

# The Evergreens Cemetery

## Quarterly Newsletter

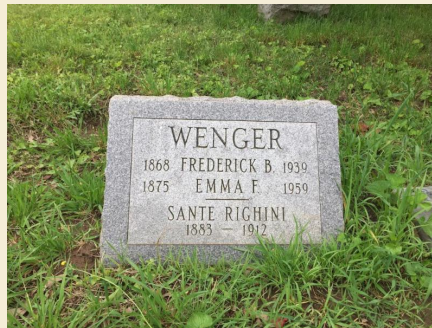


### Notable Resident

This article continues our series highlighting important people buried at The Evergreens Cemetery.

#### Sante Righini (1883 - 1912)

Sante Righini was born in Ravenna, Italy. He arrived in New York in 1903 and applied for US citizenship in 1910. He was a manservant to Ella White, a wealthy widow who resided at Briarcliffe manor and stayed at the Waldorf-Astoria when in New York City. Righini boarded the Titanic on April 10th, 1912, in Cherbourg, France with White, her maid and female friend. The group was traveling back to New York following a European vacation aboard the so-called "unsinkable" ocean liner, which was on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. White sprained her ankle while boarding the ship and was confined during the voyage to her first-class cabin, where Righini and White's maid also remained to attend her needs. Five days later, when the Titanic collided with an iceberg and tragically sank, killing more than 1500 passengers and crew, Righini was left aboard the ship, while his traveling companions entered a life boat.



His body was recovered from the sea several days later by the cable ship Mackay-Bennett, which recovered many of the victims of the Titanic. Righini's body was brought back to Halifax, Nova Scotia where many of the victims of the Titanic were identified and returned to their loved ones. Righini was identified on May 11th and his body was forwarded to his relatives in New York. At his funeral at his sister's house in Brooklyn, she spoke of his heroic actions at the end of his life. She said "My brother died a hero. I have learned he was about to enter one of the lifeboats when a woman behind him appealed to be saved and, stepping aside, he allowed her to take a place in the boat. There was room for more persons, but before my brother could get in the boat it had started off. When last seen he was standing on the deck, waiting for the ship to sink."

Righini was buried at The Evergreens Cemetery, and his sister and brother-in-law were later interred here as well. The headstone was commissioned in 1959 when his sister died. A search has revealed that all of Righini's relatives in the United States have died, with no descendants remaining.

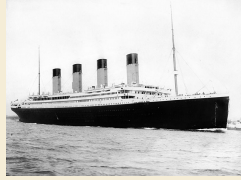
### Sante Righini: The Discovery of a Forgotten Titanic Victim at The Evergreens Cemetery



It was discovered recently that Sante Righini, who lost his life in the Titanic disaster on April 15th, 1912, is buried at The Evergreens. The research of Trevor Baxter, a British Titanic researcher who is devoted to uncovering where Titanic victims are buried throughout the world, led to the discovery. Baxter contacted us in February to confirm that Righini is buried here, and we located his grave as well as his name, place and cause of death in the log book.

Helen Thurston from The Evergreens Cemetery Preservation Foundation and Eva Bowerman, Director of Programs, at the wreath-laying ceremony for Sante Righini on April 15th

We held a wreath-laying ceremony to honor Righini on April 15th, 2017, the 105th anniversary of his death aboard the Titanic. In the near future, in consultation with the Titanic Historical Society, we plan to erect a sign, to mark his grave and indicate his historical importance as a victim of the sinking of the Titanic.



RMS Titanic departing Southampton, April 10, 1912

Press coverage of the discovery and the commemoration can be found at:

[www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/hunt-grave-heroic-titanic-victim-ends-brooklyn-article-1.3041083](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/hunt-grave-heroic-titanic-victim-ends-brooklyn-article-1.3041083)

[www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/heroic-titanic-victim-remembered-evergreens-cemetery-ceremony-article-1.3059076](http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/brooklyn/heroic-titanic-victim-remembered-evergreens-cemetery-ceremony-article-1.3059076)



## Letter from the President

The beauty of our serene landscape is more apparent than ever at this time of year, and we continue to welcome many visitors to The Evergreens Cemetery, which was founded in 1849 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Our experienced staff and family service counselor are happy to serve our community by helping families find the best interment options for their loved ones. We continue to support historic research into those buried at The Evergreens and to assist families who wish to identify the graves of their forebearers. The growing

interest in ancestry research is amply supported by our helpful and trusted staff.

We are also pleased to welcome the community for an array of public programs. Recent events include a tree walk with tree expert Bill Logan from Urban Arborists, stargazing with the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York, and a tap dance performance in honor of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson's birthday. We held our first yoga class at the cemetery recently and attendees enjoyed our beautiful and peaceful surroundings at The Evergreens. Our upcoming programs include a tree drawing class and a cloud study class with Lisa Nett from Brooklyn Brainery, and a bird walk with NYC Audubon.

We are proud to commemorate the rich history of those buried here and provide a contemplative greenspace – open to all – in the heart of Brooklyn.

With best wishes,

*Julie Bose*

## Upcoming Events



Photo courtesy of Lisa Nett

### 'Drawn to Trees' Class

Saturday, June 24, 2017  
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Join tree expert Lisa Nett for a tree drawing class. Participants will sketch and take a close look at bark, tree shape, twigs and other arboreal elements. There will be a crash course in tree identification with opportunities to draw some of those tree details.

**Class fee: \$13**

The class is held by the Brooklyn Brainery and registration on their site is required.

<https://brooklynbrainery.com/courses/drawn-to-trees-evergreens-cemetery>

### Yoga Class

Sunday, June 25, 2017  
10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

Join us on the beautiful grounds of The Evergreens Cemetery for an Alignment Hatha Yoga class. The event is free and open to the public. The class will be taught by Akiko Nishijima from All Yoga studio and is open to all levels of practice. The focus is on the individual introduction of poses, with the focus on alignment. Simple breath work is also introduced in the poses. Please bring a mat or towel.



Pre-registration is appreciated, but not required. Register on Eventbrite [HERE](#).



## Cloud Study Class

Saturday, August 26, 2017  
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Learn to appreciate clouds more deeply in this class that is partly whimsy and part cloud science, led by Lisa Nett. There will be a robust discussion of cloud classification, weather forecasting that doesn't involve a smartphone, and the hidden merits in cloud shape studies. **Class fee: \$13**

The class is held by the Brooklyn Brainery and registration on their site is required. The link for registration will be posted in July; please go [HERE](#) or email [eb@theevergreenscemetery.com](mailto:eb@theevergreenscemetery.com) for further information.

## Stargazing with the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York

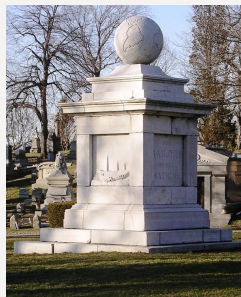
Friday, September 8, 2017  
7:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Come observe and learn about the stars with members of the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York. This stargazing event offers the rare opportunity for attendees to observe the night sky in an area relatively free of glare from the lights of the city. The association brings high-powered telescopes and binoculars through which everyone is invited to look, and will provide instruction on how to find objects in the night sky. Feel free to bring your own binoculars or a telescope as well. The event is free and open to the public.

Pre-registration is appreciated, but not required. Register on Eventbrite [HERE](#)



Seaman's Monument



## Sailors' Cemetery Association Archival Project Summary Report

By Timothy J. DeWerff and Helen Thurston  
May 2017

The New York Preservation Archive Project made a grant to describe, arrange, and preserve the archives of the Sailors' Cemetery Association, which for approximately 150 years administered burials for indigent sailors in its grounds at The Evergreens Cemetery. The Sailors' Cemetery

Association archives have now revealed a fascinating survey of the maritime history of the port of New York through the lens of the death records of the international sailors who died in port. The archival documents also reveal the work and attention of the city fathers and federal officials who took care that these indigents be given a final resting place despite their poverty.

The legal documents, correspondence, and letters about the individual seamen buried in the grounds came from three boxes of archival materials and encompassed the entire 150-year history of the Association, including, for example, correspondence with a U.S. Congressman advocating for the establishment of the Seaman's Burial Grounds in 1852, the involvement of the city's leading citizens whose names are on the base of the still-extant Seaman's Monument, surveyors' maps, newspaper clippings, burial permit ledgers, as well as contractor bids for repairs to the monument, deeds of property, board meeting minutes, correspondence with attorneys, and even a corporate seal.

Future examination of this material will no doubt offer significant findings of historical importance to the maritime history of New York City, international maritime commerce patterns, and the workings of the city fathers and federal leaders whose attention to the public weal encompassed immigrant seamen. The archives will also no doubt assist with the restoration of the Seaman's Monument itself, famous for welcoming ships to the New York harbor from the heights of Beacon Hill looking out toward the harbor from within the cemetery grounds. With the closing of the Brooklyn Navy Yard approximately 50 years ago, and with the recent focus on reopening the city shoreline, this Seaman's Archives project has proven both timely and important. The Evergreens gratefully acknowledges the support of the New York Preservation Archive Project.

## Recent Events at The Evergreens





## Stargazing

On Friday, May 19th the cemetery hosted its second, highly popular stargazing event in partnership with the Amateur Astronomers Association of New York, a group dedicated to observing the sky and introducing the public to the wonders of astronomy. Members brought telescopes and binoculars through which everyone was invited to look, and provided instruction on how to find objects in the night sky.

According to AAA member Rori Baldari, who helped organize the event, "attendees were treated to views of several bright celestial objects that the night sky had to offer that evening. While the giant planet Jupiter and three of its many moons were the showpiece targets, the bright stars Arcturus and Spica were also visible. In addition we were able to see the binary star system in the handle of the Big Dipper, known as Alcor and Mizar. Volunteer members of this astronomy club enjoy stargazing in the cemetery because once inside, they are free from the many streetlights which hinder viewing from within the city. The club looks forward to future stargazing events at this location."



## Exploring Trees at The Evergreens Cemetery

On Sunday, May 7th visitors on a guided tree tour of The Evergreens enjoyed the spectacular spring foliage as they explored the grounds and learned to identify over 30 tree species.

The tour was led by tree expert Bill Logan, who is the Founder of Urban Arborists and a faculty member at New York Botanical Garden. He is the author of three books on natural history – "Oak: The Frame of Civilization", "Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth" and "Air: The Restless Shaper of the World," all published by W.W. Norton.

According to Bill Logan, "Looking at Evergreens trees is a voyage of discovery. There are many species, each with its own story. A few of the largest trees predate the cemetery."

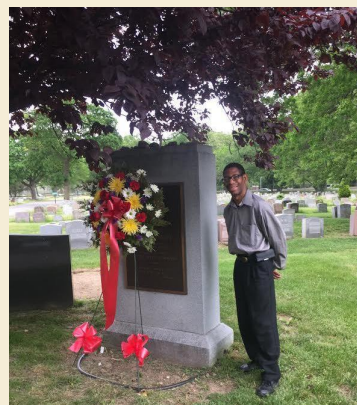


An attendee said she enjoyed the event because "We love the quiet serene feeling you get when you are in a cemetery, especially an urban one. Walking around with Bill is always exciting because he has so much enthusiasm for the trees. The great advantage to seeing trees in this kind of setting is that they have so much space to grow, aside from parks, and that is something very special for us New Yorkers."

## Tap Dance in Honor of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson

A tap dance event was held on Saturday, May 20th to commemorate tap legend Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, who is buried at the cemetery. May 25th is National Tap Dance Day – a day chosen in honor of Bojangles' birthday – so in anticipation of this day the cemetery welcomed members of the community to enjoy a performance by Reggie Myers. Mr. Myers spoke about the history of tap and the importance of Bojangles, and demonstrated the art of tap dance.

He said about the event: "It meant a lot for me to be there and do something special for the community, arts, and culture. I enjoyed being at The Evergreens Cemetery and seeing first-hand the grave of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and sharing his gift - which is now my gift. Bojangles influenced me to keep doing what I love most." Following the performance there was a wreath-laying ceremony at Bojangles' grave.



## Yoga Class

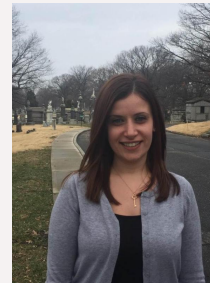
On Sunday, June 11 we held our first yoga class on the beautiful grounds of the



Evergreens Cemetery. The Energetic Yoga class was taught by LilaLucy Nelson from All Yoga studio and was open to all levels of practice. We were delighted to welcome the community to enjoy our peaceful green space and look forward to the next yoga class on June 25th.

## Staff Spotlight

### Interview with Nicole Segarra, Interment Clerk



#### What is your position at The Evergreens?

I am an Interment Clerk. I plan and coordinate interment orders, which are burial arrangements that are given by funeral directors and family members. I also help people with genealogical research.

#### How long have you worked here?

Almost three years.

#### What were you doing before you started working at The Evergreens?

I used to work at a doctor's office before this. I always enjoyed helping people, but this was definitely a new experience in helping people in finding their family members.

#### What do you like most about your job?

I really enjoy helping people. They are so glad when they find any lost family members, and then they find out if they are interred with someone else. Sometimes they are buried with someone they didn't know about, maybe a young child or another relative, and the person inquiring is so content to find out about this.

#### How do people react when you tell them you work at a cemetery?

They automatically think I am a grave digger and that I am outside on the grounds opening graves or cleaning up.

#### Where do you live?

In Queens, in Middle Village.

#### What do you like to do in your free time?

I like to hang out with my family, bake and I hate to say – I love watching TV.

#### If you weren't working here what would you like to do?

I don't really have one thing that I would love to do, but since I was little, my sister and I wanted to open a bakery. I enjoy baking, but she's a great pastry chef, so we always wanted to do that.

## Cultural Landscape Report



Historic Landscape Architects Faye Harwell of Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. and Marion Pressley, noted A.J. Downing expert of Pressley Associates, study and document the landscape of the cemetery.

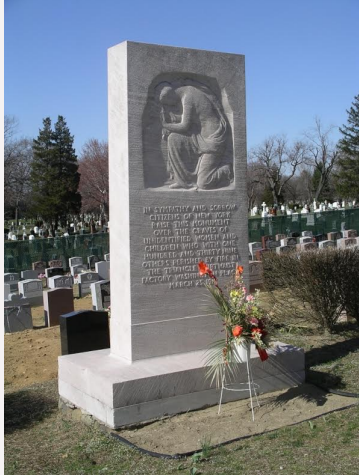
In the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation awarded The Evergreens Cemetery a grant to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR). The report will serve as a guide for short- and long-term planning, while helping to protect the Evergreens' treasured historic structures – such as the chapel designed by Alexander Jackson Davis – monuments, and landscape. Conceived by world-famous 19th-century landscape gardener, author and tastemaker Andrew Jackson Downing, the site layout of The Evergreens is considered one of America's finest examples of 'rural cemetery' design.

The cemetery has engaged Rhodeside & Harwell to prepare the CLR. Maps, plans and recommendations will include furthering the Evergreens' goal of becoming an arboretum, protecting the cemetery's valuable tree canopy, and upgrading site furnishings, access, and way-finding, for an improved and welcoming visitor experience. The CLR will also provide planting and paving treatment recommendations to enhance the natural beauty of The Evergreens in keeping with its rich historic roots.



## ***A Spring Visit from the Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery***

On April 21 The Evergreens Cemetery welcomed 50 visitors belonging to the Friends of Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, who arrived by tour bus to visit two of New York City's notable cemeteries – the Evergreens and Green-Wood. Laurel Hill Cemetery, founded in 1836, is the second oldest major rural cemetery in the country, and the members of the Friends of Laurel Hill are knowledgeable and enthusiastic cemetery visitors.



Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Monument

As the visitors were led through the grounds, they passed through the tranquil gently rolling landscape, including majestic old trees, and learned about the history associated with some of the monuments. For example, the group paused at the monument to the originally unidentified victims of the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire as they learned how the tragedy led to the passing of state and federal laws resulting in safer workplaces. Visitors also explored the cemetery's 1892 receiving vault, used in the past during the winters to store bodies when immediate burials were not possible. They stopped to puzzle at the unusually shaped metal vault of W.H. Guild, wondering if it could be a gun turret or a water boiler.

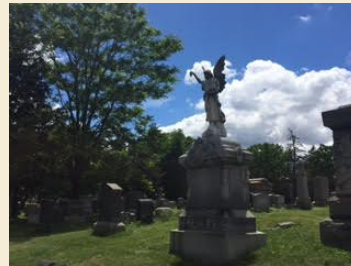
Nick McAllister, Director of Development and Membership at Laurel Hill, wrote, "We absolutely loved the tour. You have a really special place in The Evergreens and we were so tickled to have seen it first-hand."

The Evergreens Cemetery welcomes group tours. For further information contact Eva Bowerman, Director of Programs, at [eb@theevergreenscemetery.com](mailto:eb@theevergreenscemetery.com).

## ***Support Us***

We appreciate donations to help preserve the beauty of our historic grounds and provide access to a larger public. Donations may be made by credit card through Paypal or mailing a check to:

The Evergreens Preservation Foundation  
1629 Bushwick Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11207



To make a donation through PayPal please click [HERE](#).

## ***Making Arrangements***

The Evergreens Cemetery provides a beautiful final resting place for loved ones, and we are pleased to discuss the variety of options available.

Contact:  
Anthony Salamone  
Family Service Counselor  
718-455-5300  
[info@theevergreenscemetery.com](mailto:info@theevergreenscemetery.com)

## ***Research***

We welcome genealogical inquiries. Please contact the office at [info@theevergreenscemetery.com](mailto:info@theevergreenscemetery.com) or tel. 718-455-5300 for further information.

## ***Cemetery Hours***

Grounds are open seven days a week from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.,  
Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please contact the office about holiday closures.



## **The Evergreens Cemetery Board of Trustees**

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Patricia Gentilella, Bookkeeper

Damaris Rodriguez, Interment Clerk

Anthony Salamone, Family Service  
Counselor

Nicole Segarra, Interment Clerk

Veronica Willis

*Newsletter edited and designed by  
Eva Bowerman*

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**CONTACT US**