

To restore and preserve Oakland Cemetery, assuring its importance as a historic asset for Shreveport.



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CEMETERY  
PRESERVATION  
SOCIETY

## Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society Reactivated for Preservation, Restoration

A group of community preservationists has reactivated the Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society, Inc. (OCPS) and has initiated a bold new plan to restore and preserve one of the most historic sites in northwest Louisiana.

Oakland Cemetery is located at the end of Elvis Presley Blvd (formerly Grand Avenue), across from the Municipal Auditorium near downtown Shreveport. Founded in 1849, it is the oldest cemetery in Shreveport.

The cemetery is a fabulous example of a garden park cemetery that was so popular during the 19th century, and, it is largely intact. While many persons are aware of the very high style 19th century garden cemeteries such as Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Mass., most of the cemeteries that were common across the United States in the latter half of the 19th century were cemeteries analogous to Oakland Cemetery.

Very few of these cemeteries remain intact. Since Oakland for all intents and purposes was 'closed' by the turn of the century, our community has a remarkable opportunity to preserve one of the few remaining and largely unchanged cemeteries of this type in the country! Once preserved, the board is convinced that Oakland Cemetery will be a shining jewel in our community, able to draw local admiration and national appeal. This is not to mention the opportunity to celebrate the lives of many of the founders of our city.

Oakland Cemetery is maintained by the City of Shreveport. Currently, the City has initiated restoration of the entrance walls and gates. A company was contracted to replicate the pattern of the cemetery walls as part of a grant obtained by the City. That work has improved the initial appearance of Oakland.





BEFORE



AFTER

## RESTORATION & REPAIR

The City of Shreveport has used grant funds to repair the entrance to Oakland Cemetery. Craftsman contractors have meticulously poured new concrete gate forms. The gates have been restored by the original manufacturer, Stewart Iron Works in Covington, Kentucky. According to city planner and OCPS board member Tim Wachtel, the grant has some remaining funds for preservations of the walls and gates.

Please drive by and see the newly restored entrance!

### JOIN OAKLAND CEMETERY PRESERVATION SOCIETY

YES, I want to join the "Friends of Oakland" organization. I want to help by renewing my membership or upgrading my existing membership to further Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society's efforts to restore and preserve the cemetery.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

- Individual \$25   
  Family \$40   
  Friend \$100  
 Patron \$250   
  Benefactor \$500   
  Founder \$1000   
  Student \$10

Memorial/Honorarium Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

In honor/memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify (name and address):

\_\_\_\_\_

I have family buried in Oakland. (Please list.) \_\_\_\_\_

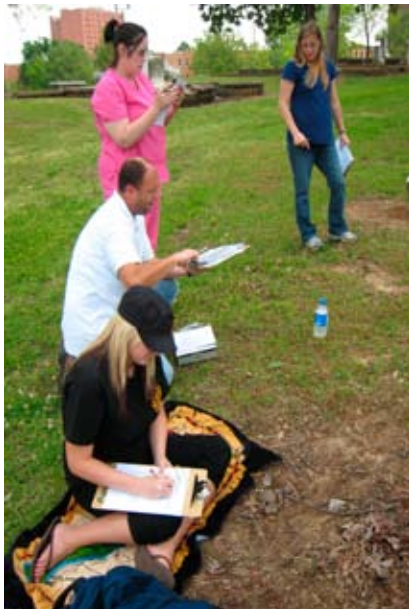
\_\_\_\_\_

Contact me about volunteer opportunities.

PLEASE SEND MY NEWSLETTER  In the Mail (black and white)  By E-mail (color)

*Note: E-mailing newsletters helps save money for OCPS.*

Checks payable to Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society. Mail to:  
OCPS, P.O. Box 5221, Shreveport, LA 71135-5221



History and geography students from LSUS pause as they review survey forms. The students are among those who are working to identify and catalog burials, monuments and points of interest at Oakland Cemetery. The information is being entered into a geographic information system (GIS) and will eventually appear on the OCPS Web site for Oakland Cemetery. This is a tedious project which will take many months to complete. Information will be added to the Web site as it is processed.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Hines Vaughan*

Welcome to the first Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society (OCPS) newsletter in years and this President's Letter. We intend to publish this newsletter quarterly, and I hope this section of the newsletter will give you an inside look at our organization. I am also hopeful that you will come to view the cemetery as a treasure of Northwest Louisiana and want to join our cause.

One of the first things that I am asked about The Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society (OCPS) is how I got involved in the effort. My immediate ancestors – parents/grandparents - are buried in Greenwood Cemetery; however I always suspected that earlier generations were buried in Oakland. Interestingly, I never visited Oakland as a child as I did Greenwood with my mother.

Last year, I finally decided to take action and printed out a list, from my genealogy program, of all those family members who might be buried in Oakland. With that list in hand, I made a visit to the City's SPAR Department, which is responsible for maintenance of Greenwood and Oakland cemeteries. With their help, I was able to find the lots and sections where those ancestors were buried.

At the time, the City was in the process of converting the graves data from index cards to the computer. Now, you may obtain that information via a list or ask them to look up the data. Soon, you will be able to sign onto OCPS's Web site and look up ancestors buried in Oakland and find their locations.

Back to the search. With the burial data in hand, my first cousin (who had just arrived for a visit) and I set out to find the grave sites. I obtained an old map of the cemetery from SPAR, and soon we found the graves in three different sites.

Two of the sites were in generally good repair, but the third had a huge dead tree lying across the lot. It had severely damaged the fence and the headstones. We were naturally appalled at the condition of the lot. After vowing to restore it to an acceptable condition, we could not help but notice the general condition of the entire cemetery. At that moment, I knew that someone needed to pick up the restoration responsibility, and decided that I would volunteer for the project. That was last August, and the revived OCPS organization has already made great strides towards the preservation and restoration of the cemetery.

In our next newsletter, I will delineate those positive steps and what effect they are having on your cemetery. In the meantime, If you would like to contact me, my e-mail address is [hvaughan1@comcast.net](mailto:hvaughan1@comcast.net), and our mailing address is on the mailing side of this newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you.



Vistas throughout Oakland indicate that this is a place of tranquility near the heart of downtown Shreveport. Jon Emerson, landscape designer, has been hired to create a plan to enhance these vistas, restoring the garden cemetery look and feel at Oakland.



Interesting iconography and beautiful sculpture are found in Oakland Cemetery. This figure with the uplifted hand and finger pointing to heaven indicates where the deceased is going.



**Oakland Cemetery  
Preservation Society  
P.O. Box 5221  
Shreveport, LA 71135-5221**

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## **Board Members Join Together to Preserve Historic Shreveport Cemetery**

The Oakland Cemetery Preservation Society was reactivated at the behest of former board member, Virginia Shehee. She gathered together previous board members and others who had expressed interest in Oakland and requested that the organization be reactivated. At the meeting Hines Vaughan agreed to serve as president and the board was reconstituted, bringing with it the organization's previous funds, held for Oakland preservation.

Others serving the organization in executive positions are Jack Sibley, treasurer and Carolyn Nelson, secretary. Other board members are Elizabeth Guin, Ph.D., who works with cemetery preservation and other preservation activities at Northwestern State University, Delton Harrison, community volunteer and preservationist; Gary Joiner, Ph.D., history professor and preservation activist; Marilyn Joiner, community volunteer; Jane Newberry, community volunteer; Virginia Shehee, community volunteer, and Tim Wachtel, planner with the City of Shreveport. Rabbi Jana DeBenedetti of B'nai Zion Temple was added at the May meeting.

The organization has commissioned a Web site and a documentary for the cemetery to support the work of preservation and restoration that will be undertaken by a landscape and an archaeological consultant. Community volunteers are being enlisted to support other preservation and restoration activities and to become friends of the cemetery.

### **OAKLAND**

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**Change of Address  
notices should be sent to  
OCPS, P.O. Box 5221,  
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**[www.oaklandcemeteryla.org](http://www.oaklandcemeteryla.org)**