

MAGNOLIA MESSENGER



The Friends of Magnolia Cemetery

"Remove not the ancient Landmark"

Spring 2008

Jonathon Emanuel: Mobile's Merchant Prince

At the center of a one of Magnolia Cemetery's historic lots is a handsome monument dedicated to the memory of Jonathon Emanuel. The monument notes that he was born in the English town of Tavistock in the county of Devonshire on October 26, 1796 and died in Mobile on February 1, 1875.

Devonshire, located between the Bristol and English channels is rural, picturesque, and remote. It apparently did not offer many opportunities for Emanuel. He immigrated to New York in 1821. There he established himself as a merchant and moved to Mobile in 1824.

The city of Mobile in the late 1820's was on the brink of becoming a booming port city and Emanuel apparently recognized its potential. He set his business up bringing goods from New York into the growing city and became rich.

The Emanuel House

Emanuel enticed a Manhattan widow, Isabella Hunter King, to join him in Mobile. Marriage records show that they were married in Mobile on March 26, 1832. Within approximately four years, Emanuel built his wife what was arguably the finest residence in the city.

The design of the house has been attributed to James Gallier. It is certainly plausible that the great architect did design the house. He was already in the city at the time, and his plans for Government Street Presbyterian Church as well as Barton Academy were being drawn at this period.

The large lot was on the south west corner of Government and Joachim streets. The Emanuel house was completed in a classic style, three stories in height with the majority of rooms measuring 20' X 20'. The ceilings were high, the doors and staircases were

of mahogany and the hardware was silver.

On the main level double parlors occupied the east side while the reception room and dining room were located on the west side of the wide entrance hall. A gallery ran the width of the back of the house and overlooked a walled garden. Two floors of bedrooms accommodated the couple and their seven children.

Emanuel continued to prosper as a merchant and cotton broker and retired in 1856. He then presided over the Mobile Insurance Company. In 1859 the firm advertised that it had \$200,000 in capital and insured "against fire, marine and river risks." Offices were located at 40 St. Francis Street.

Emanuel also served as a director for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. He held office in Mobile's Chamber of Commerce and served as a public school commissioner as well as a city councilman.

A Mansion Remodeled

The Emanuels remodeled the interior of their home in 1860, and reportedly added a side wing. The fashion for the simple lines of the Grecian taste had been replaced by the flamboyance of the Rococo Revival. The new style was commonly called "Antique French" as the Empress Eugenie of France had started the trend. Suddenly the tastemakers were stating that the most unnatural thing

in the world was a straight line, and the furniture of this period reflects that idea.

Twentieth century photographs reflect a heavily ornamented cornice in each room and massive marble mantelpieces. Each chandelier was suspended from a similar concoction of thickly leaved plaster.



The Emanuel Home:

As traffic and commercial intrusion increased on Government Street, its residential appeal lessened. The Emanuel home was being operated as a boarding house by 1903 and sold to the Shriners as a clubhouse 20 years later. That organization spent a whopping \$50,000 updating the house. Here it proudly stands at its completion. ca. 1923.

Courtesy USA Archives, Erik Overbey Collection

The Emanuel Offspring

America entered the Civil War in 1861. The war had tragic consequences for the Emanuel family. Their oldest son, Thomas King Emanuel, was killed at the siege of Vicksburg in 1863. He was 27 years old. His monument at Magnolia Cemetery features cannons and a broken column symbolizing a life cut short.

The Emanuel's eldest was daughter Mary. In 1853 at the age of 20 she married Joshua Kennedy, Jr. He was a partner in the grocery firm of Kennedy, Nevill and Jones on North Commerce Street.

Kennedy's father had been one of Mobile's wealthiest landowners. The family mansion was one of the city's largest, occupying much of a block of St. Louis Street. The younger Kennedy had been sent to prep school in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.



Joshua Kennedy married Mary Emanuel in 1853 and built this unique Government Street mansion four years later. He was one of nearly 8,000 Confederate casualties at a Virginia battle in 1862. Since its acquisition by the American Legion in the 1940's the house has taken a steady slide into dereliction.

Courtesy: USA Archives Blake McNeely Collection

The Kennedy House

In 1857 Kennedy built his wife a Government Street mansion which still stands on the south east corner of Dearborn Street. The house is unique in its design, a cross between Greek Revival with its large columns, and the Italianate, with its arches and the hood molds atop the windows.

Kennedy did not enjoy his house long. He was killed at the Battle of Seven Pines in Virginia on June 1, 1862. He was one of nearly 8,000 Confederate casualties. Kennedy left a widow and a

seven year old daughter, Isabel.

Isabel Kennedy met a sad fate as well. In 1876 the popular 20 year old was enjoying a house party near Citronelle. She took a lethal dose of caustic potash, mistaking it for a medicine which she thought would relieve a sore throat. Ironically one of the symptoms of ingesting that poison is severe throat pain. After a funeral at her mother's home on Government Street she was buried in the Emanuel lot at Magnolia Cemetery.

A House Swap

In 1887 after 30 years in her Government Street home, Mary transferred her ownership of the house to her widowed sister, Virginia. In return, Mary received her sister's interest in their childhood home. Virginia was ten years her junior and had married Ben E. Mitchell in 1867. Like the rest of the Emanuel children, Virginia was a member of Christ Church in Mobile and generously donated to its rebuilding following the 1906 hurricane.

Virginia Mitchell died at Eufaula, Alabama in 1909 and was buried in the Emanuel lot beside her husband who had died in 1883. Her heirs sold the family home to the Seamen's Bethel in 1923. The William H. Ross mansion across the street had been converted to a Knight's of Columbus hall in 1920 and the neighborhood's downward spiral to commercial had begun to escalate.

The Marrying Barnewall

Mary Emanuel Kennedy had married William Barnewall in 1874. Barnewall, like her mother, was a native New Yorker who had called Mobile home since 1847. He had been married twice before, to Helen Ingersoll in 1848 (died 1855), and Mary Hopkins in 1859 (died 1871). City directories variously show his occupations to have included commission merchant, real estate broker and cotton factor. He also had the distinction of serving as British vice consul for Mobile and he had achieved the rank of major in the Confederate army.

The Barnewalls moved in with Mary's mother, Isabella. The widow Emanuel was 76 at the time. Mrs. Emanuel died three years later and Mary Emanuel Kennedy Barnewall died in 1894 at the age of 61.

William Barnewall at 73 took a fourth wife the following year. Leila Richards, then age 42, was a daughter of Charles G. Richards, a Mobile merchant best remembered today for his spectacular home on North Joachim Street. It has been operated as a house museum by the D.A.R. since 1972.

The newlyweds are listed in city directories as living at 251 Government Street, the Emanuel house. The 76 year old Barnewall died peacefully in his sleep on a May afternoon in 1898. Following a 5PM service at Christ Church he was buried in Magnolia Cemetery where the newspaper described the grave as being "hidden from view by a large number of beautiful floral pieces."

That floral bedecked grave was not in the Emanuel lot however. William Barnewall was buried in Charles Richards' lot. Ironically his fourth marriage was his shortest. His widow returned to 256 N. Joachim Street where she would occupy the front bedroom there until her death in 1930.



Minnie Hatch Macartney, ca. 1900

Courtesy: USA Archives Erik Overbey Collection

The Christ Church Connection: Silver, Jewels and a Tiffany Window

Although patriarch Jonathon Emanuel was Jewish, his descendants had a long association with the city's oldest Episcopal church.

The Emanuel house was bequeathed to Christ Church by Mary Barnewall. Her will further directed that her family silver be melted down for a cross for the church nave while her jewelry be converted into a Chalice. Further funds and real estate from the Barnewall estate went to the church and reportedly got the church through the lean years of the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The priceless Chalice and the silver cross are not the only treasures Christ Church received from descendants of Jonathan Emanuel. One of the most memorable windows within that historic church is titled "*Nicodemus Meeting Jesus at Night*" and was created by Tiffany Studios. It depicts the elder synagogue leader secretly meeting Jesus with a glowing lantern.

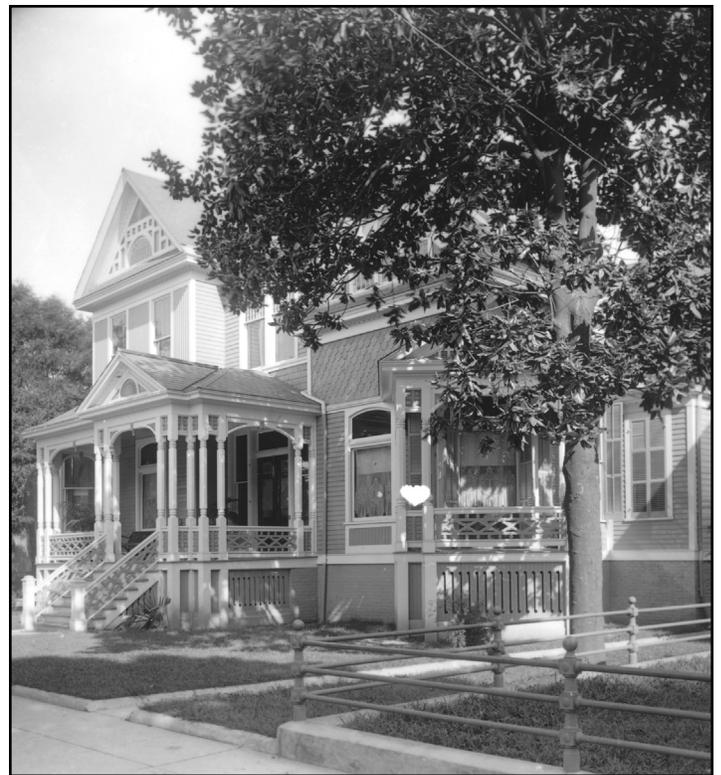
The window was given in memory of the Emanuel's daughter, Josephine Emanuel Macartney and her son Edwin. Josephine had married Thomas Knowles Macartney, a Mobile attorney in 1867. The Macartney's lived in a house on Government Street's south side between Hamilton and Lawrence streets where the Mobile Chamber of Commerce stands today.

The Edwin Macartneys

The Macartney's son Edwin was born in 1868 and attended Auburn. He returned to Mobile where city directories list his occupations as including Leadsman, U.S. Engineer Corps in 1891 and vice president of Gibson-Labuzon Grocery Company in 1894. At the time his address was with his widowed mother.

Edwin married Minnie Hatch, a native of Gallion, Perry County, Ala. in 1895. He built her a house on the south west corner of Government and Hamilton streets, next door to his mother. Edwin died childless nine years later, and was buried in Magnolia Cemetery in the Emanuel lot.

Minnie Hatch Macartney gave the Tiffany window to honor her late husband, and his mother who had died less than a year before him. She remarried a New York physician named Pearson



Edwin Macartney, a grandson of Jonathon Emanuel, built his wife this house on the south west corner of Government and Hamilton streets in the late 1890's. While his widow lay in a coma her relatives were cleaning out the house of its treasures. Her recovery came as quite a surprise. The house was replaced by a used car lot in the 1950's.

Courtesy: USA Archives Blake McNeely Collection

and moved there for a number of years. Her paid biography appeared in the short lived "Alabama Blue Book and Social Register" published in 1929. It noted that by that time she was a widow, back at 451 Government Street, while proudly declaring that "during the World War, Mrs. Pearson sold Liberty-Bonds in the Waldorf-Astoria, New York City."

Two Headstone Edwin

Minnie Hatch, as she was always known, fell ill and was checked into the Mobile Infirmary where her condition worsened. She slipped into a coma, and lingered for days. To her doctor's and relatives considerable surprise, the old lady rallied. One of her first requests was for her false teeth. When a niece asked where they were she replied "Where I always keep them. The top drawer of my bedside table."

Unfortunately the family had already been clearing out Aunt Minnie's home and the named table and its contents were already gone. What the niece told her aunt has gone unrecorded but records show that Mrs. Minnie Hatch Macartney Pearson died at home on a June day in 1943. She was 72.

The funeral services were held both at 451 Government Street and Christ Church. The burial followed at Magnolia Cemetery beside her first husband, Edwin. When her relatives got to her will, they discovered that Mrs. Pearson had specified she wanted a headstone matching that which had been installed for her beloved Edwin in 1904.

Furthermore, directed Minnie: *I expressly direct my executors to see that this is done before any part of my trust estate is paid to the beneficiaries.*

With World War II in full swing and shortages in place, custom made headstones like Edwin's were apparently in short supply. The heirs solved that problem. A modern in-stock double monument with both of the Macartneys' names and dates was placed atop the two, giving Edwin two headstones. The relatives got their money.

The Macartney home lasted a few years as physicians' offices before it met the wreckers. By 1952, Joe Bullard's used car lot occupied the corner.

Two More Government Street Homes

Emanuel daughters Eveline (born 1835) and Fannie (born 1838) also married in Mobile and lived on Government Street. Eveline married John W. Murrell in June of 1855 while her younger sister married Joseph P. Rutland in June of 1857.

John W. Murrell was a commission merchant and he and Eveline occupied a house on the southwest corner of Government and Jackson streets. That house was later replaced with a gas station and the block is now filled with the Holiday Inn.

Mr. Rutland's profession in the city directory for 1861 was Secretary of the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. In 1867 he was listed as a principal in Mitchell and Rutland, "steamboat agents and commission merchants." His partner was his brother in law, Ben E. Mitchell. He and Fannie resided on the south side of Government Street between Bayou and Jefferson. That two story brick house still stands at 805 Government Street.

These two Emanuel daughters died within three years of each other and both are buried in the Jonathon Emanuel lot. Their husbands are not. Fannie was listed as a widow in the 1875 city directory and died in 1882. There is no record of Joseph Rutland's burial at Magnolia Cemetery.

Eveline Murrell died in 1885, but her husband John lived until 1909. He rests in the Murrell family lot.

But Who Was Eliza Bleeker?

There is a mysterious occupant of the Emanuel lot: Eliza Bleeker. Her stone gives a date of death as February 12, 1868, noting that she was the widow of Samuel Chapman. Mobile County marriage records reflect that Eliza M. Center married Samuel Chapman in 1844 as her third husband. She had previously married Henry Center in 1822 and George R. Pinkham in 1819.

Henry Center is buried at Church Street Graveyard where his marker gives a date of death as 1841 noting he was "in the 47th year of his age." Mr. Pinkham's whereabouts are unknown.

Mrs. Chapman's connection with the Emanuel family has apparently been lost to time. Perhaps she was a family friend.

The Sad Fate of the Emanuel House

As previously mentioned, the last family member to occupy 251 Government Street was Mary Emanuel Kennedy Barnewall who died in 1894. Whether her husband rented the house from the church or was permitted to live there until his 1898 death is unclear. It was leased out after he died.

The neighborhood was taking a commercial turn by the late 1890's. McGill Institute had converted the Chandler home across the street into a parochial school for boys. The massive Elks Club replaced the Sidney Smith home just across Joachim Street in 1901.



The Shriners lost the Emanuel house to foreclosure during the Depression. Plans for the Bankhead Tunnel made the site irresistible to developers hoping to cash in on all that traffic. The corner has held the Admiral Semmes Hotel since the late 1930's. Here the once proud house meets its end.

Courtesy: USA Archives Blake McNeely Collection

By 1903 the former Emanuel residence was being operated as a boarding house first by Jane Hodgson and in 1916 by Henrietta Mayers. In September of 1923 the house was sold to the Shriners according to a newspaper account. The price was \$50,000 and it was announced that another \$50,000 would be spent "to renovate it into a clubhouse as one of the premier clubs of the city. Plans call for a reading room, gymnasium, reception room and the most luxurious of furnishings."

The Shriners hired architect George B. Rogers to remodel the house. Period photographs show that the exterior was preserved



Right photo: This classic monument in the Emanuel lot features a draped figure symbolizing grief leaning on a pedestal. Beneath it a winged hour glass reminds us that life is fleeting. It is dedicated to Eliza Bleeker, whose connection with the Emanuels remains a mystery. **Left photo:** Jonathan Emanuel's Monument centers the family lot.

Courtesy: T.C. McGehee

and while interior changes were obviously made, the architectural details remained. The group held their meetings here and made the space available for event rentals.

The Great Depression of the 1930's saw the Shriner's membership and its coffers shrink. The house was lost twice to them in foreclosure. The second time they were unable to bring the loan current and the house was sold for a site to build a hotel, its furnishings auctioned. The Bankhead Tunnel would soon be complete, sending thousands of cars daily past the corner.

In the wrecker's haste to demolish one of the most beautiful houses in Alabama, the mahogany staircase was ripped out before the upper floors had been cleared of their contents. Traffic on Government Street slowed to watch each piece of antique furniture being carefully lowered out of the upper windows by ropes.

By the late 1930's the Admiral Semmes Hotel was occupying the lot on which Jonathon Emanuel had so proudly built his home a century earlier. That hotel still stands, and few today are aware of the interesting family that once called that corner home.

– Tom McGehee



Edwin Macartney, was a grandson of Jonathon Emanuel. His remains were marked twice – with a slab and ornate headstone in 1904 and an off the shelf double monument in 1943. This is not what his widow had intended.

Courtesy: T. C. McGehee

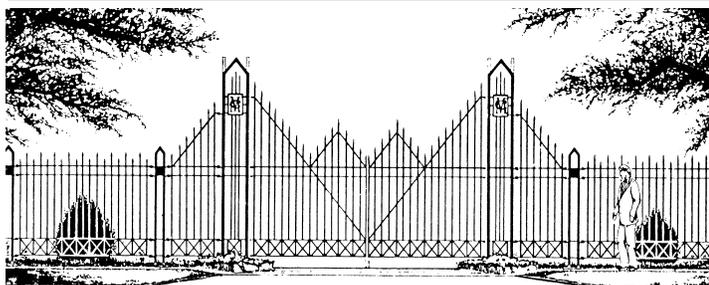
Stories Among the Stones A Walking Tour

One of the benefits of your membership with us is our annual walking tour. It's a blend of learning about the history of cemeteries, funerary art and most of all fascinating tales of the men, women and children buried here.

This year's tour will take place on Saturday, April 26 at 10:00 AM and lasts until 11:30 AM. Signs will direct you towards the Friends office on Virginia Street. Please wear comfortable shoes and join us! Your guide is Tom McGehee, president of the Friends. Current membership is required but you may buy or renew one that day.

Please call us so we will know how many to expect.





**– PLEASE JOIN US –
New Memorial Fence Sections
To Be Dedicated at 2:00 P.M.
Sunday, March 30th, 2008**

The following fence sections will be dedicated. Note that those sections given by Alletta Turner Trust honor past presidents of the Friends of Magnolia Cemetery.

**New Memorial
Fence Section 2008**

<u>Donor</u>	<u>In Honor Of or In Memory of</u>
1. The Sophia H. Ethier Trust	In Honor of Raymond H. Ethier
2. The Raymond H. Ethier Trust	In Memory of Sophia Hunter Ethier
3. The Friends of Magnolia Cemetery	In Memory of Margaret Lyons Meaher
4-6. A.S. Mitchell Foundation	A gift of the A.S. Mitchell Foundation
7. The Jack Ross Trust	In Memory of Jack Ferrill Ross, III
8-12. The Arch R. Winter Endowment	
13-18. The Alletta Turner Trust	In Honor of Judy Allen-Leventhal In Honor of Stewart A. LeBlanc, Jr. In Honor of Ruth Brandenburg Fitzgerald In Honor of Alice Holley Carwie In Honor of Stewart A. LeBlanc, Jr. In Honor of Mary Hunter Turner Slaton
19-21. Robert E. Miller, Jr.	In Memory of Thomas P. Miller In Memory of Wiber Cluis Belknap In Memory of Henry Minor Friend

Grave Spaces for Sale

The following spaces are available within Magnolia Cemetery.
Call us for further information.
Square 16 lot 74 3 spaces

**In Memorium
Margaret Lyons Meaher**

It is with deep regret that we note the death of long-time Friend, Margaret Lyons Meaher. Mrs. Meaher took a sincere interest in the restoration of Magnolia Cemetery and was a long-time supporter of this organization and its work. The board of the Friends extends its deepest sympathy to her children and grandchildren. Please note the extensive list of memorials made in her memory published in this issue.

Lest We Forget

The Friends of Magnolia Cemetery is the sole beneficiary from the sale of Harry Myers' book *Lest We Forget*. All proceeds go into the Perpetual Care Trust Fund, due to the generosity of his sons who made it possible for the book to be published.

Order Form for *Lest We Forget* by Harry E. Myers

Name _____

Address _____

City / ST _____ Zip _____

■ Books are \$25 when picked up at Magnolia Cemetery or \$29 when mailed.

■ Make checks payable to Friends of Magnolia Cemetery.

■ Mail your order to Friends of Magnolia Cemetery, P.O. Box 6383, Mobile, AL 36660. The Friends' office is located at 1202 Virginia Street. If you need additional information call (251) 432-8672.

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(251) 432-8672**

- Please find enclosed my tax-deductible membership contribution of \$35.
- I would like to make an additional contribution of \$ _____ to The Friends of Magnolia Cemetery.
- I would like to make an additional contribution of \$ _____ to The Peperual Care Trust Fund.
- Renewal I am a new member.

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Square _____ Lot No. _____

- Please contact me to work on volunteer projects.

Superintendent's Report

I would like to welcome new board members Mr. A. J. Dupree, Mrs. Lorena Bell and Mrs. Barbie Whitaker. I look forward to meeting with them and discussing their ideas as we move into an exciting new year. I would also like to welcome back old friends, Mr. Douglas B. Kearley, Mrs. Mary Hunter Slaton and Mr. Selwyn H. Turner, III. We also have Marilyn Culpepper as our new HMPS representative replacing Ann Thublin. Mr. Stewart LeBlanc and Mrs. Iras Smith have also rotated off the board and they will be missed.

The Executive Board has only one change, with Tom McGehee serving as president a second time. Tom has the distinction of being one of only two to be brave enough to serve a second time. The other was Stewart LeBlanc. I am looking forward to an extremely productive two years under Tom's guidance.

2008 promises to be an exciting year. We have just completed planting 200 magnolia trees and will plant live oaks, Taiwan cherries, coastal silver bells, and Chinese fringe trees towards year's end.

Watch for new informational cemetery signs to be in place by April of this year. Douglas Kearley worked tirelessly on this project along with myself and Tom McGehee.

The Chicora Foundation will be working on damaged stones beginning in April. I look forward to their involvement with Magnolia Cemetery and hope that this is the start of a long relationship with them. For further information visit their website at www.chicora.org.

If you have further questions, please contact me at (251) 379-0611 or email me at mhalseth@magnoliacemetery.com

– Mark Halseth

President's Report

It is an honor to be asked to serve a second term as president of one of Mobile's most successful organizations. The Friends of Magnolia Cemetery, Inc. has been repeatedly cited for the success in the ongoing maintenance and restoration of one of the Gulf Coast's most historic sites.

Our goal is to continue to assist lot owners in the restoration of their family monuments when needed. However, as we are all aware, many of the most handsome lots here are filled with the end of the family line and there are no descendants to look out for them. In these instances the Friends step in. The upcoming restoration work performed by the Chicora Foundation will save many monuments which would otherwise crumble to dust.

Mark Halseth, our superintendent, takes a personal interest in this property and it shows. The tree planting will continue to beautify the carriageways within the cemetery. Live oaks, Taiwan cherries and of course magnolias are just a few of the trees being planted. The severe pruning of the overgrown row of azaleas on Ann Street startled me, but I am happy to see that the plants have sent out thick healthy new growth.

Janet Savage, our Executive Director works long hours and never complains. She has completed the lengthy project of gleaning our membership list which will result in a substantial savings in postage. She is never too busy to assist a visitor with a research question or locate a relative's grave site.

We have an important mission here but we cannot do it without the generosity of our Friends. If you know of someone who is interested in Mobile history, ask them if they belong to the Friends of Magnolia Cemetery. They should. And if they tell you they don't have any relatives buried here, tell them neither does the president of the Friends. It's not a requirement!

– Tom McGehee

Memorials to the Perpetual Care Trust Fund

In Honor of . . .

Martha F. Greer
On her retirement

Sister McClure
On her Birthday

In Memory of . . .

Eloise Langan Anderson
Caldwell Delaney

Grover Durant

Ernest Edgar, Jr.

Mabel Green

Elwood Leon Hogan

Tokie Holley

Martha E. Kennedy

Olaf Schavland Knudsen &
Isabelle Marshall Knudsen

Herman Maisel

Margaret Lyons Meaher:

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Dorothy Bodiford
James W. Bodiford, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. R. Preston Bolt, Jr.
Sadie Gilmore Booker
L. Russell Brandau, Jr.
Effie Lou Brown
Ann & Paul Burkholder
Lane P. Carleton
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Col. Daniel D. Hall, Danny & Rebecca
Martha & Ben Harris
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Friedman's Fine Jewelry

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Mashall S. Knudsen

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Julia Hall Smith

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Marianne Busbee

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The Children of Dorothy & Gus Thames, Sr.

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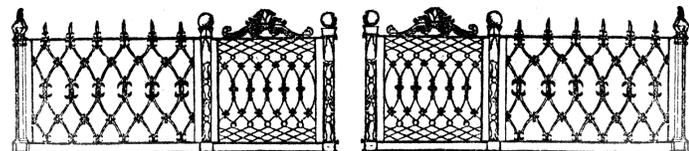
Helen C. Wilson

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Looking for a Gift?

If you know someone interested in Mobile's history, why not give them a gift of a membership in the Friends of Magnolia Cemetery? Their membership will help preserve this historic site and provide them with a year's subscription to the Messenger with its historical insights.

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