



A photograph of part of the Ministers' Burial Ground, in the Mount Moriah Cemetery, Philadelphia. In the foreground is the stone marking the resting place of the Lybrand family. Rev. George Lybrand (1822-1889) was the historian for the Philadelphia Conference during the mid-19th Century.

# *God's Forgotten Acre*

## *The Ministers' Burial Ground at Mount Moriah*

by Laura M. DiPaolo (2011)

*Editor's Note: Laura DiPaolo is an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania and has been working for the several years photo-documenting the Ministers' lot at Mount Moriah Cemetery, Philadelphia. The following article is an outgrowth of that research.*

Motorists traveling along the Cobbs Creek Parkway in West Philadelphia probably barely notice the headstones which briefly appear as the screen of trees on both sides of the road suddenly open up, just south of 60th Street. If they are locals, they might be aware that they are passing through two massive segments of one of the region's oldest public cemeteries, Mount Moriah. They would not suspect, however, that tucked away among the neglected lots to the east is a small section of particular interest to regional Methodists. Were they to turn off into the cemetery, and brave the rutted, decaying roadway, past overgrown graves and ancient monuments protruding from bushes and trees, they would come across a neat, well-kept square, marked by one large, drooping tree in its northeast corner, where about 100 Methodist ministers and their families await the final trump of God.

Buried in this secluded corner of Philadelphia are Civil War chaplains, former presiding elders, published authors, a US ambassador and many ordinary preachers. All of them once traveled throughout the Philadelphia region, planting and nurturing churches, raising their families, and building institutions that remain with us today. Regularly forgotten, and periodically rediscovered, the Ministers' Burial Ground is worthy of remembrance, as are the stories of those who rest there.

## ORIGINS OF MOUNT MORIAH

Mount Moriah Cemetery was founded at a time when changing cultural attitudes were transforming the ways Americans thought about the role of cemeteries, and the burial of the dead. Until the early 1800s, burial grounds were typically adjacent to churches, or in private lots on the grounds of a family farm. Such burial grounds were often haphazard in arrangement, and not infrequently avoided or neglected. The growth of religious diversity, and the concomitant rise of more tolerant, less sectarian attitudes, coupled with rapid urban development, gave rise to the Rural Cemetery Movement. Large, non-sectarian cemeteries, laid out on the outskirts of cities, began to be formed, which reflected romantic Victorian attitudes toward nature and death. Pathways which followed the contours of the ground, careful landscaping and ornamental stonework were all designed to invite the living to visit regularly, in order to commune with the dead, and to contemplate deeper questions of life and death. The first such cemetery established in the United States was Mount Auburn in Massachusetts, organized in 1831. The first to be founded in the Philadelphia area was Laurel Hill Cemetery, in 1836.<sup>1</sup>

Mount Moriah was founded by the non-sectarian Mount Moriah Cemetery Association in 1855, and established by an act of the Pennsylvania legislature that same year. It originally occupied 54 acres in southwest Philadelphia along the Cobbs Creek, with its entrance on today's Kingsessing Avenue. The Romanesque entrance was designed by Stephen D. Button (1813-1897), and was built of brownstone. At the time of its development, many of Philadelphia's older cemeteries were in the way of the city's booming growth. For that reason, Mount Moriah Cemetery flourished during this "rural ideal" time period,<sup>2</sup> growing to 380 acres and serving as the resting place of many Philadelphians – some well known, others ordinary citizens. Mount Moriah had its place in spotlight when Betsy Ross was re-interred there with her husband in

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<sup>1</sup>See Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery Movement,'" in *American Quarterly* 26:1 (March 1974), 37-59; and Thomas Bender, "The 'Rural' Cemetery Movement: Urban Travail and the Appeal of Nature," in *The New England Quarterly* 47:2 (June 1974), 196-211. For a comprehensive history see Meg Greene, *Rest in Peace: A History of American Cemeteries* (Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century books, 2008).

<sup>2</sup>R. D. Kerr, "A Brief History and Research Resources for Mount Moriah Cemetery of Philadelphia, PA" (April 2007) at [www.mountmoriahcemetery.org/content/view/185/2](http://www.mountmoriahcemetery.org/content/view/185/2), accessed May 29, 2008. See also [MountMoriah.Info](http://www.mountmoriahcemetery.org).

1856, and again when the first black man was buried there, after a lengthy court battle, in 1876. For people of this era, cemeteries held a place of honor, and were a focus of civic pride:

They reflected [Philadelphia's] manufacturing muscle, technical innovation, physical expansiveness and widespread prosperity... The beauties of Laurel Hill, the Woodlands and Mount Moriah were celebrated in woodcuts and stereoviews circulated worldwide. Every self-respecting Philadelphia neighborhood boasted a miniature version of them, complete with a grandiose gateway, Civil War memorial, and row of mausoleums for the local gentry.<sup>3</sup>

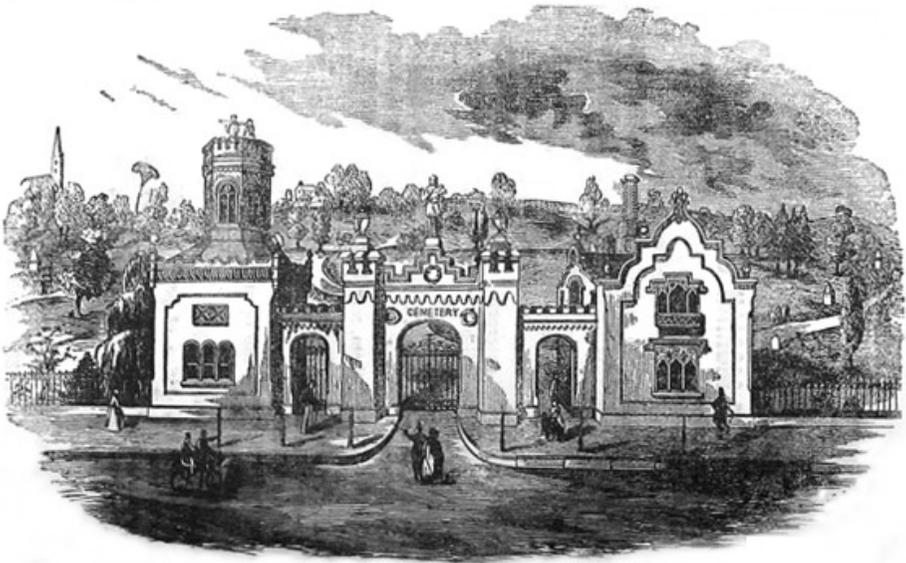
In the 20th century, however, many cemeteries fell into neglect, reflecting a variety of forces, including changing attitudes toward death, urban sprawl, suburban flight, and the decreasing ability of older cemetery endowments to keep up with maintenance demands. Mount Moriah's history reflects this pattern. Neglect, vandalism, dumping and theft have left this historic cemetery overgrown and ignored. Some organizations come to clean up at times (such as veterans'-related groups that maintain military burial sites) but many plots – and even whole sections – are inaccessible, obscured by trees and high grass.

#### THE METHODIST LOT

The vast size of Mount Moriah made it possible for churches to obtain subsections. The Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church received its section as a gift, as shown by a letter dated March 23, 1859 to the Philadelphia Annual Conference, preserved in the vault of St. George's Church, Philadelphia. The letter was written by Mr. George Cornwell, secretary of the Mount Moriah Cemetery Association, announcing a resolution of the Association to deed over to the conference "a section of ground containing twenty thousand square feet, as a place of burial for the perpetual use of the members of said conference." A committee comprised of Revs. James Neill, Anthony Atwood and J. W. McCaskey, gratefully accepted the offer, and in an article that appeared that same year in the *Christian Advocate*, publicly tendered "the thanks of this conference... to the Board of Managers of the

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas H. Keels, *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries* (Charleston and Chicago: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 6.



A 19th century engraving of Mount Moriah's gatehouse.

Mount Moriah Cemetery Association for their very liberal donation of a section of their ground.” The same article included a glowing description of the grounds as “beautifully laid out into sections and lots of different sizes, to accommodate societies and families, all of which are accessible by graveled walks and carriage ways, serving the double purpose of convenience and ornament.” The article goes on to outline the original committee’s vision for the site:

Your committee would suggest that as early a date as possible it be enclosed with a hedge of that beautiful evergreen, the *arbor vita*, or tree of life, and that a statue of Wesley or Asbury be placed in the center, all of which we presume can be accomplished without expense to the conference. We would also recommend either the immediate election of a Board of Mangers by the conference... or the appointment of commissioners who shall be empowered to select a board of trustees to whom the property shall be conveyed in trust for its appropriate objects.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>*Christian Advocate* (New York), May 12, 1859.

While no statue of either Wesley or Asbury was ever erected, a board of trustees was formed, which first met formally on December 5, 1859, in the Union ME Church, on Fourth Street, below Arch. Present were Rev. Solomon Higgins, Rev. David. W. Bartine, Rev. William McCombs, Rev. James E. Meredith, and Rev. John B. McCullough, along with laymen William Rhoads, William Brown and Charles B. Hare. Rev. Bartine was elected president, Rev. McCullough secretary, and Mr. Rhoads treasurer. The main order of business was the approval of the charter; this done, the board then appointed a committee to draw up by-laws, and empowered Rev. Higgins (who ran the local Methodist book store) "to give orders for the interment of such persons as come within the provisions of the charter."<sup>5</sup> The first burial recorded in the minute-book came the next summer, Alfred Cookman Lane, the 3-year old son of Rev. Joseph and Hannah Lane; the stone over his grave reads,

Lived to awake each tender passion  
and delightful hopes to inspire  
Died to try our resignation,  
And direct our wishes higher.<sup>6</sup>

Mount Moriah first appears in the 1861 published minutes of the Philadelphia Conference, where a short note reads, "W. Cooper and W. H. Brisbane were elected Ministerial, and W. Rhoads and J. Long, Lay Trustees of the Ministerial Burial Ground at Mount Moriah Cemetery."<sup>7</sup> Beginning in 1862, the entire board was listed each year, among the other conference-related bodies.<sup>8</sup> The 1865 minutes are the first to include a written report of the trustees, which pays formal tribute to the memory of deceased ministers and their families. The report indicates that already "a beautiful hedge of Arbor-Vita encloses the lot," and refers to plans to add "large granite posts and iron gates, carriage ways and foot-

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<sup>5</sup>*Minute Book of the Board of Trustees of the Philadelphia Conference ME Ministers' Burying Ground, 1859-1907* (handwritten volume), December 5, 1859; in the archive at St. George's Church, Philadelphia. The minutes indicate that two other lay trustees were not present, James Alcorn and Samuel H. Aldridge.

<sup>6</sup>Several stones show earlier death dates, but the minutes show them as re-interments to create family plots, including the remains of Rev. W. W. Foulks, who had died in 1845; and a child of Rev. J. H. Turner, who died in the summer of 1859.

<sup>7</sup>*Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1861), II.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.* (1862), 4; the clergy listed that year are S. Higgins, W. McCombs, C. Cooke, J. B. McCullough, J. F. Chaplain, and W. Cooper; the laymen were C. W. Higgins, J. Alcorn, W. Rhodes, James Long, E. S. Yard, Jr. and William Divine.

paths, ...choice evergreens, plants and flowers,” estimated to cost three thousand dollars. With the title, “God’s Acre,” the trustees passionately raised money and volunteers, and evoked the honor paid to Civil War dead, to build support within the conference:

A grateful people have made Gettysburg a grand centre of fond memories, above the resting place of noble warriors... in the modest “God’s Acre” which commands our special attention sleep the remains of as valorous men as ever drew a blade. In the thickest of the spiritual combat, their words of cheer and noble bearing, inspired their comrades for further conquest, and their dying shout of victory ever lingers among us. Let us pay a just tribute to their memory.<sup>9</sup>

## THE CHARTER

Beside the minutes, other documentation of the burial ground survives in the form of letters, plot maps, a ledger book, and two versions of the charter. The first, which was composed in late 1859, proved to be out of conformity with state law, and was rejected by the Pennsylvania court system. During its annual session in March 1864, the Philadelphia Conference voted to vacate the existing board of trustees, and appoint a new one, empowered to draw up a new charter which would allow it to be legally incorporated.<sup>10</sup> The new board consisted of three clergy members, James Neill, John F. Chaplain and Samuel W. Thomas, as well as four laymen, James Alcorn, Thomas T. Tasker, Joseph B. Townsend and Burton J. Kollock. The new charter and articles of incorporation were drawn up over the next year, and submitted to the court on September 18, 1865; the original copy is in the collection at St. George’s.

The charter reviews the history of the site, recording that on March 25, 1859, the cemetery formally presented to the ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church a burial ground in the eastern part of the cemetery; specifically section 131. It then outlines a written constitution consisting of four articles. Article I states the name of the corporation as “The Ministers’ Burial Ground of the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.” It also proceeds to restate the names of the trustees who would oversee the project. Article II states that the trustees themselves are entitled to hold plots for their own family’s usage as a burial place, and that they would use a common seal to “sue and be

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<sup>9</sup>*Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1865), 50.

<sup>10</sup>*Minute Book*, op. cit., March 9, 1864.

sued, to plead and to be impleaded, and to do all such other things as are incident to a corporation." It is also declared that the yearly profits of this corporation were not to exceed two thousand dollars.

Article III declares that the trustees must meet at least once a year. It also outlines the powers of the trustees: they are authorized to lay out and design the grounds under their control; arrange lots and give them free of charge when necessary (for emergency use by ministers and their families); change the by-laws, rules, and regulations as they deem appropriate; and fill vacancies among the trustees as a result of death or resignation between sessions of the annual conference (when replacement trustees normally would be elected). In the case of a trustee or any minister or family member's death, the trustees were to set apart a plot for their use large enough to accommodate six adults. That lot then was reserved for that specific family and exclusively for that family as long as some remained unburied. In the event that there were no living family members, the rest of that plot could be used for a small family, or to house the remains of a minister who died leaving no family. If a person wanted to bury a distant relative with a family member related to the Methodist Episcopal Church, they would be allowed to do so, as long as the first internment was at least ten feet underground.

Article IV section I discusses how the ministers and laymen would form the trustees while rotating positions over the years. One minister and one layman were to be replaced each year. Therefore, the ministers were to decide at their first meeting after the adoption of the constitution who would serve one year, two years, and three years. The laymen did the same with one extra member, so that at conference each year, one minister and one layman would cycle off, to be replaced by newly elected members, with ministers serving for three years, and laymen for four years. In this fashion, there would always be three ministers and four laymen to make up the trustees of Mount Moriah. Section II clearly explains that the trustees were to elect leaders within their committee whose responsibilities are laid out in the by-laws. Section III of Article IV is final section, written to ensure that, in the event of a future division of the Philadelphia Conference, the different parts would keep the same rights and responsibilities they had when a united conference, assuming that the burial ground was still in their

possession.<sup>11</sup> The document was then signed by the seven charter board members.

#### TENDING GOD'S ACRE

Each year, trustees were duly elected or re-elected at annual conference, and the burial ground gradually filled, as lots were sold and used. By March 1865, fourteen people had been interred in "God's Acre," and the minutes already begin to sound a theme that would recur as the years went forward: the need to raise adequate funds to cover the costs of improvements and maintenance. In 1872, the board reported to the annual conference session its plans to erect an elaborate railing around the property, as well as its decision to levy a \$2 annual "tax" upon each lot holder "for keeping the burial lot in order, cleaning out the paths, trimming the shrubbery, etc."<sup>12</sup> Within a year, 50 marble posts were installed around the property, linked by 3-inch iron rails or "tubes." Most of the work and materials were donated, leaving a cost to the board of somewhat more than \$100; however, less than half the lot holders had paid their \$2 fee.<sup>13</sup> By 1876, the trustees declared that the \$2 fee requirement was a "provision... we find exceedingly difficult to enforce," and proposed an alternative: the payment by all lot-holders of a one-time fee of \$10, "which shall constitute a permanent fund."<sup>14</sup> This, too, only met with limited success, especially since the trustees could only plead with those who had already purchased their lots.

By 1879, 75 of the 112 lots were occupied, and it was becoming clear that the endowment was simply not growing large enough to insure the long-term maintenance of the property, once filled. "Could we get \$1,000 in one permanent fund," the trustees opined in 1883, "the income would keep these grounds in repair for all time." Their total funds at the time, however, amounted to just \$470.<sup>15</sup> By the turn of the

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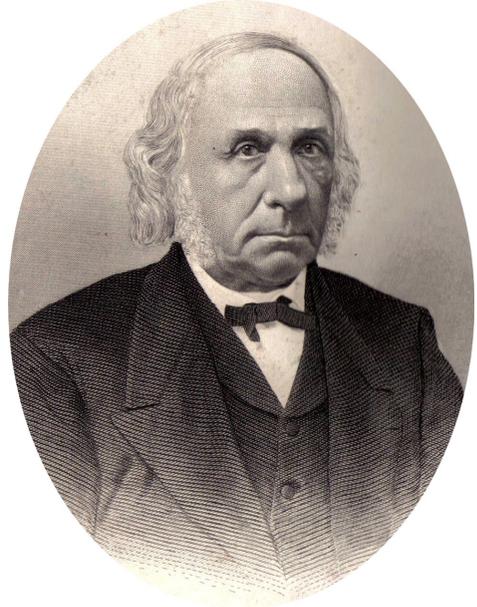
<sup>11</sup>It is noteworthy that such a division did in fact occur in the late 1860s, when the southern portion of the conference, consisting of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia and the state of Delaware, became a separate conference known then as the Wilmington Conference, today as Peninsula Delaware Conference (though it no longer includes the Virginia portion of the Shore). Thus, a number of the ministers and their families buried here served on or were natives of the Delmarva Peninsula.

<sup>12</sup>*Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1872), 37.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.* (1873), 29.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* (1876), 46.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.* (1883), 45-46.



Left: Rev. David W. Bartine, who chaired the initial meeting of the original Mount Moriah board in 1859; he is sitting amid the debris of St. George's sanctuary after that church's disastrous fire in 1865. Right: Thomas T. Tasker, Jr., a leading Philadelphia Conference layman and local philanthropist, and member of the reorganized board under the new charter of 1865. Neither is buried in the Ministers' Lot.

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twentieth century, most of the plots had been filled, and the trustees continued to struggle with inadequate funding, compounded by fading interest on the part of the annual conference. In 1911, Rev. George W. Quigley presented a resolution before the annual conference, which met that year in Philadelphia at the Park Avenue ME Church, to secure the burial ground's future. Acknowledging that "ere long, through natural causes, there will be few that have a personal interest" in the cemetery, he proposed an ambitious plan, and appealed to the delegates' reverence for their history. He was perhaps piggy-backing on the well-received historical address delivered before that same session by Rev. Samuel W. Thomas, who was a member of the Mount Moriah Board of Trustees under the new charter of 1865 (and was still on it!), and a revered elder statesman of the conference. In any event, Quigley declared,

...as many of the Heroes of Methodism lie buried therein, these splendid characters who fought the fight and kept the faith and stood in the forefront of the conflict between righteousness and sin, we, feeling they should have respect shown to their memory, as well as to the work performed by them, present the following resolution... that an endowment fund of five thousand (\$5,000) be raised, the interest of which would keep the lot in presentable shape, in perpetuity, and thereby reflect honor to the Philadelphia Annual Conference.<sup>16</sup>

The resolution passed, supplemented by another a year later, which granted permission for direct solicitation of congregations within the conference. Under the leadership of trustee president Rev. George M. Brodhead, the board spent the next several years in aggressive fundraising efforts, which were impeded somewhat by World War I. They were assisted by the Ministerial Wives' Association, and by the energetic help of Anna McCullough, who was recalled as a "prime mover in the re-arranging and beautifying of the Conference burying-ground in Mt. Moriah Cemetery;" and with reason: she had two former husbands buried in the lot, Rev. William Dalrymple (1824-1875), and Rev. John B. McCullough (1823-1894).<sup>17</sup> Several children of deceased pastors also lent their aid in the form of generous gifts, especially Fisher Dalrymple, son of Rev. William Dalrymple and Anna (Dalrymple) McCullough; William M. Lybrand, son of Rev. George and Sarah Lybrand; and Robert Montgomery, son of Rev. Thomas Montgomery. By 1920 the trustees had accomplished their task, and reported triumphantly, "[We] are pleased to report that the success has finally crowned our efforts, and that the

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<sup>16</sup>*Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1911), 156-157. Rev. Samuel W. Thomas (1830-1911) spoke on the occasion of his 60th anniversary in ministry, which was published as *Address Delivered Before the Philadelphia Annual Conference March 16th, 1911* (Philadelphia, 1911). Thomas was perhaps the most distinguished member of the conference and had been a prime mover in almost every major project undertaken by that body for fifty years, including the Ministers' Burial Ground, the first conference office and supply store on Arch Street, the Methodist Hospital, and the Home for Children; he also served for years as editor of the conference newspaper, the *Philadelphia Methodist*. Thomas died in July 1911; curiously, he is buried at Mount Moriah, but not in the Ministers' Lot, resting instead in another section amid a private family gravesite. *Minutes* (1912), 110-113.

<sup>17</sup>*Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1910), 366. Anna was married to Dalrymple from 1855 until his death, and McCullough (who was editor of the conference newspaper, the *Philadelphia Methodist*) from 1886 until his death. She also earned a medical degree from the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia in 1883, and was recalled as "a vivid and striking personality." She is also buried in the Ministers' lot at Mount Moriah.

Ministerial lot has been placed in perpetual care."<sup>18</sup> A conference board of trustees would continue to be appointed annually "as custodians of the property," but increasingly the burial ground was left to the care of the larger cemetery association, and to relatives who took an interest in the graves of their loved ones.

#### GOD'S FORGOTTEN ACRE

Despite the fact that the lots had long since been sold off, burials continued well into the mid-twentieth century, as spouses or children were interred in family plots. The last dated burial (as indicated by a surviving stone) was in 1992, when 101-year old Esther J. Hall was laid to rest near her parents, Rev. Samuel C. Carter (1860-1945) and Emma Carter (1861-1951). The iron fence which once surrounded the property by then was long-gone, probably the victim of a scrap iron drive during World War I. The last change to the design of the lot was in 1938, when a stone was installed in the center (where the two walkways intersect) which reads, "The Ministerial Burial Lot of the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Church."<sup>19</sup> A special ceremony was held to dedicate the stone on October 20, 1938, led by Rev. George M. Brodhead, who had directed the board of trustees as its president for more than three decades. The program lists the names of 92 ministers interred in the lot, and includes the words to the hymn, "For All The Saints:"

O blest communion, fellowship divine!  
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine!  
Yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!

The minutes of the Philadelphia Conference continue to show a committee appointed to oversee care of the Mount Moriah Ministers'

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid. (1920), 741. They did not need to raise their initial goal of \$5,000 since, as noted in the 1913 *Minutes*, an agreement was reached with the Mount Moriah Cemetery Association to assume the care of the property for the sum of \$3,642.50.

<sup>19</sup>The stone omits the word "Episcopal" in the church name, reflecting the anticipated reunion the next year of the previously divided branches of Methodism. In 1939, the name changed from the Methodist Episcopal to simply, the Methodist Church. Another merger in 1968 with the Evangelical United Brethren Church led to yet one more name change, to the United Methodist Church. That same year the Philadelphia Conference was merged with the East Pennsylvania Conference of the EUB Church to become the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Lot into the 1970s, though it appears to have been inactive for much of its latter history. The Ministers' Burial Ground gradually faded from memory, and by the mid-1970s, was badly overgrown. Meanwhile, the financial condition of the Mount Moriah Cemetery Association had deteriorated over the years, and large sections were left untended. It appears that the cemetery periodically cleared out areas as needed, in order to gain access to a grave site for a burial.

In 1974, several conference leaders took an interest in the condition of the ministers' lot, apparently prompted by a visit from a member of the Carter family on Memorial Day, who was upset at the condition of her family's gravesite.<sup>20</sup> Dr. J. Vincent Watchorn visited the cemetery in September and was appalled at what he found. In a letter dated September 25 of that year to Norman E. Dettra, Jr., president of the EPA Conference Board of Trustees, Watchorn noted that the cemetery association had no detailed records of who was buried there, and also claimed knowledge of only six individual lots under perpetual care. "To put it mildly," he wrote, "the section is in very poor condition – unkept and full of weeds, even those lots under perpetual care," and the surrounding sections also were overgrown. Watchorn reported that Mr. O'Donnell, the manager of the cemetery, was willing to repair the section for \$450, including leveling the ground with top soil, re-seeding the ground, and straightening all the tombstones.<sup>21</sup>

Instead of clearing out the property, however, a search began to determine questions of ownership, title and legal liability. Conference attorney Edward Williams was employed to investigate, and in a 1976 report summarized his findings, as well as the subsequent policy of the conference trustees. He was unable to locate the original deeds, minutes or charter, but determined that the conference did not own any lots, since all had been sold to individuals. Though the conference journal still called for Mount Moriah's board of trustees to be appointed each year, it "does not have regular meetings and conducts no business." His research turned up reports from 1919 and 1920 indicating that the entire section had been placed in perpetual care, but "the Cemetery officials deny this fact... [and] without production of the certificate of perpetual care... it would be difficult to prove." Williams concluded the conference had no

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<sup>20</sup>Letter of Lyle Thomas to "Frank" September 6, 1977, in the file at St. George's Church, Philadelphia.

<sup>21</sup>Letter of J. Vincent Watchorn to Norman E. Dettra, Jr., September 25, 1974, in the file at St. George's.

legal responsibility for the Ministers' Lot, and that therefore there really was "no function or purpose for the Mt. Moriah Trustees." However, the conference trustees felt a moral responsibility, and agreed to clean up the lot, and pay an annual fee to insure its maintenance.<sup>22</sup> It is not clear how long this arrangement continued, however; for the property soon faded from memory again, and once more fell into neglect.

## REMEMBRANCE AND RESTORATION

In the early 2000s, the leadership of the Historical Society of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference was reminded of the existence of the Ministers' Burial Ground, and determined that a search should be made for any records that might still exist, and that the burials there be documented as far as possible. In the winter of 2005, representatives of the Historical Society and the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Board of Trustees traveled to Mount Moriah to inspect its condition. It was found to be badly overgrown, with large portions inaccessible. The Historical Society raised money and engaged Lance Lawn Care of Bucks County to clear out the growth. Owner Vic Lance, a member of our church in Solebury Township, donated his time and expertise, charging only for the cost of the crew and equipment rentals, which totaled \$1,200, "a bargain, considering how overgrown the property had become."<sup>23</sup>

In the meantime, two original record books, dating back to 1859, were discovered in the shed beside the conference office in Valley Forge, as was a file in the same place. Another file was located at St. George's, and an important 1859 letter (cited above) discovered there among old conference papers in the vault. An historic preservationist, Mr. Jim Toner, proposed a project to photo-document the lot in 2007 at an estimated cost of \$1200-\$1500 (a reduced price, partly as a service); however he subsequently moved out of state and was unable to do the job. In the spring of 2008, the Historical Society approved employing the author of this article to begin work on the photo-documentation project, as part of as a senior internship project for her high school graduation. This article, and records now housed in the archive at St. George's, represent the result of that project.

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<sup>22</sup>Report from the Law Offices of Rambo and Mair, May 27, 1976; in the file at St. George's Church, Philadelphia.

<sup>23</sup>*The Historical Advocate, Newsletter of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference Historical Society* (Spring 2005), 1

Today the Ministers' Burial Lot, consisting of 112 family plots, is maintained by a partnership between the Historical Society and the EPA Conference Board of Trustees. While the encroachments of nature are being kept at bay, the effects of time and vandalism are still evident. Most stones remain upright and legible, though some are missing or buried, and several are damaged or overturned; at this point funds have not been secured for restoration efforts. Though not legally required to do so, nonetheless a sense of moral responsibility compels this ongoing work, out of respect for the memory of those forbears in the faith who rest there, and whose service still reverberates in churches that they served or founded which still thrive today.

#### SOME WHO REST THERE

##### *The Diplomat: Rev. Samuel L. Gracey (1835-1911)*

A native of Philadelphia, Samuel L. Gracey studied at Boston University, and joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1858, receiving his first appointment that year to Port Carbon and Silver Creek. Ordained a deacon in 1860 by Bishop Osmon C. Baker, he served one year at Chestnut Hill, and in March 1861 was appointed to Media, in Delaware County. He was only there a few weeks when the Fort Sumter was fired upon, inaugurating the Civil War. It was later recalled that "as nearly all the male members of his church enlisted in the army, he was constrained to follow them." In the summer of 1861, Gracey enlisted as the chaplain of the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry, also known as Rush's Lancers, for its commander, Colonel Richard H. Rush, a West Point graduate and Philadelphia native. The Sixth was involved in many major battles of the war, including McClellan's 1862 Peninsula campaign, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Gracey, who returned briefly to Philadelphia in March 1862 to be ordained an elder, ministered with the Sixth until 1864, after which he served as post chaplain at the Prisoner of War Camp at Rock Island, Illinois. In the spring of 1865, he rejoined his regiment briefly, just before it was mustered out of service. In 1868, Gracey published a well-regarded history of the regiment, entitled, *Annals of the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry*; it has been republished periodically, most recently in a 1996 edition that included a new introduction.

After the war, Gracey returned to ministry, serving several years locally in Smyrna, Delaware, and publishing *Anniversary Gems: Consisting of*

*Addresses, Conversations and Scripture Illustrations for the Sunday School, Concert or Anniversary* (Philadelphia: Perkinpine and Higgins, 1870). In 1870, he transferred to the New England Conference, serving pastorates there until 1890. He also became involved in local politics, winning a seat in the State Legislature for two terms from Salem, Massachusetts. In 1890, he was appointed by President William Henry Harrison to serve as US Consul to Foochow, China, serving there three years until he was recalled briefly during the administration of President Grover Cleveland. In 1897, Rev. Gracey was reappointed by President McKinley, and served in China until 1907. During his tenure,



China was torn by the Boxer Rebellion, a massive uprising of nationalist Chinese which sought to throw out foreign influences, specifically targeting missionaries and Chinese Christian converts. Gracey later received from the Chinese government an award, the Decoration of the Double Dragon, for his participation in helping to suppress the rebellion.

Gracey was married twice, first in 1860 to Lenora Thompson of Philadelphia, by whom he had four children. She died in 1897, and he remarried in 1900 to Corda Pratt, of North Middleton, Massachusetts. By 1911, his health was failing, and according to newspaper accounts, in August of that year Samuel Gracey committed suicide with a razor while a patient at a Boston hospital. His body was transported to Philadelphia to be buried in the Ministers' Lot of Mount Moriah Cemetery. His stone reads, "Soldier – Clergyman – Diplomat."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Sources for this sketch include: *New England Conference Minutes* (1912), 132-133. *Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1858-1868); Eric J. Wittenberg, *Rush's Lancers: The Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry in the Civil War* (Yardley: Westholme Publishing, 2007). S. L. Gracey, *Annals of the Sixth Pennsylvania Cavalry* (Philadelphia: E. H Butler, 1868); [www.rushslancers.com](http://www.rushslancers.com); (accessed January 10, 2010); and *The New York Times*, August 20, 1911.

*The Abolitionist: Rev. Joseph S. Lame (1832-1895)*

Described as a ministerial star “of more than ordinary moral luster,” Joseph S. Lame was born in Philadelphia on September 17, 1832, and was brought to Christ at the Kensington ME Church under the ministry of Rev. Alfred Cookman. Lame joined the Philadelphia Conference in 1853, first serving on the Radnor Circuit, in Delaware County. He was ordained a deacon in 1855 and an elder in 1857.

In 1856, Lame was appointed to Cambridge, Maryland, on the Eastern Shore, where pro-slavery sentiment ran high. He later admitted that he did not then have clear views on slavery, even leaning somewhat toward seeing it as morally acceptable. First-hand experience of slavery’s brutality, however, turned him against the “peculiar institution:”

The more minutely we watched the practical operations and developments of the [slave] system, the more fully we became settled in the conclusion that such a system is utterly repugnant to the teachings of the Bible. And such were the abominations of the traffic, as practiced by church members and ministers, professors and publicans, that we were driven to the admission that... the American is the worst system of slavery that ever saw the sun.

In 1857, after his appointment to the Snow Hill Circuit in southern Maryland, Lame began writing letters under the pseudonym “Junius,” exposing slaveholding among eastern shore Methodists, and describing the injustices he saw. The letters were published in *Zion’s Herald*, a Methodist anti-slavery paper in Boston, provoking locals to seek to uncover the identity of the undercover correspondent.

At the 1858 session of the Philadelphia Conference, held in Easton, Pennsylvania, Lame was a visible supporter of Rev. John D. Long, who was on trial for publishing a similar expose of Methodist slaveholders on the Shore. As a consequence, Lame’s identity as “Junius” was revealed not long after his return to Snow Hill. Lame, his wife and young son soon were forced to flee the area for their own safety. Later that year, he published a book entitled, *Maryland Slavery and Maryland Chivalry*, which included his “Junius” letters and an account of his expulsion from his circuit.

During the Civil War, Lame volunteered to serve as a chaplain in the 93rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, which was raised largely in

Lebanon County. He was recruited by the 93rd's commander, Colonel James M. McCarter, a conference colleague and fellow abolitionist minister turned field officer. Lane served from October 1862 until the end of the war, and was recalled as an effective minister to the troops, "steadily laboring for their mental improvement, social entertainment and spiritual welfare. A successful literary society, revival service when opportunities afforded, and particularly a rude chapel erected in front of Petersburg, Virginia, in which... a number of soldiers were converted, bore witness to his diligence and fidelity as an army chaplain."



After the war, Lane returned to the Philadelphia Conference, and shepherded churches for the next forty years before ill health compelled his retirement in the spring of 1895; he died on December 17 of the same year. Lane was remembered as a "pastor of the thoroughly evangelistic type... not forgetting to call sinners personally to repentance." He was also known to be faithful and somewhat colorful in pastoral visitation: "It was a habit with him to visit literally from house to house, tract in pocket and hand, singing a hymn and offering prayer, extending courteous, counsel and admonition."

Lane was married to Hannah Thompson, sister of the Rev. John Thomson, and the couple had three children, two of whom predeceased their parents. The entire family is buried beneath a large obelisk in the Ministers' Burial Ground at Mount Moriah. According to a colleague, Joseph Lane was one of the "heroes" of the Philadelphia Conference, who had "forever secured a place among the 'Immortals.'"<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Sources for this sketch include: *Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1896), 92-94; Joseph S. Lane, *Maryland Slavery and Maryland Chivalry* (Philadelphia: Collins, 1858); and Penrose G. Mark, *Red: White: and Blue Badge, Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers. A History of the 93rd Regiment, known as the "Lebanon infantry" and "One of the 300 Fighting Regiments" from September 12th, 1861, to June 27th, 1865*, (Harrisburg: The Aughinbaugh Press, 1911).

### *The Institution: Rev. Jacob Hughes (1840-1926)*

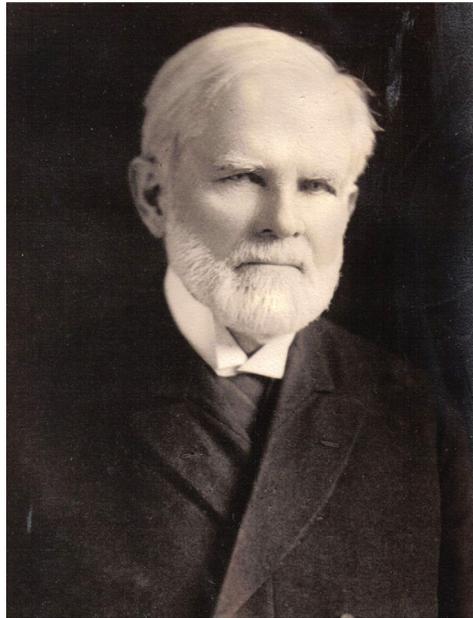
Jacob S. Hughes was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania on Christmas Day 1840. He came to Christ as a teenager, and in 1864 at the age of 24, was admitted to the Philadelphia Conference as a traveling preacher. Ordained a deacon in 1866 and an elder in 1868, his ministry would encompass 62 years under active appointment, a record unmatched at that time, serving in twelve different charges. Hughes twice represented Philadelphia as a delegate to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and served on a wide variety of boards and committees locally, including a thirty-year stint as treasurer and corresponding secretary for the Preachers' Aid Society. From 1897 to 1901, he was Presiding Elder (today's District Superintendent) of the West Philadelphia District.

In 1901, he was appointed the pastor of historic St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, the mother church of regional Methodism, dating to 1769. His appointment coincided with the suspension of pastoral tenure limits by the larger church; Hughes would remain at St. George's 25 years, the longest pastoral tenure in the church's history, and he left a significant legacy. Years of neighborhood changes from a residential to business area had resulted in a significant membership decline. Shortly after Hughes began his pastorate, a conference-wide fund drive was begun to raise St. George's endowment, to insure that the Methodist landmark would survive. Assisted by the leadership of Rev. Samuel W. Thomas, former Pennsylvania Governor Robert E. Pattison (whose father had served as pastor of St. George's, 1863-1865) and the Hon. John Field, the campaign was launched at the 1902 Philadelphia Conference session. Some \$11,500, a significant sum for that day, was raised and managed by the Conference Endowment Commission to help maintain St. George's.

Most significantly, however, was Hughes' leadership in saving the historic church from the wrecking ball. In the early 1920s, the City of Philadelphia planned to seize St. George's by eminent domain and raze it, in order to make room for the proposed erection of the Benjamin Franklin Bridge. With the active leadership of retired Bishop Thomas Neely, Hughes and a team of colleagues worked to secure St. George's, and succeeded in having the path of the bridge moved to the south, where it stands today, 14 feet from the walls of the old church. As part of the process, the church sold two properties to the bridge commission, at

227 N. 4th Street and 226 N. Lawrence Street. The bridge construction also required lowering 4th Street, radically changing the appearance of the church, as the main doors moved from street level to one story high, and were now reached by a set of exterior steps.

Hughes was married twice; his first wife, Lizzie Rambo, died in 1868. In 1874 he married again to Mary Armour, the ceremony performed by Jacob's brother, Rev. Levi B. Hughes. The couple shared in ministry for nearly 50 years, with Mary's



special focus on Sunday school work. "She was a Bible class teacher of superior ability;" her conference memorial later recorded; "few persons of her generation were more familiar with the Scriptures than she was."

Jacob Hughes died on March 5, 1926, and his funeral was held in St. George's, in the same space where he had been ordained during the conference session held there in 1866. He was laid to rest at Mt. Moriah with his two wives and a son who had died in infancy in 1875. A daughter, Bessie, survived him. Jacob Hughes was remembered as "illuminated to the very core of his being; the light of God was in him and shone out of him."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Sources: *Philadelphia Conference Minutes* (1923), 635-636; (1926), 404-405; and Francis Tees, *The Ancient Landmark of American Methodism, or the Story of St. George's* (Philadelphia: Message Publishing Co., 1951), 177-186.