



ANCIENT  
BURYING  
GROUND  
ASSOCIATION

# PASSAGES

*Preserving A History Carved in Stone*

## From the President

The Ancient Burying Ground Association has begun a very busy spring and summer season, including conservation work on several gravestones, and the initial photography phase for our database project (see below). We are also excited to have new signage, installed by the City of Hartford. And we are pleased to supply ABG brochures for Elizabeth Park's new Visitor Center.

### New Signage

In 2016, the City of Hartford developed a cohesive, comprehensive signage program to identify, brand, and unify the diverse properties that form the



Hartford Park System, which includes City-owned cemeteries. In early May, the City installed new signage on the Main Street and Gold Street entrances to the ABG. Signage includes burying ground history as well as rules and regulations.

### Elizabeth Park Visitor Center

The new Garmany Visitor Center, located within the Park's historic Brownstone Building, is now displaying our Ancient Burying Ground brochures. When visiting the beautiful and historic Rose Gardens, be sure to stop in to browse and shop and pick up one of our brochures.

~ Ty Tryon

## Digital Photo Documentation Survey Launched

The ABGA received a grant of \$20,000 from the State Historic Preservation Office to hire Heritage Consultants of Newington to conduct a digital survey of each headstone, footstone and memorial plaque. The photographs will be incorporated by the end of 2021 into an online searchable database as part of the Ancient Burying Ground Association's website.

This remarkable project is a point-in-time snapshot of all extant gravestones and memorials. There are an estimated 472 headstones, 170 footstones and a dozen memorial monuments and plaques. This phase of the *Carved in Stone* project serves several purposes:

- To create a digital photographic record of each grave marker;
- To transcribe from the gravestones the biographical information



Elizabeth Correia and Stefon Danczuk photograph a headstone.

and epitaphs;

- To create a searchable online digital survey openly available to the public; and
- To maintain these digital records as a high quality, high resolution photo reference for future conservators to monitor the condition of gravestones over time for repairs or replications.

In addition to displaying these photographs on the Ancient Burying Ground website, they will also be housed in the CT Digital Archive (CTDA). The CTDA is a program hosted by the University of Connecticut Libraries, in collaboration with the Connecticut State Library, and provides long-term preservation services for non-profit Connecticut-based institutions. We are excited that our digital gravestone photos will be archived in the CTDA and accessible to the public. <https://ctdigitalarchive.org/>.

Starting last fall, in preparation for the photography, Ty Tryon, with help from Board members and friends, cleaned most of the markers of lichen and straightened 20-30 leaning stones.

# Help Us Preserve Connecticut's Revolutionary War History

Connecticut played a big part in the American Revolution. More than 40,000 Connecticut men saw military service helping to win independence from Great Britain. Twenty-five of these patriots are buried in Hartford's Ancient Burying Ground.



Please help the ABGA replicate these three significant gravemarkers:

**Captain Joseph Talcott, d. 1799**

**Major Daniel Jones, d. 1802.**

**John Watson, d. 1795**

*Each of these stones will cost \$10,000. • Your donation will help to secure this fragile legacy.*

The ABGA is working to replicate these reminders of Connecticut's Revolutionary War heroes by July 4, 2026-the 250th anniversary of the 1776 establishment of the United States of America.

Your donation may be made by check at ABGA, P.O.Box 347, Hartford, CT 06141-0347  
or online at [theancientburyingground.org/support-us/donations/](http://theancientburyingground.org/support-us/donations/)

*For more information, phone us at 860-337-1640,  
or email: [contact@theancientburyingground.org](mailto:contact@theancientburyingground.org).*



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# 1900 History Milestones

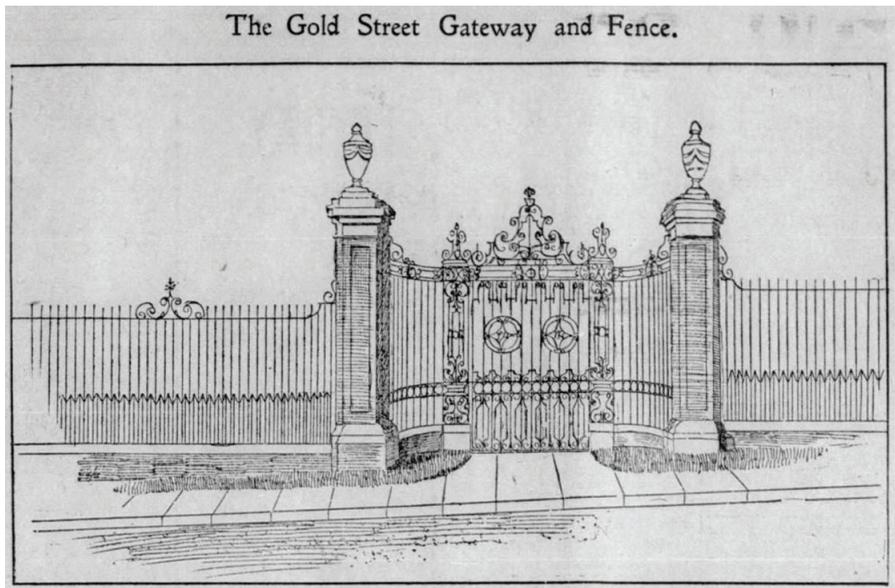
By Mary Donohue



Memorial Fence and Gateway to Ancient Burying Ground. Hartford Conn.

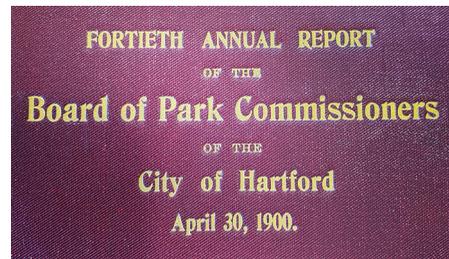
## Ornamental Fence Designed for the ABG

The *Hartford Courant* reported in June of 1900 that the Ruth Wyllys Chapter of the DAR had raised \$10,000 to erect a fence and gateway on the Gold Street side of the burial ground ~ memorials that are still there. The DAR chose one of the nation's best known Gilded Age architectural firms, New York City's McKim, Mead and White. Designers of Pennsylvania Station in New York and the Boston Public Library, the firm brought Beaux Arts elegance to the design. The wrought iron work was done by Bradley & Hubbard Company of Meriden and the stonework done by Charles B. Andrus of Hartford. The gate on the Gold Street side is a memorial to Governor John Haynes, first Governor of Connecticut. The gateway pillars include buff color brickwork with limestone coping and each has a bronze memorial plaque dedicated to Haynes.



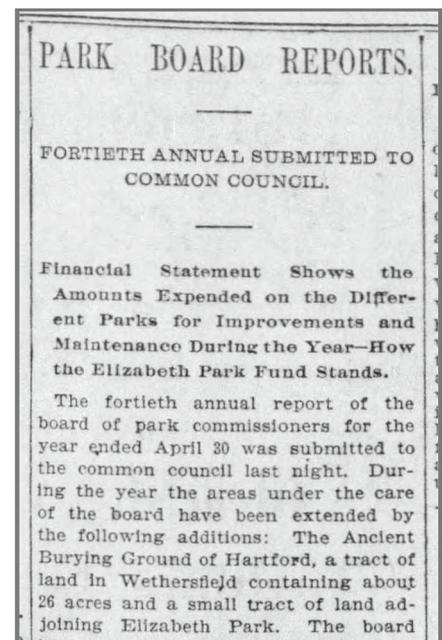
The Gold Street Gateway and Fence.

Photo credits: Ornamental Fence drawing, *Hartford Courant*, June 15, 1900; newspaper headline, *Hartford Courant*, August 14, 1900; Memorial Fence and Gateway, postcard, published by the Chapin News Company, Hartford, CT, 1905.



## The ABG Joins the Park Department

In 1900, by act of the Hartford Court of Common Council, the Ancient Burying Ground was put under the auspices of the Hartford Park Department where it remains today. Under the heading of "Ancient Cemetery," the Park Department reported in its annual report that 25 trees were removed and the existing walks eliminated. A new planting plan was prepared and the "new plantings and fresh lawns will greatly improve the appearance of this historic burial ground." Theodore Wirth, the first superintendent of the Hartford Park Department, was in charge of this improvement. The 1900 annual report noted that a total of \$482.03 was spent on the ABG. Today the ABGA works in a public/private partnership with the Park Department to maintain and restore the ABG.





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## Bruce Eliot Bidwell, 1929-2020

Bruce Bidwell was a Hartford native, and a descendant of Hartford's Founder John Bidwell. He was a long-time supporter of the ABGA, and an active member of Center Church, serving as chairman of the Church's Property Committee, where his interest in historic preservation and his knowledge of construction came together. He was also Church Historian, working alongside his wife Robin Roy, who serves as Church Librarian.



## Annual Meeting

Please join us for our Annual Meeting  
Saturday, July 12, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.  
Parkville Market\*, 1400 Park St, Hartford  
RSVP: 860-550-2776

\* for directions and parking, visit  
[www.parkvillemarket.com](http://www.parkvillemarket.com)



## Broken Headstone in Repair Shop

*This tall marble stone for Sally Patten recently became loose at an old repair, and presented a danger to itself and passersby. It is now in the shop, being reconnected to its base.*