The stones that stand in the Ancient Burying Ground are precious and fragile records that provide a glimpse into Colonial-era life and death in early Connecticut. They suffer destruction by erosion, landscaping equipment, benign neglect, and vandalism. The need to create “benchmark” documentation is paramount for today’s administrators and conservators as well as for future stewards.

This November, the ABGA was awarded a $20,000 Survey and Planning grant by the CT State Historic Preservation Office for Phase 1 of our project “Carved in Stone: Historic Marker Inventory of the Ancient Burying Ground.” The grant will support a high-quality photographic record of each stone in the burying ground and the creation of a database, which will include the images as well as information on the inscriptions. This documentation will create a record of the rich history in the Ancient Burying Ground, and will be publicly available on the ABGA website, to local stakeholders as well as to a worldwide audience.

ABGA Project Wins Award of Merit

“Uncovering Their History” Cited by the Connecticut League of History Organizations 2020

Our “Uncovering Their History” project was recognized in 2020 by CLHO, the prestigious statewide museum organization. Their citation reports: “This research project and resulting website and database provide profiles that act as “virtual headstones” for 500 individuals interred in this Hartford cemetery. Easy to navigate and downloadable, it is a valuable tool for researchers, and will include a platform for names to be added to the database. An excellent example of a digital humanities project, https://africannativeburialsct.org/demonstrates what good historical research can achieve to illuminate aspects of the past that have been hidden or unexplored. The recovery of this important history deepens understanding of the site, early Hartford, and Native Americans, Africans, and African Americans in this region, and is an outstanding model for cemeteries around the state.”

The website has had over 5,000 visitors so far this year. Dr. Katherine Hermes, who headed the project, has been asked to speak about her research to several groups. The ABGA has been contacted by groups and individuals who are interested in using this cutting-edge research as the basis for new community education programs and events. One program is underway now, as we partner with the Witness Stones Project and the Old State House Museum to bring these stories to the classroom and the community in Hartford.
President’s Letter

2020 has been a most challenging year for us for obvious reasons, yet we thrive.

During the early months of the pandemic our gates were closed to discourage people from congregating too closely, our thematic tours were canceled for the season, and our monthly board meetings continue to be held virtually via Zoom.

Bill Hosley, longtime friend of the Ancient Burying Ground Association, hosted a live virtual tour of the Ancient Burying Ground in April. Over 3,000 people viewed the video. You can watch the video on his website at this link: https://www.facebook.com/HistoricHartford/videos/672399203570537/

If you recall, in August we had a terrible windstorm which knocked down a tree in the Main Street entrance just brushing the statue of Samuel Stone and blocking the gate for several weeks. Heavy tree limbs fell into the burying ground itself. Fortunately, none of our gravestones were damaged.

Repair and conservation efforts are a never-ending and very expensive challenge for us. Please read the article on conservation in this issue. A very complicated project was successfully executed for the Ruth Flagg schist headstone. The Skinner-Pratt marble headstone was beautifully replicated. If you visit the burying ground, be sure to visit this grave marker and admire the exquisite hand-lettered epitaph.

In anticipation of receiving a grant for a photographic documentation database survey of each and every grave marker, all 32 tablestones and several dozen tablet stones were cleaned of biological growth for improved photographic legibility.

We see continued interest in our successful “Uncovering Their History” project that we launched last year, from organizations like the Witness Stones Project. The database and biographical profiles of African, African American, and Native American individuals buried in the Ancient Burying Ground offer “an excellent example of a digital humanities project,” made accessible online at https://africannativeburialsct.org, as cited in the Award of Merit which we were honored to receive from the Connecticut League of History Organizations.

Despite the pandemic, the Ancient Burying Ground Association continues to function and thrive. The successes described here are the results of the work of a dedicated team of volunteers. Please make a generous donation this year so we can continue with our educational outreach, repair, and conservation initiatives.

Ty Tryon, President

Welcome New Board Members

Catherine Mallinckrodt

Casey is the Objects Conservator at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum, where she oversees a highly diverse collection. She has a master’s degree from the UCLA/Getty Program in the Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials, and an MFA in sculpture from Yale University. Her primary interest is the stewardship of material cultural heritage.

Stephen H. Morris

Steve is Assistant Director of Operations for Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Business from UConn and a master’s degree in International Management from King’s College London. He is “passionate about learning about the past and preserving it for present and future generations … [and enjoys] researching local historical people and events.”
Names from 1837 Founders Monument Available

Adams, Gibbons, Root, Wadsworth – Was your ancestor’s name on the original Founders Monument?

In 1836, the bicentennial of Hartford’s founding, an earlier incarnation of the Ancient Burying Ground Association was formed. This group cleaned up the neglected burying ground, laid down gravel paths, and straightened and restored gravestones. They also erected the original Founders Monument obelisk.

As Hartford approached its 300th anniversary, another group formed, the Society of the Descendants of the Founders of Hartford. Their Ancient Burying Ground Committee attempted preservation work on the monument, but was unable to arrest the weathering of the brownstone. In 1986, the Founders replaced the obelisk with one of Connecticut pink granite, added newly discovered Founders’ names, and alphabetized the list. Most of the name pieces from the original monument were saved, with the hope that they would find a home with one of their descendants.

The Founders Society gave the pieces to the newly-formed Ancient Burying Ground Association, so they could be used as a fundraiser. Approximately one third have been claimed, but the rest are available, for a donation of $300 (or more should you be so moved!). Funds will help with the ongoing work in the ABG, conserving the gravestones and offering educational programs.

Following is the list of available names. If you are interested, please contact us at 860-280-4145, or email: contact@theancientburyingground.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jeremy Adams</th>
<th>Richard Butler</th>
<th>George Graves</th>
<th>John Maynard</th>
<th>John Steele</th>
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<td>Thomas Alcott</td>
<td>William Butler</td>
<td>Samuel Greenhill</td>
<td>John Moody</td>
<td>George Stocking</td>
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<td>Francis Andrews</td>
<td>Clement Chaplin</td>
<td>Samuel Hale</td>
<td>William Parker</td>
<td>William Wadsworth</td>
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<td>William Andrews</td>
<td>John Clark</td>
<td>Thomas Hale</td>
<td>William Pentrey</td>
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<td>John Arnold</td>
<td>Nicholas Clark</td>
<td>William Heyton</td>
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<td>Andrew Bacon</td>
<td>John Cole</td>
<td>William Hill</td>
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<td>Robert Bartlett</td>
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<td>John Bayse</td>
<td>Zachariah Field</td>
<td>John Hopkins</td>
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<td>Thomas Birchwood</td>
<td>William Gibbons</td>
<td>Thomas Hosmer</td>
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<td>Thomas Bull</td>
<td>William Goodwin</td>
<td>Richard Lord</td>
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<td>Seth Grant</td>
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<td>Benjamin Burr</td>
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<td>Edward Stebbing</td>
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By Ty Tryon

Many of our gravestone conservation projects address older failed repairs. Re-repairing broken gravestones presents unique challenges as the fabric of the stone may be compromised beyond traditional repair methods. A gravestone that is broken and fallen over is also prone to further damage, so it’s imperative to repair it and get it upright as soon as possible.

**Ruth Flagg** (schist)

Broken at base, non-repairable

Ruth Flagg died March 22, 1789, age 64.

Schist is a soft granite that was the choice of Eastern Connecticut carvers. It is a very durable stone that has held up quite well over the centuries. The Ruth Flagg headstone is an unusually thin slice of schist. It had been repaired several times and was too compromised to use a traditional stainless steel pin method. The Grounds Committee spent over a year researching alternative methods without finding a suitable solution. Our conservator, Randall Nelson, made the suggestion to imbed the Ruth Flagg headstone into a larger piece of schist, where the headstone would be upright and protected. Randall had a suitable slab of rough cut schist, and he took on the work of shaping the outer stone to follow the shape of the headstone and carving out a socket to receive the original stone. The final result is a lovely and remarkable feat of conservation. Ruth Flagg died Sept. 30th, 1787 age 42.

During the latter end of the Ancient Buying Ground operational time frame, marble became the stone of choice. It was an exquisite stone to carve as it created crisp lettering, yet it was relatively soft to the carver’s chisel. Unfortunately, marble is susceptible to acid rain. Many of the marble gravestones are now about 220 - 250 years old and have deteriorated, with several dissolved beyond legibility.

**Pratt Family** (marble)

Illegible from Acid Rain

Abigail (Pratt) Skinner died September 20, 1777, age 19.

Timothy Pratt died May 31, 1783, age 33.

He was at the Lexington Alarm in 1775.

George Pratt died July 22, 1805, age 50.

He was a payroll guard in 1778.

Most of this large marble headstone was beyond reading. The marble was so dissolved that re-cutting the lettering was out of the question. So this headstone was a candidate for replication. To replicate, the Grounds Committee faced two challenges: 1, to determine what were the original wording, capitalization, and line breaks, and 2, to find a source for a large marble that was an appropriate match to the original stone.

The Grounds Committee spent time in the Connecticut Historical Society (CHS) and the Connecticut State Library researching what we could find on this headstone. At the CHS we found a photo-

The replicated headstone of three of the Pratt children stands next to their father’s, which is fortunately still legible. While the children all lived to adulthood, Zechariah outlived them, dying at the age of 79.
Conservation Update

In memory of John Sargeant, son of Jacob and Mrs. Oliver Sargeant who was unfortunately drowned while bathing in Connecticut River. July 23, AD 1802, aged 11 years.

On him reflect ye young and gay
And thus a solemn warning take
That e'er this hour ye sport and play
The next to God ye flight may take.

John Sargeant’s stone before repair. The pins which were used in the previous repair are visible at the break.

Conservation Challenges with Biological Growth

Gravestones made of brownstone tend to attract biological growth like lichen, particularly if the stone is under shade. Lichens are hazardous to gravestones because they trap moisture under the stone. They also secrete acids that dissolve stone. In just a few years, lichens have overtaken our many brownstone tablestones with a vengeance, creating a thick carpet of biological growth which renders the tablestones illegible. The tools to remove lichen are simple: water, scrub brushes, and plastic scraper... and lots of elbow grease. Lichen creates a tight bond to stone which requires patience and perseverance to remove. Over fifteen tablestones were scrubbed of their thick lichen and all thirty-two* tablestones were treated with an approved anti-microbiological solution to deter further growth. Additionally, over fifty tablet markers were cleaned and treated.

*The Ancient Burying Ground has one of the largest collection of tablestones (32) in the Connecticut River Valley. They cost upwards of ten times the cost of a traditional headstone and were affordable only to the elite of Hartford’s colonial society.
The Old Gravestone

By Hans Christian Andersen

This story is passed along to all by Fred Sawyer, one of our Board Members. The spirit of the story is one that many of us feel on visiting the Ancient Burying Ground and working to preserve its treasures.

In a little provincial town, there was one evening quite a social gathering. All the visitors were talking about a great old stone which lay below in the courtyard, and on which the maids often laid the cleaned copper kitchen utensils that they might dry in the sun, and where the children were fond of playing. It was, in fact, an old gravestone.

"Yes," said the master of the house, "I believe the stone comes from the old convent churchyard. My father bought the gravestones when the church was closed, and they were cut in two to be used in the pavement; but that old stone was spared, and has been lying in the courtyard ever since."

"One can very well see that it is a gravestone," observed the eldest of the children; "we can still decipher on it an hour-glass and a piece of an angel; but the inscription which stood below it is almost erased, except that you can read the name of PREBEN, and a great S close behind it, and a little further down the name of MARTHA. But nothing more can be distinguished, and even that is only plain when it has been raining."

"Oh my word, that must be the gravestone of Preben Schwane and his wife!" These words were spoken by an old man; so old, that he could well have been the grandfather of all who were present in the room.

"Yes, they were one of the last pairs that were buried in the old churchyard. I can remember them from the days of my boyhood. Everyone knew and esteemed them as the oldest couple in the town. They were a fine old pair, Preben and Martha! They would both sit on the bench at the top of the steep stone stairs in front of the house, with the old linden-tree spreading its branches above them, and would greet passersby in their gentle way."

"The old woman died first: that day is still quite clear in my mind. I was a little boy, and had accompanied my father to their house; we had just arrived when she fell asleep. The old man was very much moved, and wept like a child. He spoke to my father and to a few neighbors who were there, and said how lonely it would be now in his house, and how good and faithful his wife had been, how many years they had wandered together through life, and how they came to know each other and to fall in love."

"I was, as I have told you, a boy, and only stood by and listened to what the others said; but it filled me with quite a strange emotion to listen to the old man, and to watch how his cheeks gradually flushed red when he spoke of the days of their courtship, and told how beautiful she was, and how many innocent pretexts he had invented to meet her. And then he talked of the wedding-day, and his eyes gleamed; he seemed to talk himself back into that time of joy. And yet she was lying in the next room - dead - an old woman; and he was an old man, speaking of the past days of hope!"

"I can very well remember the day when she was buried, and how Preben Schwane walked close behind the coffin. In the evening the grave-stone was taken to the churchyard, and laid over the grave; and the year afterwards it was taken up, that old Preben Schwane might be laid to rest beside his wife. The old wooden house, with the seat at the top of the steps, beneath the lindentree, was taken down; it was too old and rotten to be left standing. Afterwards, when the same fate befell the convent church, and the graveyard was levelled, Preben's and Martha's tombstone was sold, like everything else, to anyone who would buy it; and that is how this stone has come to lie below in the yard as a scouring-bench for the maids, and a plaything for the children. The highway now goes over the resting-place of old Preben and his wife. No one thinks of them any more."

And the old man who had told all this shook his head scornfully.

"Then I was but a child, and now I am old - as old as Preben Schwane was then. Time passes away and all things change. Forgotten! Everything will be forgotten!" he said.

And then they spoke in the room of other things; but the youngest child, a girl with great serious eyes, stood on a chair behind the window-curtains, and looked out into the yard where the moon was pouring its radiance over the old stone - the old stone that had always appeared to her so tame and flat, but which lay there now like a great leaf out of a book of chronicles. All that the girl had heard about old Preben and his wife seemed concentrated in the stone; and she gazed at it, and looked at the pure bright moon and...
New Organization Formed to Preserve Meeting House and Church House

The Ancient Burying Ground enjoys a notable setting in downtown Hartford, on Main Street set between Hartford’s third oldest building, Center Church, 1807, and the towering modern Gold Building, and on Gold Street, framed by the church and the Church House, 1909, at 60 Gold Street.

The three-stage white steeple was restored successfully over the last few years. But additional restoration work is needed to ensure the preservation of these landmarks, both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. The 1636 Heritage Partnership, Inc., a new, secular, non-profit organization has been formed to preserve the two buildings.

To learn more and support this effort, visit their Facebook page, 1636 Heritage, or website, 1636hp.org.

Hans Christian Andersen
Continued from page 4

up into the clear air, and it seemed as though the countenance of the Creator was beaming over His world.

"Forgotten! Everything will be forgotten!" was repeated in the room.

But in that moment an invisible angel kissed the girl's forehead, and whispered to her:

"Preserve the seed that has been intrusted to thee, that it may bear fruit. Guard it well! Through thee, my child, the obliterated inscription on the old tombstone shall be chronicled in golden letters to future generations! The old pair shall wander again arm in arm through the streets, and smile, and sit with their fresh healthy faces under the linden-tree on the bench by the steep stairs, and nod at rich and poor.

"The seed of this hour shall ripen in the course of time to bloom as a wondrous poem which you shall create. The beautiful and the good shall not be forgotten; they shall live on in legend and in song."

Mr and Mrs Farnsworth, who died a week apart, rest in the ABG.

Mariachi Group Filmed in ABG

This group from the Mariachi Academy of New England was filmed in the ABG for a YouTube video that debuted on November 2 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nv91IRRirEs. The Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program (CCHAP) at the Connecticut Historical Society sponsored this virtual celebration of the Dia de los Muertos, with music and the ofrenda.
ABGA on Social Media

We are posting photos, items, and events on social media, and sending them out to our email list. If you would like to hear from us via email, please send your address to: contact@theancientburyingground.org

Look for us here:

- Facebook - Ancient Burying Ground Association
- Twitter - @HartfordABG
- Instagram - hartfordabg

Website: http://theancientburyingground.org/
Website for the “Uncovering Their History” research project: https://www.africannativeburialsct.org/

Donations can now be made electronically with a debit or credit card, or PayPal account, by using this link: https://bit.ly/2yiSHeT or finding it on the ABGA website.

Stay in touch! We have a great history to explore and conserve.

Talcott Descendants to Meet

The Talcott Family is planning their next national Reunion, to be held in Hartford the last weekend of July 2021. More details will be announced in the Talcott Family Connection, and the ABGA will pass along information. In 2013, the Talcott Family raised funds to create a replica of the missing family crest on the tablestone for Hon. Joseph Talcott, a colonial governor of Connecticut.

Names of Hartford founders from the dismantled 1837 brownstone monument, offered as a fundraiser. See page 3.