

Memories Abound in Chestnut Grove Cemetery

By Barbara Glakas

Herndon's history is a reflection of the many people who have lived here over the years. And many of those people now rest in Chestnut Grove.

In 1874, Mrs. Katherine Barker, with the financial assistance of 30 other citizens, purchased a section of land for a cemetery at the northeast corner of the Town, at what is now the intersection of Dranesville Road and Herndon Parkway.

A Cemetery Association was formed in 1881, with Herndon Postmaster Stephen Killam serving as the first president. The cemetery was officially platted in 1882, and was named Chestnut Grove. Lottie Dyer Schneider, who was born here in 1879, recalled in her book, *Memories of Herndon, Virginia*, how she would walk through the cemetery land, "finding huckleberries, wild flowers, sassafras roots and stems, chestnuts and lovely mosses."

The Town took over the operation of the cemetery in 1997, and in 1999 the Town Council adopted the Chestnut Grove Cemetery Master Plan. In 2000, due to the historical significance of the cemetery and many of the individuals buried there, the Town designated the cemetery as a Heritage Preservation District. Since then many aspects of the master plan have been implemented, such as the improvement of drive aisles and the construction of an administrative building and a maintenance facility.

Here are some of the memorable people who now rest in Chestnut Grove.

- Lyman D. Ballou (1824-1890): Elected to the second Town Council in May, 1879. The Ballou farmhouse still stands at 747 Park Avenue.
- John H. Barker (1814-1893): Built a house located in a grove of tall, long needle pine trees. The house came to be known as The Pines, and was situated where the Pines Shopping Center now stands.
- Sarah (1840-1910), Henry (1835-1912), J. Herbert (1879-1932), and other members of the Bicksler family: The Bickslers were an early Herndon farming family. Sarah and Henry once owned the land that comprised most of Runnymede Park, the Hunter's Creek subdivision, and land west of what is now Herndon Parkway.
- Howard Blanchard (1852-1935): Served as Herndon's first town clerk.
- Henry C. Blanchard (? – 1913), Charles N. Burr (1840-1923), Philip A. Davis (1843-1920), Joshua M. Hutchison (1842-1931), Lycurgus E. Hutchison (1835-1924), George A. Rowzee (1840-1917), John H. Sanders (1832-1907), Samuel L. Underwood (1839-

1917), and William H. Wilson (1841-1902): All were members of Col. John S. Mosby's Rangers during the Civil War.

- B. Harry Bready (1878-1953): Served as mayor in the early 1900s.
- Isaiah Bready (1830-1913): Herndon's first mayor, in 1879. His home, Elwardstone, still stands at the corner of Ferndale Avenue and Vine Street.
- Harry Graham Breckenridge (1888-1959): The Harry G. Breckenridge American Legion Post #91—Herndon's first American Legion post—was named after him. Once the Northern Methodists abandoned the oldest church in Herndon, at the corner of Elden and Center Streets, Breckenridge bought the building and later sold it to Post #91, which later merged with another post in Sterling.
- Mabel Frye Buell (1888-1975): President of the Fortnightly Club for more than 20 years, she was a leader in establishing the first Catholic Church in Herndon.
- Ida (1860-1940), Lucy (1862-1926), Virginia (1864-1937), and Mary E. Castleman (1854-1932): The four daughters of Mary Castleman, first cousin of Robert E. Lee and founder of the private school known as the Herndon Seminary. The daughters taught at the school and were charter members of the Fortnightly Club.
- Roscoe Crippen (1877-1953): Herndon's fire chief, in 1920.
- Larkin (1869-1959), and Mollie Crouch (1869-1956): Grandparents of Vietnam War era Medal of Honor winner, Col. Wesley L. Fox.
- Bella Crouse (1850-1923): Wife of Civil War veteran and Town Council member Amos Crouse, who is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. They lived in a house that still stands at the corner of Madison and Monroe Streets.
- Dr. John T. Day (1828-1893): A beloved local doctor, sometimes referred to as "Doctor Jack." Imprisoned for a time during the Civil War, he was senior warden at the original St. Timothy's Church (now the Herndon Masonic Lodge). Devoted friends installed a 14-foot stained glass window behind the church altar in his memory.
- Edwin (1860-1916), and Ben Detwiler (1858-1931): A Herndon doctor and dentist, respectively. The Detwiler brothers founded the Herndon Gas Company.

- Charles (1877-1924) ,and Belle (1878-1968) Dudding: Proprietors of Dudding's Hardware Store, located at the corner of Station and Lynn Streets. Belle continued to run the store for many years after her husband's death.
- Elisha Dyer- (1838-1919): An early landowner and general store owner in downtown Herndon. He served as mayor and a Town Council member, and was the town sergeant for 25 years.
- Father Harris M. Findlay (1914-1980): First pastor of St. Thomas a Becket Catholic Church in Reston.
- Edgar E. Gillette (1873-1957): Master Mason of the Herndon Masonic Lodge in 1898.
- Hilda P. Gillette (1914-1992): The first woman Town Council member, elected in 1953.
- Henry Arnold Greear (1895-1969): A World War I veteran and rural mail carrier for the Herndon Post Office for 29 years. He used a horse-drawn wagon to deliver the mail.
- Katherine Groh (1875-1956): A beloved teacher who lived in Herndon and taught at Floris Elementary School for many years.
- Kitty Mariah [nee Kitchen] Hanna (1830-1907): Wife of local merchant Nathaniel Hanna and witness to Mosby's Raid at the Herndon Station in 1863.
- William Waldo Harper (1928-1985): Commander, U.S. Navy, and veteran of three wars— World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.
- George F. Harrison (1850-1938): Served as the Dranesville representative to Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.
- Lawrence Hindle (unknown dates): Served on the first Town Council, in 1879.
- Robert B. Horn (1892-1950): Founded Horn Motors in 1929.
- Edwin Barbour Hutchison (1876- 1971): Taught in the public school system, worked for the State Department, received a law degree from Georgetown University, and became a school principal. Hutchison Elementary School is named for him. His home still stands on Monroe Street.
- Hugh Barbour Hutchison (1870-1924): A wealthy dentist who had a practice in Washington D.C. He built a house on Spring Street in 1908 that was said to be the first house in Herndon with indoor plumbing. The house was later used as a parsonage for Herndon's Woolf Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church South.

- Graham M. James, Jr. (1914-1978): Served as mayor from 1957-1960.
- William H. Kephart (1856- 1944): Owned a small factory in Herndon where he wove carpets and made chairs. His son, William Herman Kephart (1910-1992) was a WWII veteran and a charter member of the Herndon Volunteer Fire Department. He and his wife Ellen Cockerill Kephart (1916-2010) bought and renovated a house on Dranesville Road known as “Quail Hollow.” It remains in the Kephart family today.
- Wayne Kidwell (1948-1968): Herndon resident and Army sergeant killed in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Herndon’s American Legion Post #184 is named after him.
- Stephen Killam (1811-1888): Member of the first Town Council in 1879, Herndon postmaster, and president of the first Cemetery Association.
- Elizabeth Butler Kitchen (1797-1875): Married to William Kitchen and mother of Kitty Kitchen Hanna. Related by marriage to John Coleman, a Revolutionary War veteran who built the first known house in Herndon in 1776.

The list of some of Herndon’s more memorable residents will continue in next week’s edition.