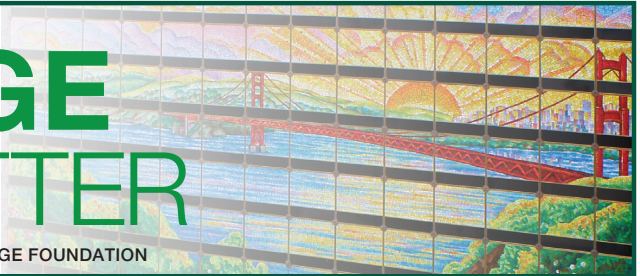




# HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE CYPRESS LAWN HERITAGE FOUNDATION



A FOUNDATION DEDICATED TO EDUCATION & PRESERVATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

Spring 2021

Volume 11 No. 5

## CALENDAR



Dear Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation Followers:

It is with great regret that we have decided to suspend all Heritage Foundation events until further notice. We plan to begin the Trolley Tours again this summer. This health crisis has demonstrated how much the Heritage Foundation really means to the Bay Area. Many Cypress Lawn fans have reached out to tell me that our programs are greatly missed. Thank you for your encouragement and support! We miss you, too!  
We will be back — as safely and as soon as possible.

Please find updates on our Facebook page and the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation website.

Sincerely,

Terry Hamburg  
Director of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation



### Do We Have Your Email?

Cypress Lawn is trying to go paperless. You can receive most Heritage notifications and information by email instead of post. Send your email address to [thamburg@cypresslawn.com](mailto:thamburg@cypresslawn.com).

## AT REST AT CYPRESS LAWN The Eccentric Belle of San Francisco

In 1850, eight-year-old Lillie Hitchcock arrived in San Francisco. Her father had just been appointed the Army Medical Director of the Pacific Coast.

A fifteen-year-old Lillie was on her way home from school when she spotted the plight of the Knickerbocker Engine Company #5 volunteer firemen struggling to negotiate a steep Telegraph Hill street. Tossing her books to the ground, she dashed to a vacant place on the rope and threw her strength into the effort. "Come on, you men! Everybody pull!" Lillie exhorted the crowd. Thus, was born a fabled public passion that would bring her fame and notoriety, not to mention waves of speculative curiosity and gossip.

"Pretty and impulsive," recalled a Battalion Chief after her death, she was "the tale of Jeanne d'Arc at Orleans, The Maid of Saragossa and Molly Pitcher of Revolutionary fame all over again." Made an



*Continued on page 5*

## From the President's Desk



In the last 14 months of the pandemic, we all experienced many challenges, fears, feelings of anxiety, and for some, loss of loved ones. As an organization we persevered, pivoted, and innovated at every twist and turn of the Covid-19 battle. Team members helped keep safety and service for our employees and clients at the top of the list. At the time of this writing, newscasters are reporting that

California will be 100% re-opened on June 15th. With every American getting vaccinated, we all receive another shot of hope.

As the future brightens and we see better days ahead, Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association, its affiliates and associates emerged stronger, innovated better, are more resilient and have become pandemic hardened. Our ability to assess challenges and opportunities as an organization is world class. We have never been better. Because of how we responded to the last 14 months, we are in a wonderful position to scale who we are to what we do and how many we can impact in a positive way. This is our time to execute.

At our core we aspire to continue to be the market leader in the funeral cemetery and cremation space. We help families celebrate life, remember those they love, and heal from loss. To this end we will continuously improve our service delivery, internal process, customer engagement and financial prowess. To differentiate ourselves from our peers, we must not

*Continued on page 2*

look like, serve like, price like, be like they are. We must be better, offer more and increase our relevance in the market.

We were on the forefront of Livestreaming and housing virtual funeral and celebration services. Our move to arboretum status, combined with historical and “tree tours” set us apart. We are planning movies in the park and a wine tasting event to honor the important vintners buried at Cypress Lawn. Our Heritage Foundation is nearing the launch of a virtual museum and soon a physical site. Cypress Lawn will be a learning center for future generations. In addition, we are working on a partnership with local organizations to start Cypress University (4–8-week classes) that provide certificates in Landscape, Arborist, and Masonry skills.

In terms of physical development, we have in process the purchase, design and development of at least 2.5 additional acres. These sections will add more offerings for our team while extending the

life of our campuses and the endowment care contribution. Our software development has been launched in March with an operating system named One Portal. Currently the initial prototype is being adopted by users in all areas of our organization. The developers are working on a prioritized list of improvements, and we have engaged a design and user experience expert to provide additional feedback. We will build the first proprietary system that serves both the funeral cemetery and cremation business units from customer to finance.

We are all the benefactors of our founder Hamden Noble and the Cypress Lawn Associates’ hard work in the last 130 years. I am honored to be on this trusted journey with the rest of our associates to carry the torch of Mr. Noble’s vision and leave the brand and the association stronger than we found it.

- Bob Gordon, CEO



## ANNUAL APPEAL

**W**e thank all our friends who responded to our Annual Appeal. Your invaluable support allows us to continue our education and cultural programs, preserve our historic arboretum and gardens, and maintain our incomparable outdoor “museum.” On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation, we would like to extend our deep gratitude, and hope you will continue to support us as well as encourage your friends to join in these educational and preservation efforts.

Donations can be made at any time of the year and it’s easy to do. You have two options: traditional mail option and online option. Go to our website at [www.cypresslawnheritagefoundation.com](http://www.cypresslawnheritagefoundation.com). Rewards are offered for giving and increase as the donation increases.



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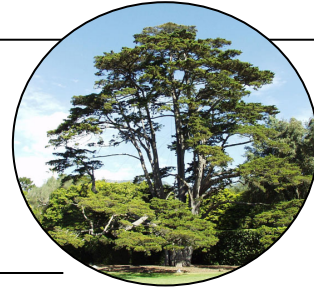
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### Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association

Cypress Lawn is a 501 (c)(3) not for profit corporation established in 1892 by a group of prominent and responsible citizens, headed by Hamden Noble, determined to provide a decent cemetery for all creeds and races as well as “an attractive and pleasing place for meditation of the living.” Today, over a hundred years later, Cypress Lawn stands as a testament to the vision of these men when they proclaimed, “... in the fullness of time, the cemetery... will form an extensive park, rich in foliage, flowers, mausoleums, statuary and other works of art ... a handsome gift to posterity.”

# CYPRESS LAWN ARBORETUM



EUROPEAN LAUREL



JAPANESE CEDAR



JAPANESE MAPLE



MONTEREY CYPRESS

Cypress Lawn has begun to label and identify the significant trees in our Arboretum. Here's some of what you can expect on your visit.

# Did You Know?

## Vintage Cypress Lawn Nature Facts



**B**ecause they rejected the image of heaven as a garden, leaders of the early Christian Church forbid the planting of trees and flowers within cemetery boundaries. By the 1700s, this thinking had changed. In fact, trees and flowers became the cornerstone of the nineteenth century American “garden cemetery” movement. On the West Coast, Cypress Lawn was the earliest and grandest example of this style. In the 1930s, Cypress Lawn purchased advertising placards on San Francisco streetcars advising commuters when trees and flowers were in seasonal bloom, reminding them that it was the time to visit the cemeteries in Colma.

*Cypress Lawn is a Lovely Ornament of Suburban San Francisco.*  
National Geographic Society Magazine, June 1929.

**H**amden Holmes Noble, the founder of Cypress Lawn, became enamored with the cooing brown-winged turbit pigeons that populated Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Massachusetts - regarded as the pioneer “garden cemetery,” and which served as an inspiration for Cypress Lawn.

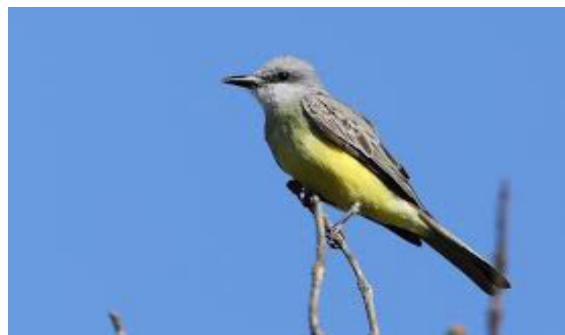
Noble beseeched the Director of Mt. Auburn to donate a small turbit flock to provide added life to the Cypress Lawn grounds. Pigeon cotes were constructed behind the administration building to house the new arrivals. At noon and 4 p.m. daily, Noble personally appeared with a basket of seed in hand to feed his cherished pigeons. When he died in 1929, there were about 1400 such birds participating in the daily meals. The habitat expanded to include ducks, geese, seagulls, mud hens, crows, et al. Thousands of local adults fondly remember feeding the birds of Cypress Lawn during their childhoods. That tradition continues, passed on generation to generation.



Hamden Holmes Noble feeding his Cypress Lawn flock

### Birds of Cypress Lawn

Happy days are (almost) here again. During the pandemic, stuck in my rustic suburban habitat, I have developed a bird brain. Are there folks who want to form a Cypress Lawn Birdwatchers Club that would meet regularly and search out our fine feathered friends living on the Arboretum grounds? We would need an “expert” - an Audubon-er who can lead us. Volunteers/participants? Contact Terry Hamburg at [thamburg@cypresslawn.com](mailto:thamburg@cypresslawn.com)





Lillie as a child with her mother



honorary member of the Knickerbocker Engine Company #5 in 1863, Lillie wore her No. 5 badge with pride for the rest of her life including, according to stories, on her monogrammed underclothes. She loved taking firemen out to dinners after they had finished extinguishing the flames and, as a socialite with means, could well afford it. The City heroine attended firemen banquets and marched in all their parades.



Will the real Lillie please stand up?



You would think that this thrill-seeking groupie would walk down the aisle with a fireman. Instead, she married one Howard Coit, the dull “caller” of the San Francisco Stock Exchange. They separated 16 years later, and Lillie never remarried.

“Firebelle Lil” smoked cigars and wore long trousers long before it was socially acceptable for women to do so. Both traits served her well as an avid gambler who would dress like a man to tempt fate in the male-only establishments that dotted North Beach.

Upon her death, she left one-third of her considerable estate to the “beautification of the City I love.” There is no direct evidence that Lillie discussed how her bequest would be spent, much less requesting a specific monument. But many believe she might have dictated the details. The form it took had people wondering...and talking.



Coit Tower, dedicated in 1933.

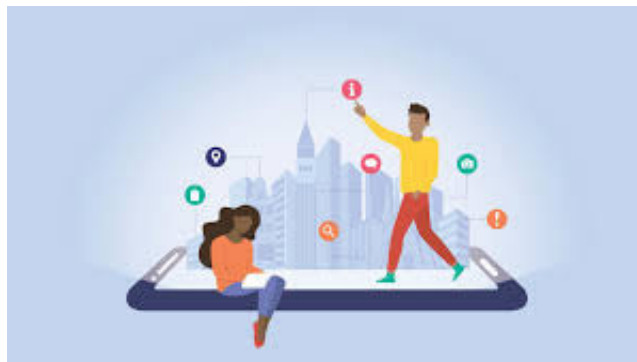
Various schools of thought exist. One is that a tower is a tower is a tower. Others center on Lillie's obsession with fires and firemen: the memorial represents a giant fire hose nozzle. Another more scurrilous school of thought, which we shamelessly repeat here, is that the monument is also and not just coincidentally a Freudian allusion. Indeed, Mrs. Coit's love of fires went beyond the bounds of normalcy. Whenever a fire broke out in the City, she was generally first in line among the rubberneckerers, and was clearly enamored of the strong machismo young men taking charge of the situation.

During the filming of Alfred Hitchcock's (no relation) 1958 movie "Vertigo," shot in San Francisco, he was keen that Coit tower appear prominently in the background through James Stewart's window. When the Art Director inquired why, Hitchcock replied: "Coit Tower is a phallic symbol."

Lillie is buried in the Hitchcock family mausoleum at Cypress Lawn. A stone's throw away lies the memorial for her close friend, Arthur Brown, who in addition to designing Coit Tower, was the architect for the San Francisco War Memorial Opera House and the 1915 City Hall.



**Lillie Hitchcock Coit location: Section M, Island**



## Virtual Tours

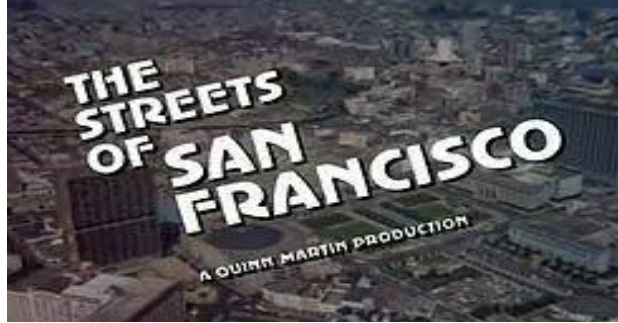
are available on the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation website [cypresslawnheritagefoundation.org/](http://cypresslawnheritagefoundation.org/)



- Virtual History Tour of Famous Personalities at Cypress Lawn**
- Video Tour: Murder, Mayhem & Museums**
- Video Tour: Inaugural Arboretum Day**
- Virtual Tree Tour**

**Coming Soon: "Wine Hill" Video Tour:**

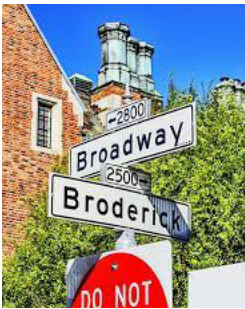
A history of California wines told through the lives of great vintners at rest at Cypress Lawn.



It is often said that Cypress Lawn Cemetery hosts the remains of the most prominent Californians in history. Many made their mark in San Francisco itself. In fact, no less than 23 of the city's streets are named after an individual buried at Cypress Lawn. And here they are...

John **BOALT**: Lawyer & Judge

David **BRODERICK**: U.S. Senator



James **FLOOD**: Silver King

Joseph **FOLSOM**: Port Collector of San Francisco



Edward **GILBERT**: U.S. Congressman

Edward **GORDON**: Real Estate Mogul

Horace **HAWES**: State Senator

William Randolph **HEARST**: Newspaper Mogul

Behrend **JOOST**: Railroad Owner

John **LARKIN**: Entrepreneur & Diplomat



Frederick **MACONDRAY**: China Trader

John **McLAREN**: Superintendent of Golden Gate Park

**TURK MURPHY LANE**: San Francisco Jazz Musician



Henry **NEWHALL**: Railroad and Ranching Empires

James **OTIS**: San Francisco Mayor

James **PHELPS**: U.S. Congressman

Andrew **POPE**: Pope & Talbot Lumber Company

William **SHARON**: Business Tycoon

Steve **"BEACH BLANKET BABYLON"** Silver



William **RALSTON**: Bank of California & Palace Hotel

Jonathan **STEVENSON**: Soldier & Founder of California Masons

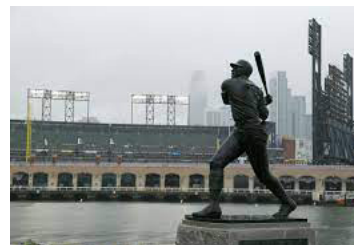
Hugh **TOLAND**: Established University of Cal Medical School

James **VAN NESS**: S.F. Mayor

### HONORABLE MENTIONS

Willie **McCOVEY COVE**

**LEFTY O'DOUL BRIDGE**



**CYPRESS LAWN  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

A non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation promoting Cypress Lawn Cemetery as a historical and educational resource for the Bay Area community.

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The *Heritage Newsletter* is published by the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation, a subsidiary corporation of Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association

*Terry Hamburg*

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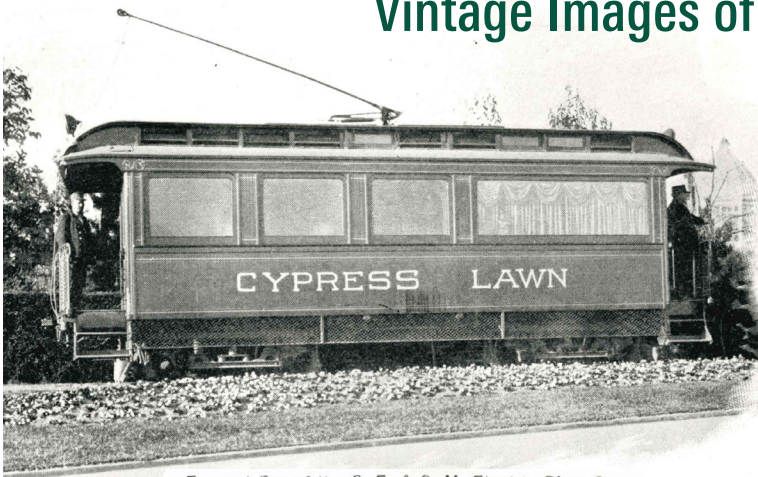


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## Vintage Images of Cypress Lawn



Funeral Car of the S. F. & S. M. Electric R'wy Co.



Cypress Lawn Funeral Surney