



EVERGREEN
CEMETERY WALK

EST. 1995

THE GRAND FINALE

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
OCTOBER 5-6 & 12-13, 2024



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Our partnership with the McLean County Museum of History
and Illinois Voices Theatre Echoes continues
with our commitment to the Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

We are grateful for the many individuals and organizations
that put in so much time and effort to make this historical
walk a success.

We would like to say Thank You to everyone who has been out
to take a walk back in time and educate themselves on our
local history.

302 E. Miller St.
Bloomington, IL 61701
www.evergreenmemorialcemetery.com



EVERGREEN
CEMETERY WALK

EST. 1995



PUBLIC TOURS:

October 5-6 and October 12-13, 2024

SCHOOL TOURS:

October 7-10, 2024

SPONSORED BY:



Illinois Prairie
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**Deanna Frautschi
& Alan Bedell**



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THE GRAND FINALE OF THE EVERGREEN CEMETERY WALK

The opening line of the 10th Anniversary Commemorative Playbill read “If there was ever a project that had a life of its own, it is the *Evergreen Cemetery Discovery Walk*. When the program began in 1995, no one had any idea that it would still be going strong ten years later.” But here we are, holding the 30th and final *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*.

Over three decades ago, leaders from the McLean County Museum of History, Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Illinois Voices Theatre, and the McLean County Arts Center collaborated to create an engaging new program utilizing the voices of people from the past to share stories about our community’s history and educating people on the importance of cemetery preservation. Furthermore, the event aimed to curb the rampant vandalism occurring in Bloomington’s oldest and most historic cemetery.

What began as a single Saturday event with two days of school performances quickly blossomed into a full-fledged historical theater event, serving more than 3,000 people over the course of eight days each year. Upwards of 95,000 people (the majority of whom being students), have experienced the *Walk* over the last three decades, both in-person and virtually.

The Walk has featured stories from 211 individuals from various walks of life. Some of these people’s stories would have lived on without our event, but others would have been long forgotten. We have heard from coal miners, university presidents, librarians, opera singers, sisters who survived the Tulsa Race Massacre, brothers who fought racism while serving in the Great War, close friends and colleagues of Abraham Lincoln, and so many more.

This event would not have been possible for the last 30 years if it was not for the 530 volunteers who have given more than 34,000 hours to ensure the *Walk*’s success. All of the work the actors, staff, crew, and volunteers have put into this event has turned into a supportive community of people, invested in their local history and passionate about helping others learn more about it.

The power and impact of this award-winning event has been felt far beyond the boundaries of McLean County. The Museum has been called upon many times to help shape other cemetery programs in our nation. *The Walk* has also helped people understand the significant roles individuals from our past play in history. By introducing visitors to the educational benefits of acting and the arts, we’ve been able to bring our history to light and to life.

Please know that this is not goodbye. The Museum will always champion the preservation of our local history. We will always collaborate with our community partners to make history accessible for all. Most importantly, we will never leave the legacy of the *Cemetery Walk* behind. It is a piece of history in its own right, and its influence will continue for many years to come.

Thank you for making history with us.

Evergreen Cemetery Walk Coordinators

Candace Summers, Emily McCusker, and Eric Hansen

SAVING *Santa*

THE MUSEUM'S LARGEST PRESERVATION PROJECT YET

Join us Saturday, November 30th at 11:30 a.m.
to welcome the iconic Livingston Santa back to
Downtown Bloomington.



Scan the QR Code to learn more about
Santa's journey and the plans to bring
public art to the Museum Square.



The Museum's new mobile tour platform, **TOURIENT**, puts local history in the palm of your hand. Its easy to use tours lead you from place to place with an interactive map; simultaneously, photos, text, and audio provide historical context to what surrounds you. So far, we have two tours ready for your enjoyment ***Looking for Lincoln in Bloomington-Normal: A Tour Narrated by Abraham Lincoln*** and the ***Downtown Bloomington Architectural Tour***. We have plans to add more tours in the future, including a Spanish Language Audio Tour in November! Scan the QR code or visit mchistory.tourient.app/ to start exploring.



CEMETERY WALK FUND DRIVE DONORS AS OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

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LIVE & LOCAL



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CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Sophia Huggins (1831-1903) or “Aunt Sophia” as she was known by her clientele, was a claimed clairvoyant who made a living in Bloomington, IL telling the fortunes of a wide cross section of Bloomingtonians. She is featured with the mysterious **Madame Annette**, a reporter for the *Daily Bulletin* newspaper who profiled early settlers and touring actresses, chatted about fashion and makeup, and interviewed eccentric individuals like the enigmatic Huggins.



Jennifer Rusk (Sophia Huggins)

is grateful to again work with the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. She is an ISU theater alum with an acting emphasis. Rusk has appeared in various productions in the community including as “Mrs. Dickerson” in *Intimate Apparel* (Heartland Theater), plus directing *A Raisin in the Sun* at Community Players Theater. She would like to thank her heavenly guardian angels: her mother, her father, and her brother. They instilled in her faith, love of the arts, history, and a “never give up attitude.” Rusk dedicates this performance in remembrance of her mother, Joyce Ann Rusk, a lover of history.



Cristen Monson (Mme. Annette)

an Academic Advisor at ISU, earned a B.A. in acting from the University of Texas at El Paso and an M.A. in theater from Illinois State University. She directs, acts, writes, and teaches theater locally. Recent directing credits include *Sponge Bob: The Musical*, as well as several shows for Heartland Theater’s *10-Minute Play Festival* and Nomad Theater (co-founder). Favorite acting roles include “Sarah” in *Time Stands Still*, “Beth” in *Tribes*, and “Carol” in the 2023 Holiday Spectacular. Monson has previously appeared in the *Walk* as Susan B. Anthony and Emily Noble.



CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



**June Crandall
(1878 - 1910)**

a Kentucky native, came to Bloomington in 1898 and began working as a miner at the McLean County Coal Company on the west side of town. He was one of the earliest labor union organizers and Socialist Party leaders in Bloomington. Crandall was deeply concerned about the exploitation of the American working class. He fought hard on various platforms, including in the political sphere, to improve the quality of life for his fellow workers and their families.

**Nathan Gaik
(June Crandall)**

is thrilled to be returning to the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* after making his debut last year as Samuel Noble King. Gaik



received his acting training at Illinois State University and is active in local theatre. For over a decade, he was an acting company member at Conklin's Barn Dinner Theatre. This past July, Gaik played "Bottom" in Lincoln Community Theatre's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. A horror film fanatic, he recently played the titular role of "The Hag" in the film *Hunting For The Hag*. A special thank you to Patrick for his love and support.



**Eva Jones
(1930-1987)**

was a woman who never turned away from challenging situations or tough decisions. She was the first Black person elected to the Bloomington District 87 Board of Education in 1971 and the Bloomington City Council in 1979. In these leadership roles, her voice amplified the needs of previously underrepresented individuals during a period of increased racial tension in the community and across the country. Outside her elected positions, she also worked with McLean County's YWCA, League of Women Voters, and United Way.

**Darraugh Maxine
(Eva Jones)**

is honored to be returning to the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk!* She is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University with a



BFA in Acting. Earlier this year, Darraugh went on tour with the National Theater for Children, performing in the show *Land of Smiles*. Some of her favorite credits include *A Raisin in The Sun* and *Crowns*. When not on stage, you can also find Darraugh making magic as a princess performer with *A Royal Remembrance*. She thanks her mother for always supporting her, as well as her partner Zach.

CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Georgina Trotter (1836-1904) and Sarah Raymond Fitzwilliam (1842 - 1918)

were advocates and close friends who wanted better for Bloomington. Businesswoman Georgina Trotter was the first woman elected to the Bloomington Board of Education in 1874. She served alongside educator Sarah Raymond Fitzwilliam, who became the first female superintendent of Bloomington Public Schools that same year. These women had an uphill battle to prove they were worthy of these positions. Together, they worked side-by-side to improve the quality of education students received in Bloomington Public Schools and to improve the lives of others in the community.



Kevin Yale Vernon (Georgina Trotter)

is excited to join the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* for the first time. Previous shows include *Indigenous Intervention*, *The Front Porch Plays* (Nomad Theater), *This is Not Business as Usual* (Coalescence Theater Project), and *August: Osage County* (Community Players Theater), plus shows at Peoria's Corn Stock Theater. She has two theater degrees, one from the University of Wyoming and one from ISU. Vernon retired this year from teaching theater at Normal Community High School. Special thanks go out to her spouse, David - literally couldn't do it without you!



Kathleen Kirk (Sarah Raymond Fitzwilliams)

has been a script writer for the Museum's annual *History Makers Gala* and *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* for many years. She has played several characters in the walk, including Helen Clark McCurdy, Mary Gridley, Georgina Trotter, Ange Milner, and Helen Davis Stevenson. An actor, writer, and editor in Chicago before returning to Normal, Kirk worked with the Steppenwolf, Court, and Free Shakespeare theatre companies. She now works at the Normal Public Library, serves on the Board of Heartland Theatre, and edits the online magazine *Escape Into Life*.



CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Augustus "Gus" Belt (1895-1954) and

Edith Pressler Belt (1896 - 1973) successfully grew a single

Bloomington restaurant into a nationwide chain. The Steak n' Shake proprietors had several failed business ventures before acquiring a Shell Oil station at the corner of Main and Virginia Streets, which they transformed into a successful drive-in serving hamburgers and milkshakes in 1934. After Gus's death in 1954, Edith continued as chairperson and continued to grow and expand the company for more than a decade before selling the company in 1968. The Belts are this year's visiting voices from East Lawn Memorial Cemetery in honor of Steak n' Shake's 90th anniversary.



Jeff Ready (Gus Belt) is returning for

his third *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. He has been seen around town in various productions at Heartland Theatre, Community Players Theater, and Coalescence Theatre Project. Ready is excited to work with this cast and crew and hopes you enjoy the experience as much as he has.



Kayla Pulliam Mendoza (Edith Belt) is thrilled to

be joining the cast of the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* for the first time. She

has been lucky enough to perform across the Midwest, including multiple productions here in Bloomington-Normal. Favorite credits include: "The Governess" in *Turn of the Screw*, "Blanche" in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, "Barbara" in *August: Osage County*, and "The Narrator" in *Puffs*. Mendoza holds a degree in acting and is also an accomplished director.



CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Angeline Vernon Milner (1856-1928)

known to most as Ange, is one of Illinois' most famous librarians. Milner became Illinois State (Normal) University's first full-time librarian in 1890, serving nearly 40 years. Her passion for library science drew national attention and shaped the university's curriculum. Milner was a founding member of the Illinois branch of the American Library Association and instituted the idea of teaching college students how to use library resources in their studies, a practice she outlined for other teachers' colleges to follow.

Devon Lovell (Ange Milner)

previously appeared in the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* as Clara Kessler, also a librarian! Lovell enjoys both writing and acting. She acted in and wrote for Nomad Theatre's *HERstory* this past spring. Lovell has acted at Heartland Theatre, most recently in *Tiny Beautiful Things*, as "Sugar." She co-hosts the *Next to Normal Story Slam*, a local story-sharing event. Professionally, Lovell works as an educational consultant focused primarily on literacy. Her family, Rhys, Carys, Will (and Fiddler), fill her life with delight. She is full of gratitude for all of it.



Susan Anhalt Thetard (Echoes Artistic Director)

This is Susan's seventh year as Echoes Artistic Director producing both the *History Makers Gala* and the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. Thetard holds an MFA in Costume Design and a BFA in English and Theater Education. She taught and directed plays and musicals at University High School for 19 years, and has designed for local and professional theaters for many years. Thetard is thankful for her husband Jon's patience and her daughter, Stacia's, assistance with graphics and props. She is also grateful to work with such dedicated and talented members of the Museum staff.



Dave Krostal (Director) has performed in over 75 local productions including most as "Bardolph" in *Henry V* at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, "Norman" in *Table Manners* at Heartland Theater, and as "Paul Sheldon" in *Misery* at Peoria Players. Dave and his wife Cristen played Clyde and Emily Noble in the 2018 *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. Krostal is a graduate of Illinois State University's Theater Education program and retired from teaching in 2016. This is his fifth year as director for the *Cemetery Walk*.





Candace Summers (Senior Director of Education), Emily McCusker (Director of Youth & Family Education), and Eric Hansen (Director of Volunteers) are the lead Museum staff members responsible for the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. Together, they bring a combined 20+ years of Museum experience with them to their planning of this signature event. With degrees in History, Archaeology, and Political Science, all three of them have a passion for our local history—one that they hope to instill in others through Museum programs like the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*.

HISTORY *Makers*

*Do you know someone who is over the age of 70 and has made McLean County a better place for all?
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Thanks for a great season! We'll see you again in the Spring!

A DEADLY DECEPTION

THE ASBESTOS TRAGEDY IN MCLEAN COUNTY

This new temporary exhibit explores the history of the Union Asbestos and Rubber Company (UNARCO) manufacturing plant on Bloomington's westside, which operated from 1951-1972. It uncovers the workers' experience and their fight for better working conditions.

However, this exhibit also tells a story larger than just McLean County. It is a universal story of people being sacrificed, forced to endure toxic conditions and environmental hazards all in the pursuit of profit. It illustrates a national tragedy on a local scale, all the while educating the public about the dangers of asbestos and honoring our neighbors who lost their lives. To learn more, visit mchistory.org.

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McLean County
& MUSEUM of HISTORY

MARGARET “PEG” KIRK (1933–2023) & WILLIAM P. “BILL” LABOUNTY (1930–2024)

The McLean County Museum of History, Illinois Voices Theatre, and Evergreen Memorial Cemetery lost two dear friends and long-time volunteers since last year’s *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* with the passing of Peg Kirk (November 5, 2023) and Bill LaBounty (May 25, 2024).



After retiring from a 27-year teaching career at Normal Community High School, Peg became involved with the Museum because of the *Cemetery Walk*. Starting as an actor in 1996, Peg portrayed six different women (Mary Potter, Luella Kimbell, Letitia Green Stevenson, Dr. Margaret McGillivray, Melinda Rankin, June Rose Colby, and Rose Whipp Northrup) during the *Walk*, writing the scripts for most of those performances herself. When she was not “on stage,” Peg served as a volunteer tour guide for the *Walk* for 10 years. This allowed her to put her teacher’s hat back on to help educate thousands of people who attended the

Walk, in particular middle school students, about cemetery preservation and our local history. “I always loved to interact with the kids, and I had a variety of things I could teach,” she said. Peg looked forward to the *Cemetery Walk* every year, and we looked forward to working with her each year too.



Bill came to the Museum after spending 37 years in the bookbinding and printing industry. Upon his retirement from ISU Printing services in 1993, Bill began volunteering with the McLean County Genealogical Society and McLean County Museum of History. For over two decades he shared his time and talents with both organizations, giving over 10,000 hours of his time. Many of those hours were given each fall to help the Museum put on the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. From the *Walk*’s inception in 1995 until 2014, Bill worked behind the scenes putting together the playbill, which every attendee at the *Walk* received. In

addition to laying out the playbill each year, Bill’s connections in the local printing industry guaranteed the Museum was getting the best printing deal and the highest quality product for our largest annual event. Bill’s son, Lars LaBounty, said the *Cemetery Walk* was his dad’s favorite event and Bill looked forward to it every year.

Words cannot express how much we appreciate both Peg and Bill’s dedication, hard work, and talents that they gave to help make the *Cemetery Walk* successful over the years. Both of them were mentors to many at the Museum and we are better for having known and worked with them. Peg and Bill are truly missed.

30 YEARS OF VOLUNTEERS

Over the last three decades, 530 volunteers have given more than 34,000 hours of their time to ensure the success of the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. Simply put, this event would not have been possible without their dedication and tireless efforts. Whether they volunteered once or every year, served as tour guides, box office volunteers, researchers, guide script writers, or cookie bakers, we thank each and every one of them.



Nola Marquardt leading a tour during the very first Cemetery Walk in 1995



Phylis VerSteegh with a student group at the 2004 Walk



Box Office Volunteers, 2016 (left to right: John Kibler, Marilyn Aucutt, Joann Hart, Carole Knipp, Mary Sheehan, with Candace Summers)



Tour Guides, 2008 (left to right: Mary Kay Zeter, Judith Myers, Nola Marquardt, Peg Kirk, Carol Fox, Carol Straka, Scott Johnson, Mary Scott, with Mary Anne Schierman)

To view the full list of Cemetery Walk volunteers from 1995-2024, please scan the QR code below.



Volunteers

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Echoes is proud to produce the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* for the McLean County Museum of History.

Thank you to everyone over the years who has made Echoes possible, especially Judy Brown who started it all. We will miss working in this beautiful setting that has informed audiences for 30 years! Although not an easy decision, we know the Museum will continue to create new things that involve theatre to inform and educate on history. Special thanks go to all the people over the 7 years I have had the privilege to work with while producing and creating costumes for the Museum. A special thanks to my husband, Jon, for all that he has done to help with so many aspects of Echoes.

The Writers and Tech Team



Cristen Monson (Sarah Raymond Fitzwilliam and Georgina Trotter) works at ISU as an academic advisor. She directs, acts, writes, and teaches theatre locally. Cristen has written and portrayed characters for the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* over the last few years.



Todd Wineburner (Gus and Edith Belt) had his first experience with the *Walk* in 1996 and he's delighted to be writing for the last season. Todd, an ISU graduate, grew up in Central Illinois, so it's always gratifying to give guests a glimpse into the history of the area.



Kathleen Kirk (Sophia Huggins and Mme. Annette) has been a playwright and actor for the *Walk* for many years. Before returning to Normal, she worked with theatre companies in Chicago. She now works at Normal Public Library, serves on the Board of Heartland Theatre, and edits the online magazine *Escape Into Life*.



Devon Lovell (Eva Jones) is a first time writer for the *Walk*. Her short play, *Alchemy*, was featured in the 2014 *New Plays From the Heartland Festival*. Devon has worked in education most of her life and does literacy consulting currently.



Bruce Boeck (Ange Milner) first time writer for the *Walk*, has written over 100 short plays including three that were performed at Heartland Theatre's *10-Minute Play Festival*. His work has been performed across the U.S. and Canada. He taught psychology at Lincoln College and Heartland Community College, and was a licensed counselor for 40 years.



John Poling (June Crandall) is writing for the second time for the *Walk*. John is a local playwright, whose had several of his short plays produced. He also directs and acts in local theatre productions. John has an M.S. in History.



L. Jane Thomley, Co-Costume/Props, is joining the *Walk* for the sixth year. She retired from Thomas Metcalf School in 2014 after over 35 years teaching and directing and designing shows.



Grace Irvin, Production Assistant, returns for her sixth *Walk*. Grace is involved in many theatres in town, especially ILVT Seedling Theatre where she directs and produces. She is also a wedding coordinator for Complete Weddings + Events.

We would like to extend an extra special **THANK YOU** to our diligent and hard-working volunteers without whom we could not do this event!

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- Denise Fries-Romack • Madison Hieser • Allie Love • Jordan Kennedy
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TICKETS

30 YEARS OF THEATER

Illinois Voices Theatre has been our theatrical partner since the very beginning of the Walk. Over the last 30 years, these talented writers and actors have helped tell the stories of 211 unique individuals from McLean County's past. We appreciate their hard work and dedication to bringing our community's history to life and to light.



Michael Pullin as Christoph Mandler, 2010



Timothy Jefferson and Emmanuel Jackson as Edward and Lincoln Bynum, 2017



Char Fesler as Louise Muxfeld, 1996



Cast of the 2022 Evergreen Cemetery Walk (Left to Right: Jennifer Rusk as Ella Lee Stokes, Kathleen Kirk as Helen Clark McCurdy, Len Childers as Alexander G. Erickson, Kevin Wickart as James Preston Butler, Jeff Ready as Paul Beich, David Flanders as David Davis, and Sara Flanders as Sarah Davis)

To view the full list of Cemetery Walk writers and actors from 1995-2024, please scan the QR code below.



Actors & Writers

If a name is missing or misspelled, please kindly email education@mcistory.org so we can accurately record this momentous history!

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TOWNSHIP FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

General Assistance

Provides up to \$425 in monthly financial assistance to persons who do not have adequate income or resources to provide for their basic needs.

Emergency Assistance Program

For residents who have: Minor children in the household, A five-day notice or eviction notice from the landlord or a current disconnect notice from a utility, Household income at or below 100% poverty for the area

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The primary responsibility of the Assessor's Office is to discover, list and value all Normal Township property.

HIGHWAY OFFICE

The Highway Commissioner is responsible for all Township road construction & maintenance, which includes snow removal, clean-up, & annual repairs as needed & as funds are available.

Learn more at www.normaltownship.org

EAST LAWN MEMORIAL GARDENS AND CEMETERY

Our guest voices for this year's Walk, Gus and Edith Belt, are visiting from East Lawn Memorial Gardens and Cemetery, located at 1002 Airport Road in Bloomington.



Augustus "Gus" Belt and Edith Belt's grave, located in section 1, Lot 50 5 and 6

When East Lawn was founded in 1935, it was located two miles east of the city limits and just west of the new municipal airport on highway Route 9. R.F. Beeler of Burlington, Iowa developed the cemetery after purchasing a 30-acre-tract of land from Fred Young that year. Frank Howell was listed as the authorized sales agent for lots in the cemetery.



Aerial view of Bloomington Municipal Airport looking northwest shows the main hanger and East Lawn Memorial Gardens, June 20, 1941.

The cemetery was established as a non-monumental burial park with flush, bronze markers identifying burial plots. However, in 2008 a monument garden was added to the cemetery for those who wished to have that type of memorial.

Cemetery features include three multi-story garden mausoleums, two columbariums, Italian white granite statues scattered throughout the cemetery, and an ossuary for cremated remains.



One of three multi-story mausoleums that were constructed over the years, the earliest being in the 1960s.



This ossuary holds cremated remains and takes the place of a scattering garden at East Lawn.

Cemetery ownership has changed hands several times over the years and is currently owned by Service Corporation International, a member of the Dignity Memorial Network, North America's largest provider of funeral, cremation, and cemetery services.

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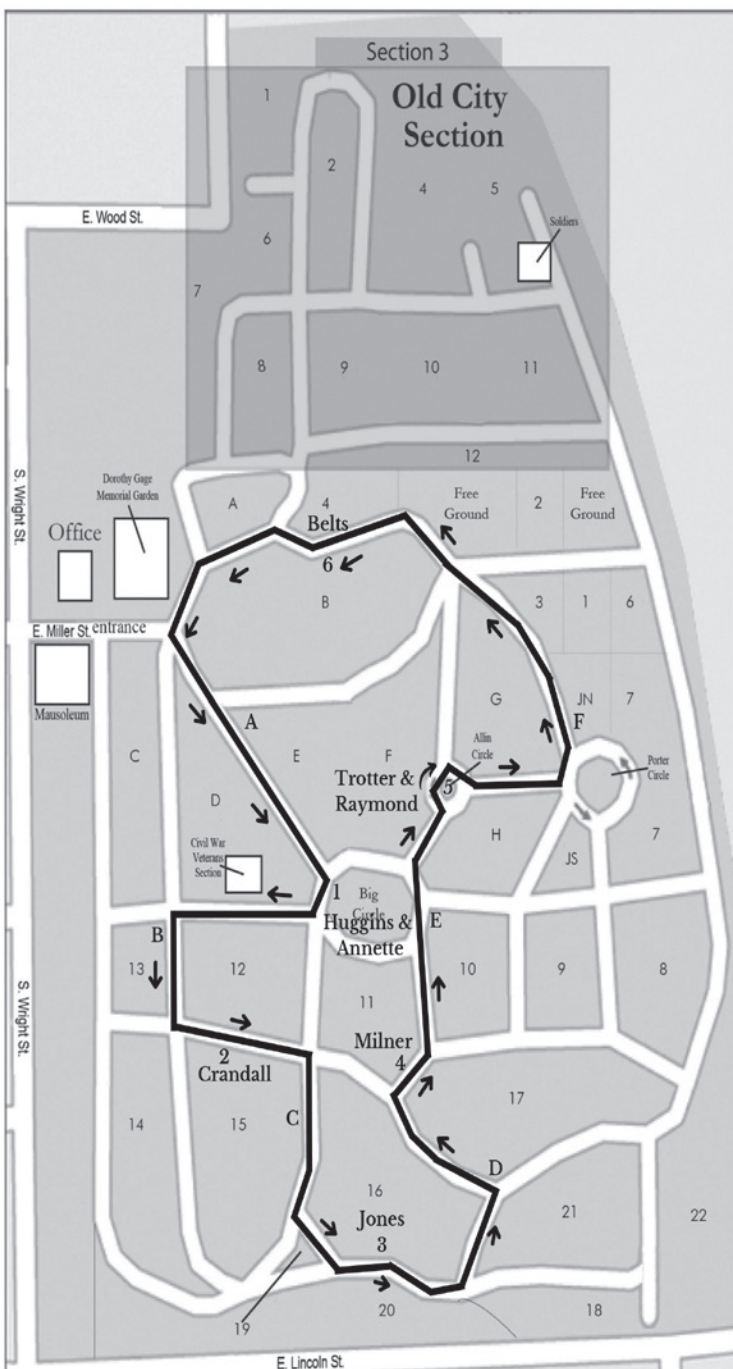
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6. Gus & Edith Belt

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