watch the migrating birds and resident wildlife that call Mount Auburn home. We hope you will join those who have made possible the preservation of this unique and vibrant place. Please give generously to the Annual Fund to help us continue the excellence of our stewardship of this special place. Contributions may be made to the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Annual Fund, 580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Recent Biographies of Mount Auburn Cemetery Residents

☞ *Longfellow – A Rediscovered Life* by Charles C. Calhoun (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004). This is the first new biography of Longfellow in nearly fifty years. Author Charles C. Calhoun has drawn on unpublished Longfellow family papers to create a revealing portrait of Longfellow's upbringing, education, family life and the evolution of his work. Longfellow is buried in his family lot on Indian Ridge Path.

☞ *Poe & Fanny* by John May (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2004). In this historical novel John May offers an intimate look at the lives of two remarkable poets – Edgar Allan Poe and Frances Osgood. Fanny Osgood, now buried with her three daughters and artist husband Samuel Osgood here at Mount Auburn on Orange Path, was a celebrated poet in the New York literary circles in 1845 when she first met Poe, whose new poem "The Raven" had just been published. Their public flirtation in the literary journals of the day astounded their friends and fascinated their readers. May's extensive research gives him the ability to imagine the details of their love affair and its impact on their lives.

☞ *Harriet Jacobs: A Life* by Jean Fagan Yellin (New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2004). Decades of original research have enabled author Jean Yellin to bring us the story of the life and times of one of the 19th century's most important women authors. In 1861 Harriet Jacobs published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, an autobiographical telling of her life under the pseudonym of Linda Brett. Jean Yellin's edition of the narrative in 1987 established its historical accuracy. *Incidents* is one of the most widely read slave narratives. The new biography presents the full complexity of Harriet Jacobs' life – from her birth as a slave to her long struggle for freedom for herself and her family to her work in the North and South after the Civil War. Harriet Jacobs is buried with her brother John and daughter Louisa on Clethra Path at Mount Auburn.



The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is very grateful for the program support it receives from an Organizational Support grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement at Willow Pond

During the summer and fall of 2004 major improvements were made to the wildlife habitat of Willow Pond. Hydro-raking removed invasive aquatic weeds and accumulated organic debris from the bottom of the Pond. Eroded banks were repaired and stabilized. Most obvious to visitors is the new shallow underwater "shelf" created at the western edge of the Pond. It supports an emergent wetland that will provide food, shelter and cover for many species of birds, fish, amphibians and aquatic insects. In addition the water quality of the Pond will be improved since the new wetland will filter sediment and excess nutrients out of any storm-water that enters the Pond.

The wetland was created using the material raked from the bottom of the Pond and clean loam and gravel. It is all held in place by an underwater berm of coconut "Bio-Logs." More than 4,600 aquatic plants were pre-grown in coconut fiber "Bog-mats" which were then installed in the wetland. Additional plants will be added next year during the growing season. At the fringe of the new wetland, plants that were added include: Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), New England Aster (*Aster novae-angliae*) and Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*). The bright scarlet flowers of the Cardinal Flower appear in late summer. Migrating hummingbirds are attracted to these blossoms and serve as the plants' only pollinators as they collect nectar from them.

Other species that provide cover and food for wildlife were planted in the shallow water: ornamental Sweetflag (*Acornus calamus*) and Blue Flag Iris (*Iris versicolor*) and the seed-producing Woolgrass (*Scirpus validus*). In water about 6 to 8 inches deep, the plants include: Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), Burreed (*Sparganium americanum*), Hard-stem Bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*) and Duck Potato (*Sagittaria latifolia*).



New plantings in emergent shelf area at the west end of Willow Pond. Photo, September 2004.

Birds such as Great Blue Herons, Mallards and other water birds will find the shallow water and increased food supplies a welcome addition. Other species may take advantage of the cover of the plantings. We will be watching for Song Sparrows, Swamp Sparrows, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow Warblers. The new stable bank will provide suitable basking sites for turtles (such as the Painted Turtle and the Snapping Turtle) and emergent sites for dragonflies and damselflies (such as Northern Bluet, Eastern Pondhawk, Yellow-legged Meadowhawk and others). These improvements are being funded by a generous grant from the Ruggiero Memorial Trust and by contributions from individuals and other private foundations. Additional contributions are welcomed.



Red Sox Nation

The success of the Boston Red Sox in capturing the World Series this year led to new decorations at Mount Auburn. Families and friends included in the celebration those who had died waiting for this year's triumph. Red Sox mementos began appearing in the Cemetery the week of the Series. Flags, pendants, T-shirts, hats, balloons, and other items were lovingly placed at graves and monuments throughout the Cemetery. WBUR radio, *The Boston Globe*, Channel 5, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Sports Illustrated* and *People* magazine all called and visited to report this story.

The appearance of these Red Sox items here reminds us how precious Mount Auburn is as a contemporary place to remember loved ones, a place to share the joy of a long-awaited victory with those who are no longer with us but who are forever close to our hearts.



**Josephine
St. Pierre
Ruffin**
1842-1924

Civil Rights Leader, Author, Editor.

Born in Boston, Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin was the youngest of six children of John and Eliza St. Pierre. Her mother was a native of Cornwall, England. Her father, a

successful Boston clothing dealer, was of mixed ancestry that included a father from Martinique and mother with African, French and Native American heritage. Josephine St. Pierre received her early education in Salem, MA, where the schools were not segregated. Ruffin finished her education with two years of finishing school and private tutoring in New York City.

In June 1858, Josephine St. Pierre married George Lewis Ruffin (1834-1886). Ruffin, born in Richmond, VA, moved with his family to Boston in 1853 after Virginia passed a law banning African Americans from learning to read. Soon after marrying, the Ruffins moved to Liverpool, England but after six months, they returned to Boston. During the Civil War the Ruffins supported the war effort by recruiting African Americans for the Union Army and serving on the city's Sanitation Committee. During this time they also purchased a house on Charles Street in Beacon Hill and began a family. The Ruffins had five children: Hubert St. Pierre, Florida Yates, Charles Stanley, George Lewis and Robert (who died in infancy).

After the war, George Ruffin went on to become the first African American to graduate from Harvard Law School and the first African American judge in the North, securing for himself and his wife an elevated social status. Ruffin used her standing to help efforts related to civil rights, suffrage and Civil War welfare reforms. In 1879, Ruffin organized the Boston Kansas Relief Association to help combat the financial crisis of Kansas after masses of African Americans migrated there and strained the state's economy. She also served as a visitor for the Associated Charities of Boston and on the executive boards of the Massachusetts Moral Education

Society and the Massachusetts School Suffrage Association. As a charter member of the Massachusetts School Suffrage Association, Ruffin became acquainted with fellow association founder and reformer Julia Ward Howe. Howe, along with suffragist Lucy Stone, had also founded the New England Women's Club in 1868 and invited Ruffin to join



Josephine Ruffin

in the mid-1890s. When Ruffin joined the New England Women's Club, she was its first African American member.

In addition to her active social work, Ruffin wrote for the *Courant*, a weekly black newspaper, and became a member of the New England Women's Press Association. After her husband died in 1886, Ruffin founded the *Woman's Era*, the country's first newspaper published by and for African American women. In addition to financing the paper, she and daughter Florida served as its co-editors. The illustrated paper, published monthly, urged its readers to become more informed and more active in public issues such as suffrage and civil rights. Josephine and Florida Ruffin published and circulated the *Women's Era* for seven years.

To encourage Boston's middle class African American women to become more involved in reform work, Ruffin founded the Women's Era Club in 1893. Although not specifically a club for African American women, the Women's Era Club was founded and governed by black women. The club's motto, "Make the World Better," perfectly expresses Ruffin's belief that African American women were a vital component of the fight for equal rights for all Americans, white and black, men and women. Like the New England Women's Club, the New Era Club was comprised of educated, middle-class women who worked on issues related to improving the community. The club raised funds for scholarships, sponsored kindergartens, organized health clinics and hosted literary events and art exhibits.

In 1895 Ruffin organized the first national conference for black women's clubs nationwide. One hundred women, representing twenty clubs in ten different states, traveled to Boston to attend the conference. The organization of women's clubs became known as the National Federation of Afro-American Women. In 1896, the association merged with the Colored Women's League to form the National Association of Colored Women. Ruffin served as vice-president of the new organization.

In 1900 Ruffin attended the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Milwaukee, WI as a representative of three different organizations: the New Era Club, the New England Women's Club and the New England Women's Press Club. After learning that the New Era Club's membership was comprised of African American women, the executive committee of the General Federation would not allow Ruffin to sit on behalf of the club. Although she was allowed to sit on behalf of the other two organizations she planned to represent, Ruffin refused to sit for any of the clubs on principle and was banned from the conference. The events were widely published around the nation and became known as the "Ruffin Incident."

Ruffin remained an active member of the Boston community championing the causes she believed in.

In 1910 Ruffin became one of the charter members of the Boston Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In that same year, she founded the League of Women for Community Service, which still exists today.



Ruffin monument, Indian Ridge Path

Josephine Ruffin died at her home in Boston on March 13, 1924. Her funeral service was held at Trinity Church, where she was a member, and she was laid to rest next to her husband in their family lot on Indian Ridge Path at Mount Auburn. In 1999 a bronze bust of Josephine Ruffin was installed at the Massachusetts State House as part of the

permanent exhibit "Hear Us" that honors six Massachusetts women who overcame adversity to make important contributions to society in the state and in the nation.

-- Bree Detamore, Orientation Center Coordinator, Mount Auburn Cemetery

Sources: James, Edward T., ed, *Notable American Women 1607-1950: A Biographical Dictionary*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971; The State House Women's Leadership Project, <http://www.mfh.org/specialprojects/shwlp/site/honorees/ruffin.html>; Boston Women's Heritage Trail, <http://www.bwht.org/beaconhill5.html>; "Long Road to Justice" online exhibit, <http://www.masshist.org/longroad/>.



Mount Auburn Forever

Whatever your interest in Mount Auburn - whether you love its history, horticulture, art and architecture or birds - you can make a gift to the Friends that will live forever, maintaining and enhancing the Cemetery's beauty and value for future generations. Through your will you can make a gift of cash, securities, or other assets. The following language may be used: "I bequest the sum of x dollars (or description of securities or property) to the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery, a federally tax-exempt Massachusetts charitable trust with offices at 580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138." Please contact Piper Morris, Vice President of Development, for additional information about how to include the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery in your will or estate plans. (Tel 617-607-1919 or e-mail pmorris@mountauburn.org.)

An Invitation to Join The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery Please enroll me as a member:

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Check enclosed payable to Friends of Mount Auburn.

Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card.

Credit Card # _____

Expiration Date: _____ Mastercard Visa

Signature: _____

___ Senior / Student \$20

___ Individual \$30

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The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is a 501 (c) (3) charitable trust promoting the appreciation and preservation of the cultural, historic and natural resources of America's first garden cemetery.

If you would like this to be a gift membership, please enclose your name and address so that we may notify the recipient.

Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

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Birds and Birding at Mount Auburn Cemetery: An Introductory Guide

The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is pleased to announce its publication of *Birds and Birding at Mount Auburn Cemetery: An Introductory Guide*. This 32-page, full-color *Guide* offers a portrait in words and colors of the spectacular birdlife of American's first garden cemetery. It explores the inherent mysteries of this special place that has attracted both birds and birdwatchers through nearly two centuries of dramatic change. The *Guide* is designed for year-round interest.

The text was written by Christopher Leahy, who has been working with Mount Auburn as a consultant on habitat issues. Among his published works is the recent *The Birdwatcher's Companion to North American Birdlife*, Princeton University Press, 2004. The *Guide* is illustrated by handsome color sketches of birds and habitats at Mount Auburn by Clare Walker Leslie, author and illustrator of nine books, including *Nature Drawing* and *Keeping a Nature Journal*. Copies are available for sale (\$8) at the Gate Information Office or by mail (\$10) from the Friends of Mount Auburn, Att: Bird Guide, 580 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.


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Winter at Mount Auburn Cemetery - a snowy day at Asa Gray Garden. Photograph, March 2004.