

SWEET AUBURN

Magazine of the Friends of Mount Auburn | 2016 VOLUME I



REIMAGINING THE CEMETERY AS MUSEUM

SWEET AUBURN

A publication of the
Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery

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The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery was established in 1986 to assist in the conservation of the Cemetery's natural beauty and to promote the appreciation of its cultural, historic, and natural resources. Organized in 1990 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable trust, the Friends seeks financial support from its members, other individuals, foundations, corporations, and public agencies. It receives gifts for educational and interpretive programs and materials for the public, specific cultural projects, and operating support for horticultural rejuvenation and the preservation of the historic monuments, structures, and archival artifacts and records. The Friends has over 1,300 active members.



Rev. Charles T. Torrey monument by Joseph and Thomas A. Carew. Of the more than 60,000 memorials at Mount Auburn, 30 monuments, selected for their artistic and historical significance, were photographed by Greg Heins as part of an IMLS grant project. More photographs by Greg Heins can be seen on pages 10-11.

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See more online at www.mountauburn.org

In this issue of Sweet Auburn, we focus on Mount Auburn Cemetery as a museum. In what sense is it a museum? According to the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), "Museums preserve and protect objects and help communities better understand and appreciate cultural diversity...and museums tell important stories by collecting, preserving, researching and interpreting objects, living specimens and historical records."

Mount Auburn does all of that and more. In 2013, we were excited to be recognized as a museum by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with a \$92,000 grant for a two-year project to research and document thirty of our most significant monuments, many of them important expressions of Victorian funerary art. It was a great honor to be the first cemetery in the United States to receive a grant from IMLS. Meg Winslow, Curator of Historical Collections, elaborates (page 6) on Mount Auburn's diverse collection of commemorative art, and confirms our commitment to steward the collection while also preserving related archival records that "tell the stories" and illuminate their historic significance.

While this project focused on thirty significant monuments, we also continue to inventory, assess, and care for tens of thousands of other memorials throughout the grounds, under the direction of Vice President of Preservation & Facilities Gus Fraser and Chief of Conservation David Gallagher. As a cemetery, we are committed to preserving these memorials and the stories of the people commemorated (see article on page 12).

We are committed as well to preserving other aspects of the historic landscape, including the trees. When my predecessor Bill Clendaniel hired me as Director of Horticulture in 1993, he made it clear that one of my charges was to bring curatorial best practices and collections standards typical of arboreta and botanical gardens to Mount Auburn. There was already a fabulous collection of trees (that's why I came!), but the records of the trees and other plantings were far from complete. Under the direction of Horticultural Curator Dennis Collins, a dedicated crew of volunteers spent over ten years inventorying first our 5,000 trees and then all the shrubs and groundcover plantings throughout our 175 acres. The collections are now entirely mapped and logged in a database. It was gratifying to be the first cemetery in the country to achieve Level III certification as an arboretum in 2012 by ArbNet.org (page 2). In this issue, Plant Records & GIS Manager Steve Jackson explains how and why Mount Auburn is a "living museum of trees" (page 2).

The Cemetery is indeed a living museum and a vibrant cultural institution, as evidenced by the many activities described under People & Happenings (pages 17-19). But Mount Auburn is also still very much an active cemetery, providing important services to families at a time of need. One of the options available to families is our Tree Memorials program (page 4). Our dedicated staff is available to assist you with this or any of the many other services that we provide.

Happy New Year, and I hope you enjoy this issue of Sweet Auburn.



David P. Barnett
President & CEO



PHOTO BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON



A Living Museum of Trees

BY STEPHEN JACKSON, *Plant Records & GIS Manager*

THE NATURAL FEATURES OF MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY have always set it apart from other cemeteries. One of the most striking of these features is the incredible plant diversity across our 175 acres. Over 17,000 plants are recorded on the grounds, with nearly 5,000 trees, a similar number of shrubs, and over 7,000 herbaceous groundcovers making up an enviable plant collection. We are a museum of living plants, the first historic cemetery to be certified as an arboretum.

As an arboretum, we are required to follow curatorial best practices. Just as the Museum of Fine Arts has a Curator of Contemporary Art, we have a Horticultural Curator, Dennis Collins, who oversees the planning,

What is an Arboretum?

“A place where trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants are cultivated for scientific and education purposes”
— Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Mount Auburn Cemetery was certified a Level III arboretum in 2012 by ArbNet.org, a program supported by the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL. As a member of ArbNet, we are part of a growing community of arboreta across the world that share knowledge, resources, and expertise to further plant science and education. We are also a member of the multi-institutional oak collection of the North American Plant Collections Consortium (NAPCC), holding a portion of the reference collection and germplasm for the genus *Quercus* in North America.

development, preservation, and use of our plant collections. He designs new plantings and guides the growth of the plant collections, often looking 20–30 years into the future when considering a seedling newly planted in the nursery.

The Curator needs to wear many hats and consider many factors when deciding how best to manage the plant collection. Mount Auburn’s Plant Collections Policy, first approved in 2006, includes “Guidelines for Making Planting/Removal Decisions” with a list of questions reflecting an inter-related framework of considerations aligned with our Horticultural Mission Statement:

The Horticultural Mission of Mount Auburn Cemetery is to improve and maintain the landscape’s diversity, inspirational qualities and historic significance with responsible stewardship while serving the needs of lot owners.

Questions are categorized under topics such as “Collections” (diversity, historic significance, number of specimens), “Design/Aesthetic” (character zone, vistas, spatial relationships, seasonal interest), “Management” (maintenance impacts, cemetery development plans, impact on monuments and structures), and “Wildlife Habitat Value.”

With these guidelines in mind, the Curator has to prepare for storm damage, manage destructive pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer, and anticipate future space needs, for both the arboretum and the active cemetery. Curators need to keep abreast of new plant introductions as well as the day-to-day work of plant identification, labeling, mapping, and design.

Historical records are also important, as the Cemetery has a long tradition of horticultural record-keeping upon which to draw. One of our founders, Dr. Jacob Bigelow, was a skilled botanist who published the *Florula Bostoniensis: A Collection of Plants of Boston and Its Environs* in 1814. For the upcoming landscape renovation in the historic core of Mount Auburn near Bigelow's grave, we were able to look back at the *Florula* to identify plants that were special to Dr. Bigelow and incorporate them into the new planting design.

Historical documentation furnishes stories and associated data that breathe life into our "living collection." In 1896, we learn, Mount Auburn placed a rather radical plant order with Tokio [sic] Nursery in Japan (see catalog image to the right). Superintendent James C. Scorgie spent hundreds of dollars on plants from halfway around the world, ordering lilies, magnolias, Japanese umbrella pines, iris, peonies, and, of course, Japanese maples. His correspondence reveals anxious awareness of the risk involved. Would the plants ship through the Suez Canal or across the Pacific? Would Boston Customs officers allow the plants into the United States? Would the plants all be dead on arrival? Fortunately, most survived, but they left us with curatorial puzzles due to changes in botanical nomenclature, the vagaries of Japanese translation, and non-scientific record-keeping. For example, are the 1896 maples named *Acer palmatum* 'Hिकासoya' the same as the modern *A. palmatum* 'Higasyama'? For this and other quandaries, further research is needed.

The Hurricane of 1938 provided both a challenge and an opportunity for curation. The storm destroyed 811 trees at the Cemetery with an additional 777 suffering substantial damage. But we have very good records concerning the replacement trees and shrubs, including sizes of plants, the nurseries they came from, and their planting locations. These records help us not only to tell a story of the havoc storms can wreak but also to measure the success of the replacement trees. This is especially important as we enter an era of increasingly erratic weather and damaging storms.

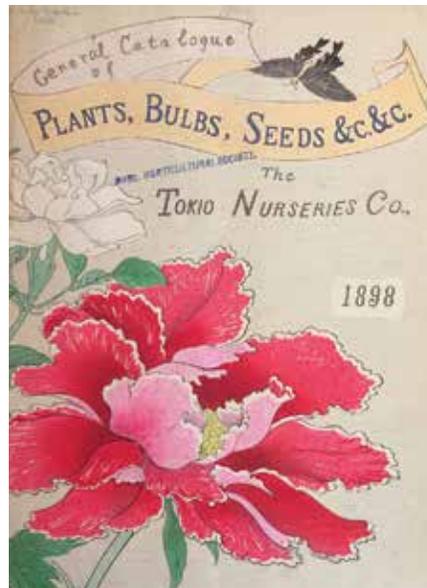
Certain individuals have played critical roles in the development of our records. Noted horticulturist and author Dr. Donald Wyman, then retired from the Arnold Arboretum, was hired in the mid-1960s

to begin a systematic labeling of our tree collection.

(Middle image) This was a major curatorial advance as labels

at the time consisted of embossed copper strips and there were trees that had not been fully identified. Wyman, who had worked with the Cemetery in 1938 to assess the hurricane damage, did much to fill in holes in our record-keeping. In 1965, he brought the first batch of rectangular, metal tree-display labels to Mount Auburn and began installing them. Wyman's inventory was a key starting point for a concerted effort, begun in the mid-1990s by Dave Barnett (then Director of Horticulture) and Dennis Collins, to catalog and map every tree in the cemetery, assigning each a unique accession number. (All existing trees that did not have a planting record were given a "1996" accession number, and all trees added to the collection since then have an accession number reflecting the year they were planted). At the same time, we began to formalize our curatorial practices with the addition of CAD-based mapping of the plants and a plant-specific database.

Technology continues to change and aid our record-keeping. Fifty years after Wyman introduced metal labels, we have begun using a new laser engraver for our signage. The plant records database (BG-BASE) allows us to quickly and accurately look up information on plants in our collection. GPS technology will help us to map plants with greater accuracy and speed. And work is moving ahead to make our plant collections accessible through web-based applications, allowing visitors to plan their trips to Mount Auburn or visit our plants virtually. Records, the backbone of good curation, will help future Horticultural Curators make informed decisions about the collection and provide a rich and detailed story of our trees and shrubs for generations of visitors to come.



MEMORIAL TREES PROGRAM

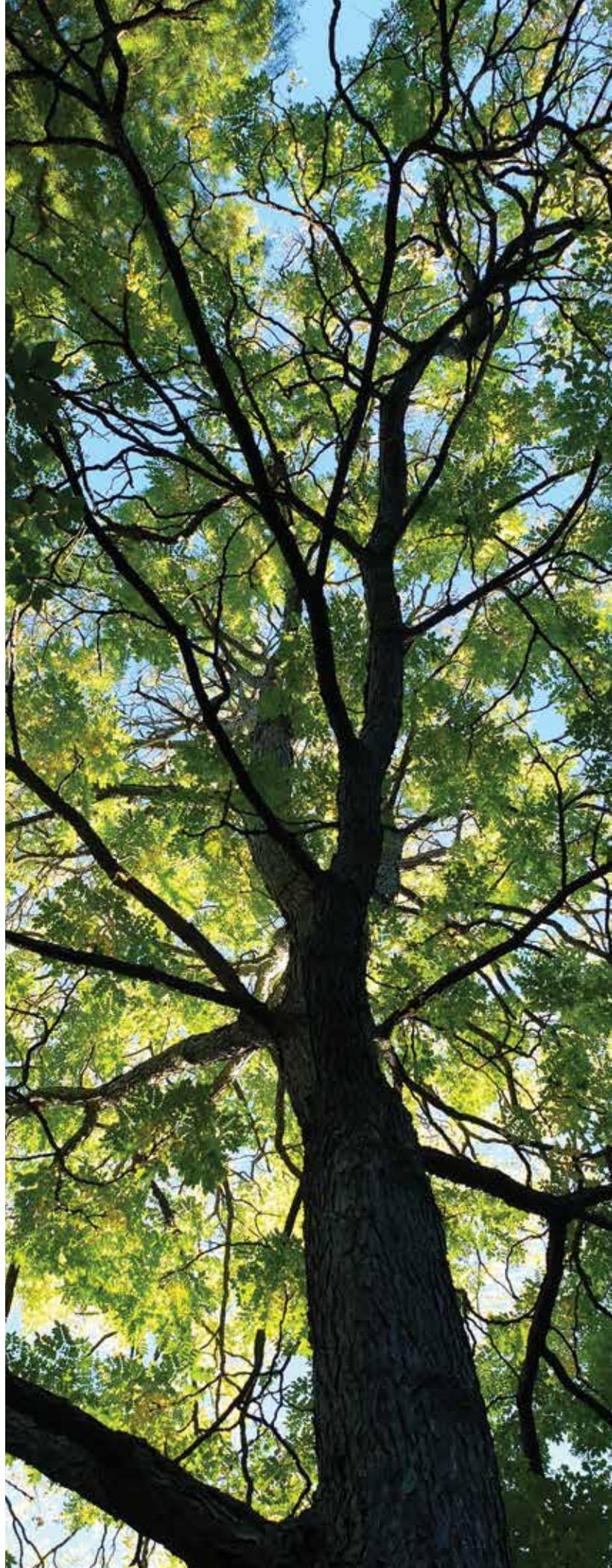
BY DAVID BARNETT, *President & CEO, Mount Auburn Cemetery*

MOUNT AUBURN'S TREES ARE AMONG THE CEMETERY'S most treasured possessions. Majestic symbols of life, they have long provided comfort to the bereaved and inspiration to our visitors. They also have important habitat value for our resident wildlife and help cleanse our polluted urban air, connecting us to the larger natural world. In addition, about 50 specimens from our collection have taken on a most fitting role as memorial trees.

Through Mount Auburn's Memorial Trees program, plaques engraved with the names and dates of the individuals being commemorated have been placed on selected trees throughout the Cemetery. Since the program began over 20 years ago, families have been able to select an existing tree to serve as a memorial for a loved one, based on its proximity to a location of importance, its aesthetic qualities, or personal symbolic meaning. The plaques have been guaranteed for terms of 10 or 20 years, with options to renew or extend the length of time that they remain on our trees.

Changing ideas about burial and commemoration, and particularly the growing interest in natural burials, have led Mount Auburn to expand its existing Memorial Trees program. While families may continue to select from mature trees in our existing collection, we now also offer the opportunity to plant a new tree and place a memorial plaque in honor of an individual. Family and friends will be able to participate in the actual planting of the tree at the appropriate season. The memorial plaque may be mounted on a granite or wooden post next to the tree. Horticultural staff will provide a selection of tree species to choose from, taking into account the historic landscape character and other curatorial guidelines of the desired location. Our Memorial Trees program will be of particular interest to families choosing one of our new natural burial locations, where no other physical marker is allowed. Memorial tree plantings also allow families to commemorate those not buried at Mount Auburn, adding an individualized meaning to a beloved location.

Through our Memorial Trees program, we can extend our ability to celebrate life and continue our commitment to providing a landscape of exceptional natural beauty. To learn more about this program, visit www.mountauburn.org/MemorialTrees.



CONNECTING TO OUR COLLECTIONS: A NEW MOBILE APP FOR MOUNT AUBURN

BY BREE D. HARVEY, *Vice President of Cemetery & Visitor Services*

MOUNT AUBURN IS IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING AN exciting new resource for its many visitors. Since last fall, the Cemetery has been working with webCemeteries.com to build an interactive mobile app that provides basic navigational tools as well as detailed information about the people, plants, art, and other landscape features found throughout the Cemetery. The app, which will be ready for visitor use later this year, will be an invaluable resource for family members, researchers, regular visitors, casual tourists—and even our own staff.

Ease of “wayfinding”—the process of moving from one place to another using navigational tools—is an important factor in determining the quality of visitor experience at any museum or cultural institution. At Mount Auburn, where 30 miles of roads and paths meander over 175 acres, wayfinding is critical. Loaded into the new app will be GPS coordinates for the more than 98,000 burials within the Cemetery, making it easy to locate the grave of anyone buried or commemorated at Mount Auburn. Coordinates linked to specimen plants and trees, gardens, significant monuments, and architectural features will reduce the challenge in finding and identifying our many points of interest.

The navigational feature alone will be a useful tool for anyone exploring the Cemetery. But most exciting is the app’s potential for providing in-depth information about

the trees, monuments, and people buried here. Through the app, visitors will be able to access stories, images, and media files that help to tell more complete stories about the Cemetery and its many facets. While standing on Tulip Path at the grave of Robert Creeley, a visitor may listen to a recording of the poet in his own words; one may learn about the artistic and historic significance of the Amos Binney monument from our Curator of Historical Collections; and at one of our native white oaks, a visitor can discover the tree’s important habitat value from our Curator of Horticultural Collections. Records within the app will also be accessible through our website, providing physical and virtual visitors to Mount Auburn with access to the same information.

Mount Auburn’s partner in this project, webCemeteries.com, is a company that specializes in creating mobile apps for complex and historic cemeteries. Also partnering with Mount Auburn on this project are Cypress Lawn Cemetery (Colma, CA) and West Laurel Hill Cemetery (Bala Cynwyd, PA). Like Mount Auburn, both are large historic cemeteries continuing in their role as active places of burial while also welcoming visitors who come to explore their collections of monuments, trees, and designed landscapes. For this collaborative project, webCemeteries gathered suggestions and ideas from all three cemeteries to create new features and an improved user experience within their existing app. Mount Auburn, Cypress Lawn, and West Laurel Hill will be the first three cemeteries to launch the improved app, creating a model for others to follow.

This program is funded in part by Mass Humanities, the Anthony J. & Mildred D. Ruggiero Memorial Trust, and gifts from individual donors. The Friends continues to seek support for this project, which will allow us to create additional thematic tours and new content on specific people, landscape features, monuments, and horticultural specimens.



Monument photographers working with webCemeteries began the daunting task of photographing every monument at Mount Auburn in the fall of 2015.





Eglantine Path

REIMAGINING THE CEMETERY AS MUSEUM

BY MEG L. WINSLOW, *Curator of Historical Collections*
PHOTOS BY GREG HEINS

MOST OF US VENTURE INTO A CEMETERY WITHOUT expecting to encounter great art. Yet that is precisely what we experience at Mount Auburn. Coming upon the memorial to Amos Binney on Heath Path, you see the monument's heavy marble shroud from a distance, seemingly thrown over the top of the monument. On closer approach, you notice that the drapery is carefully pulled back to reveal carved niches below. This magnificent shroud has softness, movement, and an immediacy that the sculptor has managed to capture in the inert, hard medium of stone. So too with the Harriet Hunt statue on Lily Path: from a distance, it appears to be a stiff Victorian figure, but closer examination reveals a graceful naturalism in its stance. Looking closer still, you find the chisel marks of the sculptor and the name of a goddess, *Hygeia*, carved into the pedestal.

The act of looking, and slowing down, allows us to discover the layers of meaning within each monument. Even the simplest architectural memorial can have an unexpected impact. The pedestal monument to Hannah Adams, like the monuments noted above, is carved in such a way that your eye is immediately drawn to it. If the carvers had truncated the stone to make it lower, or if they had tapered the sides more dramatically, it would not have the proportions that generate in the viewer a sense of harmony.

Walking through Mount Auburn's landscape, we can seek out these monuments and appreciate them from multiple points of view. We can get up close to them, linger for as long as we like, and return to them again and again. We can observe how they reflect light and color through the changing seasons: or how they develop the dark patina of age over time.

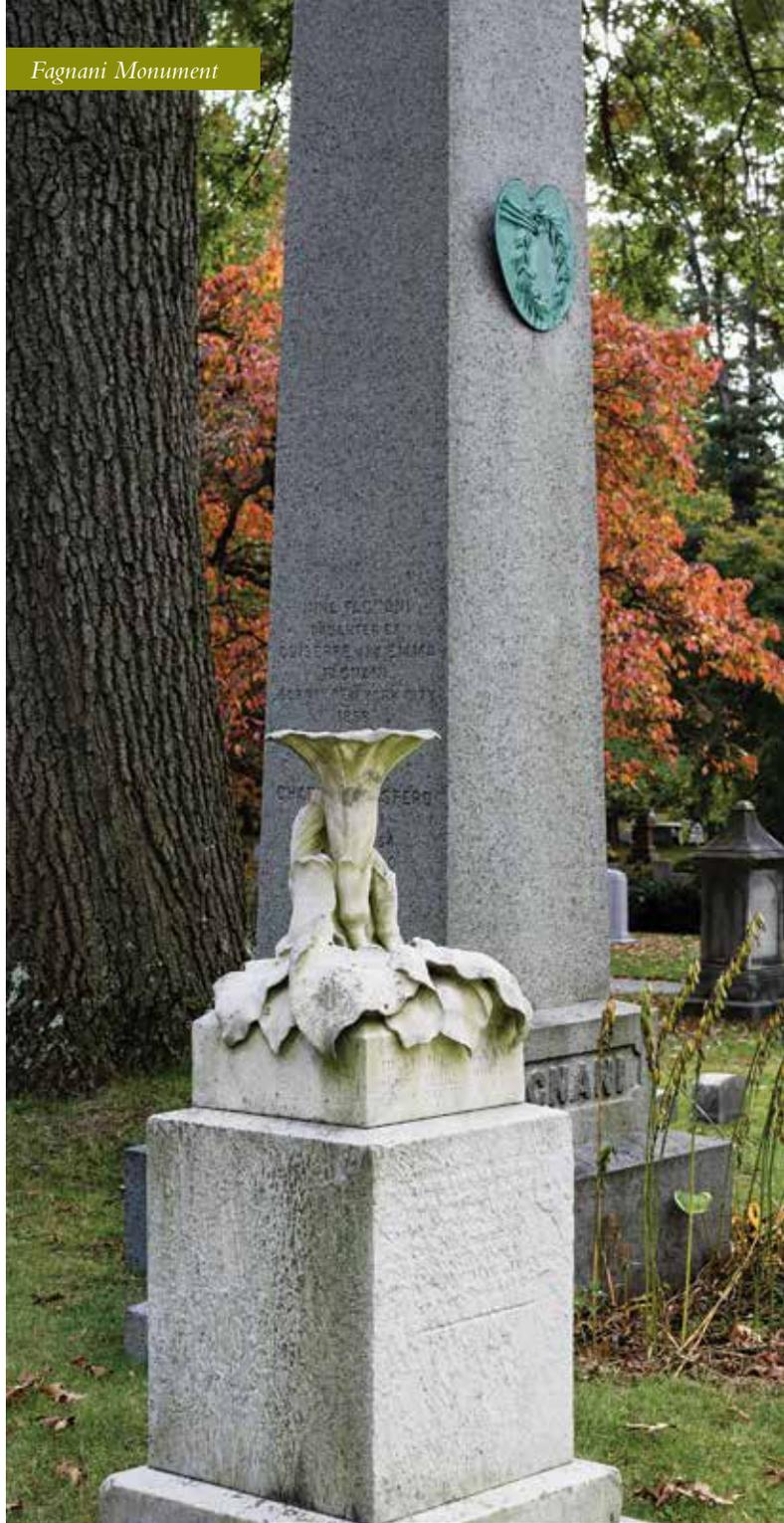
The Cemetery's natural space can be experienced as an outdoor museum with different rooms or galleries of monuments that span three centuries. In keeping with the original vision of the Cemetery's founders, an integral part of Mount Auburn's mission is to steward this diverse collection of commemorative art. Starting in 1993, Mount Auburn formally articulated a philosophy of preservation values and commitments. Through a steady trajectory of initiatives, the Cemetery has taken steps to protect and stabilize significant monuments and also to preserve related archival records that illuminate their unique historical significance.

Of the more than sixty thousand memorials on the grounds, a smaller number have been selected for their artistic and historical significance. The Binney monument by Thomas Crawford, for example, has been designated a National Treasure for its artistic contribution to our country's history; the statue of *Hygeia* was commissioned by a female physician and carved by Edmonia Lewis, one of the first female African-American sculptors to achieve international recognition; and the monument to author Hannah Adams, by local carvers Alpheus Cary and David



Rich Monument

Fagnani Monument



Dickinson, was the first memorial to be erected at Mount Auburn. Not all memorials at Mount Auburn rise to this level of significance, and many are smaller in scale, but together they form an extraordinary collection of fine and vernacular art, with particular strength in early nineteenth-century Victorian funerary art.

Mount Auburn received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) in 2013 for a two-year initiative to research and document Mount Auburn's thirty significant monuments. The project gave us an extraordinary opportunity to delve into the Cemetery's rich historical collections and pull together diverse resources including monument plans, correspondence with families and monument makers, historic photographs, cemetery guidebooks, newspapers, and journals. For the first time, we were able to organize and make accessible a body of historical evidence that further enhances our understanding of Mount Auburn's role in the rural cemetery movement and the development of funerary art in America.

Jonathan Fairbanks, one of the foremost authorities on American sculpture, writes that "eloquent sculpture, both public and private, can and should still lift the human spirit with new expressions, drawing upon the timeless and universal theme of human mortality and memory."¹ We hope that families and visitors who come to Mount Auburn will be inspired to look with new eyes at these monuments, appreciating the visual language and history of the Cemetery's memorials as a window into our culture and expressions of commemoration. Please join us in reimagining the Cemetery as museum.

¹Jonathan Fairbanks, "Eternal Celebrations in American Memorials," in "Remove Not the Ancient Monument": *Public Monuments and Moral Values*, ed. Donald Martin Reynolds (New York: Routledge, 2013), 187.



Bulfinch Urn

Announcing a New Publication from the Friends of Mount Auburn
The Art of Commemoration and America's First Rural Cemetery:
Mount Auburn's Significant Monument Collection

Written by Melissa Banta with Meg L. Winslow. Introductory essay by David B. Dearing. Foreword by Dave Barnett, President and CEO of Mount Auburn Cemetery. Published with the support of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).
www.mountauburn.org/2015/the-art-of-commemoration/



*This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services
Grant number: MA-30-13-0533-13*

THE SURPRISING RANGE OF RESOURCES IN MOUNT AUBURN'S HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS

BY MEG L. WINSLOW, *Curator of Historical Collections*

We deal, not with tracts of land, nor even with lots large enough to provide a house with a garden, but with areas often measured in feet or inches... There is probably no business in existence in which the importance and value of mere records is so high.

— CEMETERY ACCOUNTS, WALTER MUCKLOW (1935)

Every year, the Historical Collections Department at Mount Auburn fields inquiries from some four hundred researchers: architects, landscape designers, historians, biographers, genealogists, preservationists, curators, writers, publishers, teachers, filmmakers, artists, poets, and individuals with family members at the Cemetery. Institutions such as the Boston Athenaeum, Gettysburg Cemetery, Harvard University, Massachusetts Horticultural Society, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and New York State Historical Association have consulted our records, which are unique among American rural cemeteries in their extent, completeness, and organization. Mary Roach, author of the bestselling book *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers*, describes Mount Auburn's holdings as "a rich and endlessly surprising trove of death-related goodness, the likes of which I have never come across elsewhere."

The Department holds a wealth of materials that tell the story of the Cemetery and those interred here: burial records, guidebooks, maps, plans, blueprints, photographs, lithographs, engravings, drawings, paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, and ephemera. Though the Department was only officially established in 1993, its holdings go back to the Cemetery's founding in 1831 and continue to grow through purchases, gifts, and acquisitions. In addition to aiding researchers, the Historical Collections serve as a valuable resource for Cemetery staff seeking to improve the landscape, implement preservation plans for monuments and buildings, or create interpretive programs and materials.

Researchers come to us with questions relating to family genealogy, historical figures, landscape and architectural history, horticulture, American studies, anthropology, sociology, natural sciences, and medicine. The rural cemetery movement is a subject of increasing interest to scholars and educators, and Mount Auburn's records reflect society's changing ideas about death, commemoration, religion, ethics, and nature over the past century and a half.

Contact with researchers enriches the Cemetery as well. The late Caroline Loughlin, a Trustee of the Cemetery who for many years handled research questions at the Historical Collection Department, remarked that "The exchange we have with researchers—between what we know and what they know—is enormously useful." Curator of Historical Collections Meg L. Winslow concurs: "The people laid to rest here and the ways in which they are commemorated are remarkably varied and rich. Each day we continue to discover new things about the Cemetery through our growing collections and through our interactions with the families and scholars we serve."

The Cemetery's holdings are organized into Archives, Library, Photographs, and Fine and Decorative Arts collections. In addition, the Department manages the Cemetery's collection of significant fine art monuments, stained glass, monuments, and landscape furnishings.

Archives

The Archives holds more than 2,000 linear feet of materials generated and collected by the Cemetery since its founding. The collection contains business and legal documents such as deeds, lot correspondence, invoices, death certificates, lot work order cards, entrance tickets, trustee records and meeting minutes, annual reports, interment records, superintendent reports and correspondence books, operations and engineering records, horticultural records, and financial records. Also included are general correspondence, manuscripts, news clippings, ephemera, and maps. Collection subject strengths are cremation, early nonprofit history, and rural cemetery practices.

Library

The Historical Collections Library holds more than 3,000 accessioned books. Included are many signed or first-edition nineteenth-century works by or about people buried at the Cemetery, as well as reference

books on local history, other cemeteries, the rural cemetery movement, cremation, burial practices, horticulture, funerary art, and landscape architecture. Highlights include Jacob Bigelow's *Elements of Technologies* (1829), Cornelia Walter's *Mount Auburn Illustrated* (1847), and numerous older guidebooks about the Cemetery, including those by Nathaniel Dearborn and Moses Brown.



Old Secretary's Reports recently digitized

Photographs

From sweeping aerial shots of the grounds to detailed views of grave markers, the photographic collections at Mount Auburn document the Cemetery's changing landscape and contribute greatly to our understanding of the history of Mount Auburn and the rural cemetery movement. The holdings include more than 15,000 prints and negatives and a large slide collection, chronicling Mount Auburn from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Subjects include burials, monuments, mausolea, buildings, landscape, horticulture, wildlife, maintenance, staff, events, and programs. The formats and processes used to create these images span the history of photography, from stereographs, lantern slides, and glass-plate negatives to black-and-white prints, 35mm slides, color prints, and digital images. The images come from a variety of sources including Cemetery records, superintendent reports, photograph albums,



19th Century Cabinet Card

guidebooks, and general reference files, and the collection continues to grow.

Of particular interest is the collection of nineteenth-century stereo views; the twentieth-century Arthur C. Haskell Collection of black-and-white photographic prints; and a collection of color transparencies by Alan Chesney, President of Mount Auburn from 1968 to 1988.

Fine and Decorative Arts

The Cemetery's Fine and Decorative Arts include commissioned works as well as purchases and gifts. Mount Auburn holds several nineteenth-century oil paintings, sculptures, and decorative artworks for Story and Bigelow Chapels, in addition to prints, watercolors, drawings, and contemporary works of art. Of note are an 1832 souvenir tea cup, a nineteenth-century china pin tray, and an 1849 girandole set with Bigelow Chapel as the motif. Researchers will also find among the holdings chapel textiles, forged iron tools, gatekeeper's helmets, and award medals from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society.



Displaying the Collections: A nineteenth-century porcelain pin tray featuring the Cemetery's Egyptian Revival Gateway.

Stained Glass

The stained glass in Bigelow Chapel, commissioned by the Cemetery's co-founder and second president, Jacob Bigelow, was created in 1845 and installed when the Chapel was erected in 1846. The Scottish firm Ballantine & Allan designed the two large windows—the chancel window in the north wall and the rose window in the south wall. The Bigelow windows are hand painted and leaded in the geometric style. They are the third earliest known examples of this firm's work and the first to be shipped to the United States. The chancel window is set into a wood frame painted to look like stone, and the rose window is set into a cast-iron frame. The eight clerestory windows, which date from the 1920s, are set into cast-iron frames.

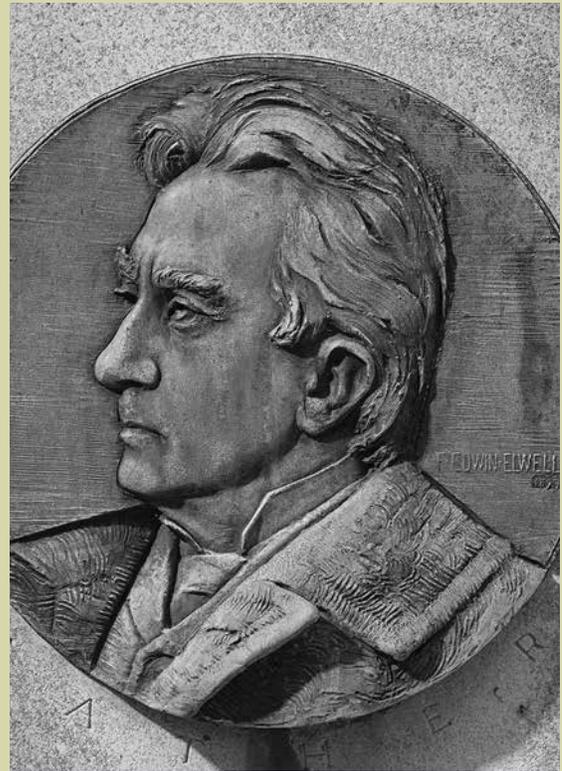
For Story Chapel, the Cemetery commissioned stained glass from the Boston studio of Wilbur H. Burnham in the ornamental Gothic Revival grisaille pattern, dating to 1930; Boston artisan E. E. Sanborn designed the large chancel window with figures of Christ and saints, circa 1928. The opalescent windows date from the construction of the building in 1896–98.

Significant Monument Collection

A small number of the approximately sixty thousand memorials at Mount Auburn are highly significant, works that stand out as either rare, reflective of a historically significant era, representative of a known artist, associated with a noted individual, or valued by the community. These significant monuments are an essential part of our cultural landscape and many are in need of preservation work.

Range of material from the Historical Collections on display as part of a past Cambridge Open Archives event.







Mount Auburn's Significant Monument Collection photographed by Greg Heins, 2014. Photos, opposite page, clockwise from top: Spurzheim, Booth, Nevins and Harnden monuments. Above: Bowditch monument



STORIES BEHIND THE STONES: *A Gumshoe in the Archives*

AN EMAIL QUERY WAS SENT TO MOUNT AUBURN'S Historical Collections Research Desk earlier this year: "I am trying to see what info you have on an older grave in your cemetery," wrote Shanna Stephens Doughty. "Her name is Bertha Philips Highley." The Cemetery receives hundreds of such requests each year, from genealogists, scholars, and family members. Due in part to the dogged research of volunteer docent and history detective Steve Pinkerton, this one turned up forgotten family history and helped reunite a long-lost baby picture with its kin.

Pinkerton searched the Cemetery's database and found Highley interments at two locations. One was Bertha "Philps" Highley in Lot 2015 on Honeysuckle Path, which belonged to the Phelps family. A further review of Cemetery records showed that Bertha Phelps Highley was initially interred on April 29, 1889, in Lot 5000, one of Mount Auburn's general or "public" burial areas. She had died of diphtheria in Somerville, MA, at age 8 years and 3 months. Her remains were moved to the Phelps family lot on July 6, 1889. Pinkerton noticed that the remains of Ashton Shute Highley, who died May 1, 1889, also of diphtheria, aged 10 months, 24 days, were relocated there the same day. A third Highley, 39-year-old Caroline, was buried in the Phelps lot a year and a half later on January 10, 1891.

Pinkerton reported his findings to Doughty, speculating that Caroline was probably mother of Bertha and Ashton and noting the presence of a second Highley family lot on Excelsior Path nearby.

Doughty replied immediately, asking if Mount Auburn had a contact for the Highley or Phelps families: "I have come across a baby photo of Bertha and would like to

return it to someone related." Sensitive to privacy concerns, she asked that Mount Auburn contact the family on her behalf.

Pinkerton began searching for Highley family descendants. Accessing Massachusetts vital records via FamilySearch.org, he learned that Bertha was born on New Years Day, 1881, to Caroline Phelps Shute and Philip Highley, a printer from England. Caroline was the daughter of Mary E. Robinson and James M. Shute, a well-known Boston typesetter and for many years Chairman of Somerville's Board of Selectmen.



Bertha Phelps Highley.

According to Cemetery records, Philip Highley purchased Lot 5266 on Excelsior Path in 1893, two years after his first wife's death; he was buried there along with his second wife and children from both marriages. Census and vital records showed that Caroline and Philips's last surviving child died unmarried in 1906. However, several of Bertha's half-siblings reached adulthood and started families of their own. Their surviving descendants would be Bertha's closest living relatives.

Cemetery records showed that flowers had been purchased for the Highley lot as recently as 2009. Pinkerton asked Cemetery Services Representative Theresa Fallon to find out who had ordered the arrangements, and she was able to find a contact name and phone number.

Meanwhile, Doughty emailed images of a "carte de visite" photograph of an infant and the back of the card, which bore the studio's logo along with Bertha's name and age, and the date of the photo. With the images in hand, Pinkerton contacted the family. Once he had confirmed their interest, Doughty mailed the original to Mount Auburn.

But why were Bertha, Ashton, and Caroline buried in the Phelps lot? Pinkerton had found no evidence of a family relationship. Acting on a hunch, he searched the Plot Finder database for Shute family burials and found Caroline's parents' graves in Lot 2014, next to the Phelps lot on Honeysuckle Path.

Cemetery deeds showed that the two adjoining lots were purchased the same day in 1852 by James M. Shute and Sewell Phelps. Pinkerton learned that the two men had been business associates at the Boston Type and Stereotype Foundry for many years. He also noted that the second decedent buried in the Shute lot was a three-year-old child named Bertha Phelps Shute, who died when Caroline Shute was sixteen years old. It appeared that Bertha Phelps Highley was named after her mother's baby sister.

Census documents indicated that neither Sewell Phelps nor his sister Elizabeth G. Phelps—who were buried in the Phelps lot in 1864 and 1896, respectively—ever married. Pinkerton guessed that they may have acted as godparents for James Shute's daughter Bertha.

When little Bertha and her brother Ashton died in 1889, the Highleys did not have a lot of their own, and most of the grave spaces in the Shute family lot were taken or spoken for. However, the Phelps lot next door had seen just two burials, with only one more expected. There was

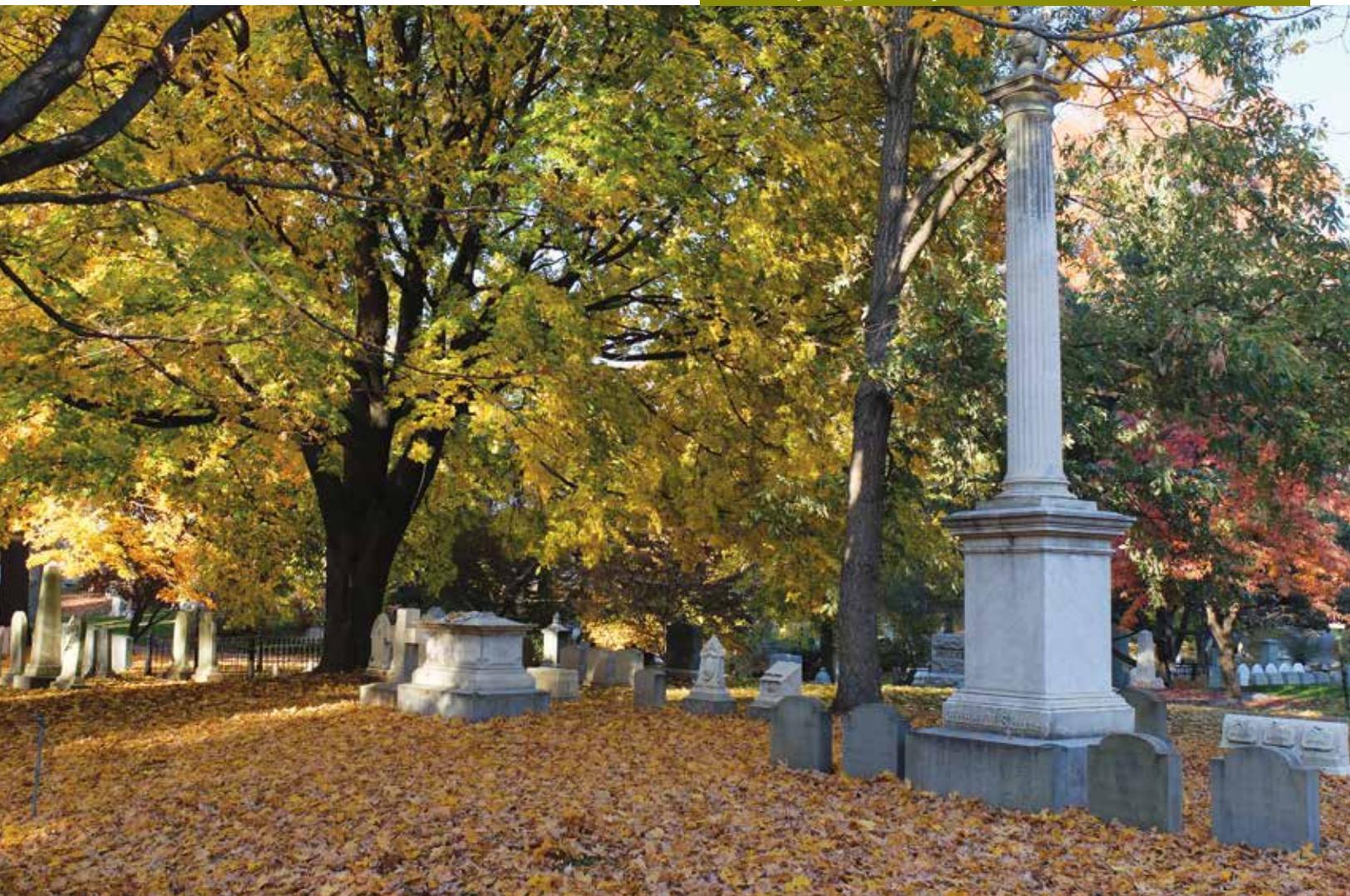
plenty of room for the Highley children who died so young and the remaining Highley family after that.

Caroline died in 1891, and Philip Highley remarried the following year. In 1893, he bought a separate lot at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Lot 5266 on Excelsior Path, for the burial of a son born prematurely to his new wife. As she was then just 23 years old, they had every reason to expect that there would be more children for whom additional burial space might one day be needed.

Bertha's *carte de visite* arrived at Mount Auburn Cemetery in due course, accompanied by Doughty's handwritten letter to the family. She explained that she bought the old photo at an antiques booth at the Alaska State Fair in the late 1980s, and it was the first of many she would collect over the years. Now in her forties and armed with an Ancestry.com account, she recently started trying to return identifiable photos to their families. "In July of this year," she wrote, "I had my first return of an entire album to a family in Chicago."

Bertha's is just one of many cases that Cemetery archivists have cracked to connect families with their past, sometimes with the help of benevolent strangers. Inquiries may be addressed to research@mountauburn.org.

View from the James M. Shute lot looking towards the Sewell Phelps lot. The two adjoining lots were purchased on the same day in 1852.





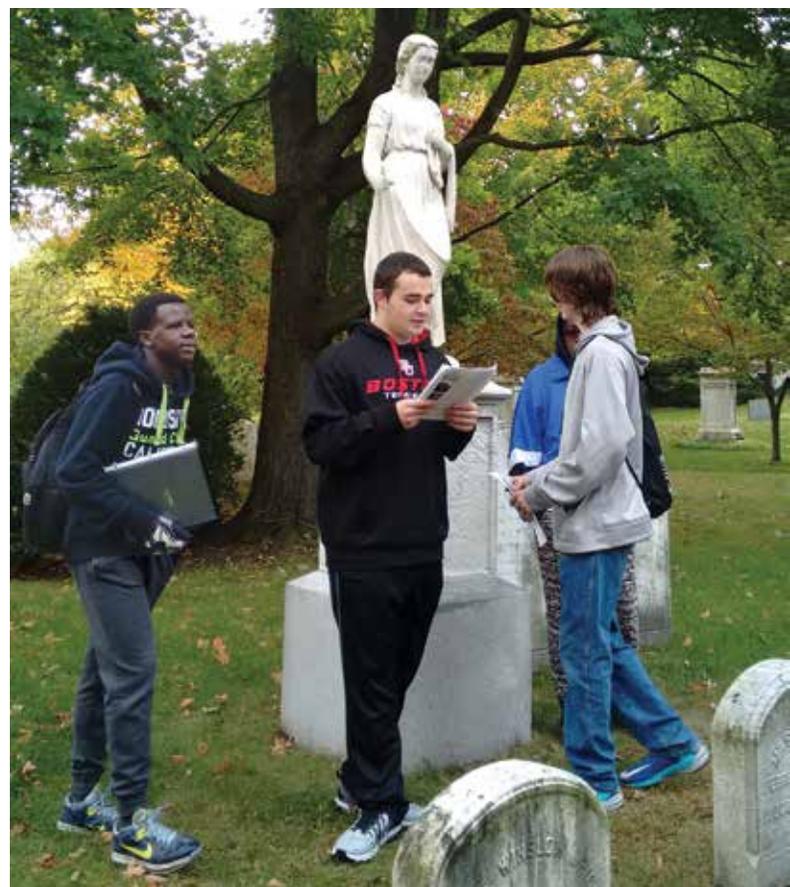
HISTORY STUDENTS VISIT MOUNT AUBURN

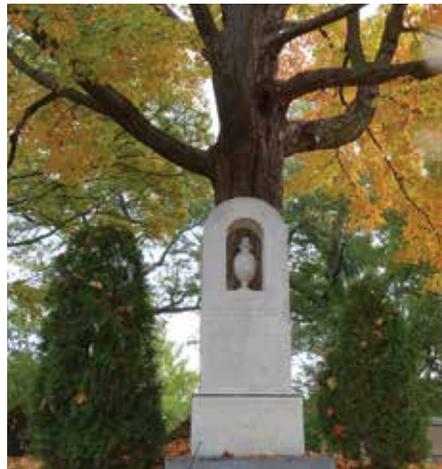
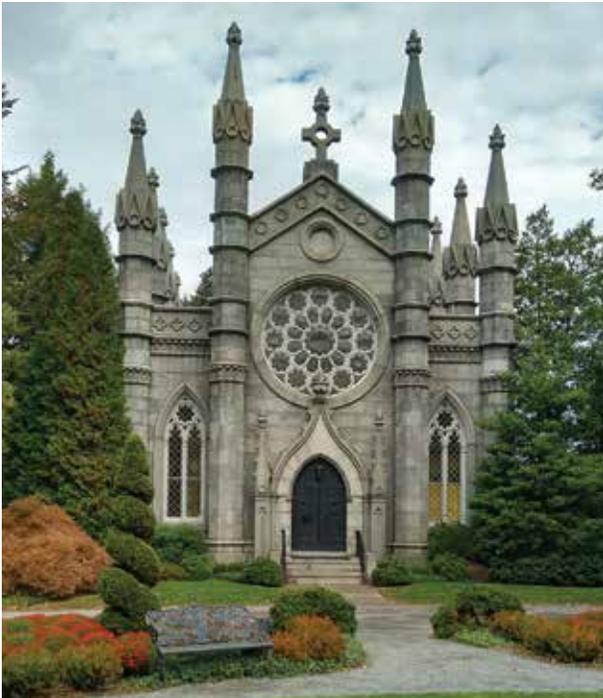
ON OCTOBER 16, 2015, MR. ANDREW MILNE, A teacher at Medford High School, brought forty-three students from his AP U.S. History classes to Mount Auburn as part of a workshop on early American burial practices. The students had already studied the Puritans and the Enlightenment. At the time of their visit they were exploring how the Transcendentalists had altered the dominant New England religious ideology.

Students first examined the gravestones at the Cambridge Burial Ground, noting the relative uniformity of funerary icons—winged skulls and cherub heads, willow trees, and urns—and charting their frequency over time. The class then took a 90-minute tour with Jenny Gilbert, Mount Auburn’s Director of Institutional Advancement, learning about the founding history of the Cemetery. Students were given a list of twenty objectives to photograph, such as most beautiful or saddest monument. In small groups, they created short biographical sketches of important nineteenth-century figures buried at the Cemetery.

The students were greatly impressed by the natural beauty of Mount Auburn and the diversity of its memorials relative to those in the Cambridge Burial Ground. They had gathered empirical evidence that the Transcendentalists and their followers valued individuality and the cycle of nature, rather than conformity to theological beliefs or the role of an afterlife.

The students were divided into ten groups for a Cemetery and Architecture Photo Treasure Hunt. Images of Mount Auburn by Photo contest winners Georgia Bowder-Newton, Abby McCarthy, Olivia Marks, Tyler Nguyen, and Andre Melo, with Chaperone Joe Ferrari are presented here.





Volunteer Profile:

KATHLEEN FOX

BY JENNIFER JOHNSTON,
Webmaster, Media & Imaging Coordinator

ON OCTOBER 27, 1988, KATHLEEN FOX—A LOCAL Cambridge artist and then Associate Registrar at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University—wrote to then Cemetery President Bill Clendaniel about her interest in investigating who had done the carving on all of the small (and large) monuments she had become so familiar with. She voiced her appreciation for Mount Auburn, which she had visited at least once a week for the better part of a decade, and expressed her desire to “pay homage to this wonderful arboretum, to provide a way of perceiving it, and in particular to recognize the wonderful sculpture and sculptors who have contributed to it.” We take this opportunity to pay homage to Kathleen in return.

The spring 1989 issue of *Sweet Auburn* magazine told of her official arrival at Mount Auburn as one of our very first volunteers: “Kathleen Fox...has spent many years in the Cemetery drawing and painting the landscape. Last year she did a series of graphite drawings of several figurative sculptures in the snow. This work led her to wonder about the stonemasons who had carved the stones and...she then approached the Cemetery staff with an offer to research Mount Auburn’s sculpture.”

This was not a simple task. In the early 1990s, Kathleen Fox read through 17,000 Cemetery records, took 700 photographs, and created a database of over 5,000 monuments at Mount Auburn. A particular thrill was discovering all of the correspondence with sculptors Thomas Crawford, Richard Saltonstall Greenough, William Wetmore Story, and Randolph Rogers for the statues originally commissioned for the Cemetery offices that now reside in various locations at Harvard. The “Fox Database,” as we now call it, can be sorted by monument carver, monument dimensions, monument symbolism, lot number, location, name of the deceased, or the source of information regarding the monument. All references in the database are from records on file at the Cemetery—such as general correspondence files, work order forms, Cemetery journals, and nineteenth-century guidebooks—or from external sources such as monument company files or Boston Public Library records. For over twenty years, the database has proved invaluable to staff, volunteers, and researchers at the Cemetery.

Kathleen also began transcribing select letters in the Cemetery correspondence files. She realized that these letters revealed details of nineteenth-century cultural habits and technologies that were of historic significance. Kathleen began sorting letters into categories such as horticulture, wildlife, and workers. She knows the names of the six Cemetery horses and how much they weighed; she



can tell you how the first telephone lines were installed at the Cemetery and when typewriters were first bought for the office.

Though she at one time hoped to craft her discoveries into a book, Fox ultimately realized that the quiet rewards of pure discovery were enough. Exploration itself—“the hunt” as she calls it—is what has always driven her, both as an artist and as a historian. This same sense of curiosity and discovery is what drew Kathleen back to the Cemetery as a volunteer, after retiring from a 27-year career as an Assistant dean at the Kennedy School.

For the past few years, Kathleen has come in two days a week as a volunteer in the Historical Collections department at Mount Auburn Cemetery. There, her colleagues, including her supervisor Meg Winslow, Curator of Historical Collections, continually rely on her expertise in all manner of research, logic, and organization. Since returning, Kathleen has proofed over 3,000 images in reports against digital scans to confirm that all items were indeed photographed and digitized. She has also created digital files of various records concerning each of our thirty significant historic monuments. These files were then printed and compiled, with detailed information on each monument secured in a binder.

Kathleen recently finished assisting Historical Collections Consultant Melissa Banta with fact-checking a new publication on the significant monuments of the Cemetery (*see page 7*). Kathleen has painstakingly confirmed every name, date, place, and quote, checking them against other Cemetery records and online resources to ensure the complete accuracy of the final printed publication.

At a recent celebration in honor of volunteers at the Cemetery, Kathleen stood up and told the audience how grateful she feels for the privilege of volunteering at Mount Auburn Cemetery, working on projects that she sees as truly limitless in terms of depth, breadth, and potential to lead in all kinds of new directions. We feel the same about Kathleen Fox.

Trustee News

In September 2015, we welcomed Franklin A. “Frank” Reece III (left) and Niels Peetz-Larsen (right) to the Board of Trustees. Before joining the Board, both served as non-trustee members of Mount Auburn Committees: Niels on the Investment Committee and Frank on our Education & Outreach and Institutional Advancement Committees. In 2012, Frank also served on the Friends’ Education Task Force and now serves as Co-Chair of our Council of Visitors. Frank and Niels, both Cambridge residents, bring impressive knowledge and expertise in finance, management, and strategic planning with them to Mount Auburn.



Grant News

Mighty at the Dix monument working on his earth.sky film series

The Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery is pleased to announce a \$5,000 grant from Mass Humanities for artist-in-residence Roberto Mighty’s ongoing earth.sky project. This grant will help support the creation of two additional films in Roberto’s earth.sky series that are focused on Dorothea Dix, the pioneering Civil War era nurse and early advocate for sufferers of mental illness, and George Thorndike Angell, a nineteenth-century Bostonian lawyer and animal rights activist.



Members Week 2015

From September 14 to 19, 2015, the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery held its annual Members Week in appreciation of the many individuals and families who support its work. Among various benefits and discounts, members received free admission to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, plus a complimentary Friends of Mount Auburn birders’ pocket notebook when they stopped by the Visitor Center that week. Additionally, almost thirty members joined Horticultural Curator Dennis Collins on a walking tour in which he detailed various initiatives in Mount Auburn’s new Wildlife Action Plan and discussed how they will be implemented throughout the Cemetery.



Greenhouse Visit

Isabel Dabrowski toured Mount Auburn’s greenhouse on September 2, 2015, with Greenhouse Manager Maurene Simonelli. A plaque commemorating a bequest from Isabel’s sister Alice Dabrowski was recently installed, acknowledging her generous legacy gift to the Cemetery. Alice died six years ago, in February 2009 at the age of 91.

Council of Visitors

On October 1, 2015, Mount Auburn welcomed seventy-three friends and colleagues for the fourth annual Council of Visitors meeting. Our afternoon began with lunch under a tent on Bigelow Chapel Lawn followed by breakout sessions focused on preservation (*below*), horticulture, and contemporary monumentation. Award-winning horticulturist and landscape designer Patrick Cullina gave the Keynote Presentation, *Landscape as Art: Transforming the Urban Experience*. Cullina showed how the sensitive integration of plants can transform a diverse range of designed and managed landscapes such as New York's High Line, where he served as Vice President of Horticulture and Park Operations, and Mount Auburn Cemetery, where he consulted on our recent Wildlife Action Plan.



Reimagining the Cemetery as Museum!

Mount Auburn hosted 70 collections managers, preservation planners, landscape architects, sculpture conservators, architectural historians, and cemetery presidents and superintendents from around the country for a one-day program in November to celebrate Mount Auburn's Significant Monument Collection and learn about highlights from our *Museums for America* Stewardship Grant project. The cross-disciplinary program presented new strategies for managing and interpreting outdoor collections in cemeteries and historic landscapes.



A Glimpse Beyond

The fourth-annual *A Glimpse Beyond* took place on September 19th and 20th, 2015. Memorable performances by **Lorraine Chapman, Commonwealth Ballet, Jo-Mé Dance, Juventas New Music Ensemble, Jamie LaDamasquina & Antonio Tiri Tran, the Mount Auburn Celebration Brass Band, Ruckus Dance, Paul Schaffner, and Voices Rising** anchored this year's production, which took its inspiration from the poetry of David Watson McCord (McCord is buried at Mount Auburn on Chestnut Avenue). Under the leadership of Artistic Director Denise Pons, Music Director Nate Tucker, and Producer Lauren MacCarthy, the 2015 production of *A Glimpse Beyond* was Mount Auburn's most successful to date. Stay tuned for more information about the 2016 production, tentatively scheduled for the first weekend in October.



Project Updates

Last summer and fall, Mount Auburn made significant progress on several exciting projects, including:

Egyptian Revival Gateway Restoration



August 2015



August 2015

As part of the first phase of a multi-year project to restore our Egyptian Revival Gateway, our historic iron fence and gates along Mount Auburn Street were removed beginning in August. After restoration in the workshop of the Cassidy Brothers Forge is completed, the fence will be reinstalled in early 2016. This project is being supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, a City of Cambridge Historical Commission Community Preservation Act grant, Cambridge Savings Bank, the Harold Whitworth Pierce Fund, and several individual gifts.

Willow Pond Rain Garden



September 2015



October 2015

A new rain garden was completed last fall at the northern end of Willow Pond. Under the direction of New England Environmental, Inc. a new rock weir was constructed to slow the discharge of storm water into the pond during large rain events. New plants were selected for their water purifying qualities as well as their value as habitat for wildlife.

Spruce Knoll Expansion



May 2015



November 2015

A project to expand Mount Auburn's cremation garden, Spruce Knoll, started last spring. Julie Moir Messervey, who designed the original garden 20 years ago, worked with Mount Auburn on the expansion to ensure that qualities of the original space carried forward into the newly designed section. Sale of burial space in the new section of Spruce Knoll began in the summer of 2015.



Visitors flock to the Prince of Wales Scion Beech Tree on Bigelow Chapel Lawn in November 2015

DID **you** KNOW...?

BY STEPHEN JACKSON, *Plant Records & GIS Manager*

At Mount Auburn, Some Trees are Celebrities!

Prince-of-Wales Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*): The current tree on the lawn outside of Bigelow Chapel is a vegetative re-propagation of the original 1860 tree, which had to be removed in 2008. That tree was ceremonially planted by the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII.

Newton's Apple Tree (*Malus domestic* 'Flower of Kent'): A recent gift to Mount Auburn, this tree was propagated with cuttings from the original apple tree that gave Sir Isaac Newton his ideas on gravity. It is currently in our nursery.

Asa Gray's Yellowwood (*Cladrastris kentukea*): Seeds were taken from the two Yellowwoods that famed botanist Asa Gray planted outside of First Church in Cambridge (the trees were in very bad condition and were removed in 2014). We hope to be able to grow more trees from this seed.

Longfellow's Linden (*Tilia cordata*): A Linden tree grown from one at the historic Longfellow house in Cambridge. Planted on Fountain Avenue.

Waverly Oaks (*Quercus alba*): Acorns collected in 2015 from the last of the original Waverly Oak trees in Belmont, which were instrumental in the formation of the Trustees of Reservations, are currently in propagation.

Jacob Bigelow's Magnolias (*Magnolia virginiana*): Collected from the same swamp in Gloucester where Bigelow discovered this northernmost population of the species, which he included in his *Florula Bostoniensis* of 1814. Currently in our nursery, it will be planted by Bigelow's lot on Beech Avenue in 2016.

Pre-1831 Black Oaks (*Quercus velutina*): These trees were part of the original oak forest that occupied the site prior to Mount Auburn's founding.

THE FRONT ENTRY PRECINCT AND CAROLINE'S PATH – A RECENT GIFT IN HONOR OF CAROLINE LOUGHLIN

BY JANE M. CARROLL, *Vice President of Institutional Advancement*

IN APRIL 2014, THE FRIENDS OF MOUNT AUBURN received its largest single gift ever. This generous donation from the Caroline Loughlin Fund of Vanguard Charitable is given in memory of a beloved Mount Auburn Cemetery Trustee, dedicated volunteer, supporter, and friend for more than thirteen years. It is being used to support the planned restoration of Asa Gray Garden, named for the esteemed nineteenth-century botanist, and to create a walkway named *Caroline's Path*.

Caroline Loughlin was naturally drawn to Mount Auburn and to the preservation of the Cemetery's archival records, which illuminate its rich history and designed landscape. In addition to her work at Mount Auburn, Caroline was nationally recognized as an active steward of the legacy of landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted. Creating a path at Mount Auburn in her name allows us to honor her abiding interest in and commitment to history, preservation, and landscape design.

Caroline's Path will provide an improved pedestrian experience near the Cemetery's main entrance. The Path links Story Chapel to the Asa Gray Garden. A seating area opposite the Chapel marks the beginning of the Path, which continues along a gently sloping stone wall to a circular bench with the name *Caroline's Path* engraved in a wall panel. The project adheres to the 1993 Master Plan Principles of preserving the design intent of our historic landscape and strengthening its most successful existing features and values.

This gift stimulated Mount Auburn to move forward with other long-planned enhancements of the front entrance precinct and Asa Gray Garden. The multi-phase project will create a more welcoming entry for visitors and clients, improve vehicular and pedestrian access, make travel safer, preserve historically significant structures, and highlight the strength and breadth of Mount Auburn's horticultural collection.

The second phase of the project will be the restoration of Asa Gray Garden, which will make it a showpiece of horticultural excellence appropriate to its location in the Cemetery. Mount Auburn staff members are working with Halvorson Design Partnership to incorporate a beautiful display garden with plant groupings that illustrate Gray's



discovery that two geographically separated groups of plants (in eastern North America and eastern Asia) were descended from common ancestors but had developed subtle differences during their long isolation on different continents.

Caroline Loughlin's family believes that the Asa Gray Project perfectly combines her three passions—archival records, designed landscapes, and historic preservation. We are deeply grateful for this tremendous gift, and hope that it will encourage additional contributions.

On October 7, 2015, the second anniversary of Caroline's death, a beautiful cenotaph was erected on Indian Ridge Path. Just past the entrance from Central Ave and overlooking Story Chapel and Asa Gray Garden, the pedestal monument was carved in granite by Nick Benson of the John Stevens Shop in Newport, RI. In combination with *Caroline's Path*, it provides an inspiring reminder of an inspiring life.

Upcoming Events

Here is a sampling from the exciting schedule of upcoming programs. Visit us online today to register for any of these programs or to get a complete list of other events on our calendar.

* Eyes on Owls

Saturday, February 13, 1PM & 3:30PM

Join us in Story Chapel for a special presentation by teacher naturalist Marcia Wilson and wildlife photographer Mark Wilson. Marcia and Mark will introduce visitors to the owls of New England and beyond. Learn the field marks, signs, and naturalist's skills that you can use to find owls without disturbing them, then meet some live owls up close! Two sessions will be offered.

\$10 adult – member / \$15 adult – non-member

\$3 child – member / \$5 child – non member

* Longfellow Birthday Celebration

Saturday, February 27, 10AM

Join us for this annual program in Story Chapel, co-sponsored by the Longfellow House – Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site. Following a talk about Longfellow's lasting legacy, we'll enjoy birthday cake and then walk to the Longfellow Lot on Indian Ridge Path for a wreath-laying ceremony.

Free

* Winter Tree & Shrub Identification and Signs of Spring Monday, March 21, 2PM

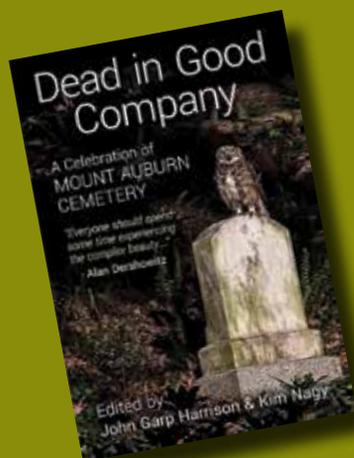
Join Mount Auburn President Dave Barnett as the snow-covered ground gives way to the earliest spring flowers and buds. We will observe the early signs of spring's arrival and learn how to identify some of the most interesting trees and shrubs at Mount Auburn by their buds, twig, and bark characteristics.

\$7 members / \$12 nonmembers

* Women's History Walk: Honoring Women in Public Service in Government Saturday, March 26, 1PM

Mount Auburn Staff and Docents will share the stories of the women who they most admire on this walking tour celebrating Women's History Month. The theme this year is "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government." Women featured on the walk will be from the fields of non-profit or advocacy work, public health, legal work, elected officials, work in government agencies or military service.

\$7 members / \$12 nonmembers



Now in bookstores: *Dead In Good Company: A Celebration of Mount Auburn Cemetery*. Edited by John Harrison and Kim Nagy, this collection of essays and photographs features contributions from an impressive list of authors, historians, naturalists and others connected to this special place. Learn more about the many contributors, read excerpts from the book and learn how to purchase a copy online: facebook.com/deadin-goodcompany.

Photo, right: Kim Nagy, Chestnut-sided Warbler

