

# Shiloh Cemetery Association Inc NEWSLETTER



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO DEDICATE RESPITE GARDEN TO ROBERT VERNON and ARNO WEBSTER



Robert Vernon and Arno Webster had deep ties to Shiloh Cemetery and were active in caring for it for more than 40 years. In honor of their service, a respite garden is being developed in the northeast corner of the Cemetery.

Arno's grandparents, James Mason (II I 36) and Elmira Lane Surls (II I 35) were born in Florida in the 1870s, and grew up and raised their family around Wyly and Sumner. Arno's father was born in Wyly in 1899, and she was born in Sumner in 1924. Her family lived in Cedar Key and Sumner then moved to Lacoochee when Sumner's sawmill burned. She met Mr. Webster in Aripeka and after they married, they finally settled in Tampa. Throughout her life, Mrs. Webster and her family joined others of the Surls families in caring for graves of family members buried in Shiloh Cemetery. When Mr. Webster retired, they moved first to Cedar Key then back to Sumner near where Mrs. Webster was born. Active in volunteer work of various sorts, in 1977, Mr. Webster took on the duties of caretaker of Shiloh Cemetery which had fallen into disrepair over the years, much of it overgrown with Florida scrub. He recruited family and friends to clear the Cemetery of dead trees and debris, find the sunken headstones and buried graves, and

provide for on-going maintenance of the common grounds. (see History of Shiloh Cemetery, page 5)

Mr. Webster was a gregarious man and enjoyed visiting with those who came twice a year to Shiloh to maintain the grounds at the Spring and Fall Cemetery cleanings. He recruited friends of the cemetery to bring covered dishes to compliment the fried fish or barbecue he prepared for the volunteers. Though stolen time after time, he installed pitcher pumps, then electric pumps on the now unused well. He opened an account at Drummond Bank to safeguard the meager funds donated to Shiloh, first to replace the fence, then to repair the fence, and to pay the electric bill for the electricity for the well pump. He filled in gopher holes; he righted the headstones. He and Mrs. Webster often walked the cemetery in the evenings, picking up palm fronds and fallen branches, burning them in smudges to keep the cemetery tidy and to deter the sand gnats while they talked of the people of Shiloh gone on before.

After Mr. Webster died in 1997, (I I 23DW) Mrs. Webster continued as the advocate for keeping the common grounds of the cemetery maintained and served as the defacto Trustee for assignment of locations for burials. She was instrumental in revitalizing the Board of Trustees of Shiloh Cemetery Association and became a Trustee in 2010, serving as its Secretary/Treasurer until 2015. She instituted the Association's grave space database and led the production of the first maps of the Cemetery. She took a leadership role in clearing and fencing the new South area of the Cemetery for use by families who did not have relatives buried in Shiloh, which is required for burial in the Ancestral area. She was unflinching in her determination to build a bathroom at the Cemetery, though that goal is still to be realized. She resigned from the Board in 2015 at age 90, but continued to attend its meetings until her death in 2019 (I I 22DW.)

Please join us for the dedication of the garden in their memory at the Spring Cemetery cleaning on April 23, 2022, at 12 noon.

### SHILOH CEMETERY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Charles King - President
- Randy Beckham - Vice President
- Ginger Oliver - Secretary
- Elaine Rains - Treasurer
- Mark Webster - Trustee-at-large
- Gerald Morgan - Trustee-at-large
- Jerald Beckham - Honorary Trustee



Your comments and questions may be submitted in writing to

Ginger Oliver, Secretary  
PO Box 634  
San Antonio, Florida 33576

Correspondence will be reviewed at a meeting of the Board of Trustees and a reply provided.

**ANNUAL SPRING CEMETERY CLEANING AND OPEN FORUM**

**Saturday, April 23, 2022**

**9 am - 12 noon!**

**Please support Shiloh Cemetery!**

**Bring your rakes and trimmers and we'll all roll up our sleeves to give Shiloh a good spring cleaning and work on restoration of graves that need our care.**

**Let's work together to keep Shiloh Cemetery a place of solace, tranquility and peace.**

**ALSO, JOIN US FOR THE DEDICATION OF THE Robert V. AND ARNO WEBSTER MEMORIAL GARDEN AT 12 NOON.**

**We look forward to seeing YOU!**

**FRIENDS OF SHILOH**

A group of volunteers, led by Fred Wynans, is cleaning the headstones of Shiloh's military service veterans and their spouses. We appreciate the work of these volunteers who give their time to demonstrate their respect and affection for Shiloh's veterans.

Since our last newsletter, off road joy riders damaged a section of the fence on the north border of the Ancestral Area. Seeing the damage, Chad Beckham made repairs to the fence. Chad is often at the cemetery visiting the grave of his father and other members of his family. Thank you, Chad.

"A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435- 7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE."

**ELAINE RAINS PRIMARY CONTACT FOR DONATIONS**

We'd like to thank everyone who has donated to Shiloh Cemetery. Shiloh Cemetery is wholly supported by modest grave space fees and donations. Shiloh Cemetery Association solicits donations by word-of-mouth and in its semiannual newsletter. In compliance with State of Florida statutes, Shiloh Cemetery is registered as a qualified charitable organization that solicits donations and as such, does not employ any firm to solicit donations on behalf the cemetery.

Donated funds are placed in the Association's general account along with grave space fees. These funds are used for all of the cemetery's expenses, which include maintenance, improvements, and a few administrative costs, such as postage and printing. The trustees are volunteers and are not paid to administer the cemetery, but have authority to pay for goods and services necessary to the operations of the cemetery as well as its upkeep and improvement.

Recently, Elaine Rains was elected Treasurer of Shiloh Cemetery Association, Inc., and one of her duties is to receive and process donations. We appreciate your support of Shiloh Cemetery. You may make donations payable to Shiloh Cemetery Association and mail to

Elaine Rains, Treasurer  
PO Box 634  
San Antonio, Florida 33576



### FALL 2021 CEMETERY CLEANING

Our sincere thanks to the many folks who come to the group cemetery cleanings and to those who come by during the year to weed, mow, and pick up fallen branches. This past fall, we cleaned the entire cemetery, though a lot of effort was given to starting work on clearing the northeast corner of the cemetery for a memorial garden. A big thanks to Matthew King and Ron Oliver who brought tractors to assist with the heavier work.



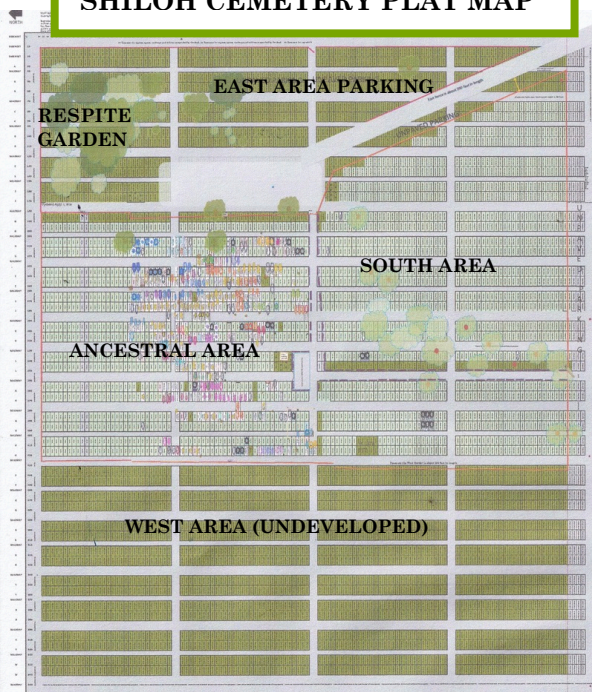


**GRAVE SPACE RESERVATIONS**

Grave space reservations may be made by contacting a Trustee who will make arrangements for determining the site, completing the paperwork and payment of the requisite fees.



**SHILOH CEMETERY PLAT MAP**



**PROCEDURES FOR RESERVATIONS AND INTERMENTS IN SHILOH CEMETERY**

**RESERVATIONS**

1. Make an appointment with a Trustee to visit the cemetery and determine a desired location.
  2. Complete the required paperwork and pay the necessary fees:
    - \$50 Administrative fee
    - \$50 Grave Space privilege fee
    - \$50 Headstone promise deposit
    - Total fees, \$150
- Note: The headstone promise deposit will be refunded when a durable headstone is placed within one year of interment.
3. You will be sent a certificate which affords the named individual the privilege of burial and/or erection of a memorial in the designated grave space. This certificate is for your records only.
  4. You will receive guidelines that outline embellishments that you may or may not make to the grave space.

**INTERMENTS**

1. Notify Mark Webster and confirm authorization for the burial and/or placing a headstone.
 

Note: A grave space is required for both burials and cremations. Though cremations have been placed in occupied graves spaces in the past, individual grave spaces are now required. Scattering of ashes in the general areas is not permitted.
2. Provide Mark Webster with the deceased's date of death and date of burial for the Association's records, as required by the State of Florida.
3. Notify the funeral home to contact Mark Webster to discuss any questions and procedures.
4. Mark Webster will mark the grave space location for the funeral home.
5. After a durable headstone is placed, the headstone promise deposit will be refunded.

## HISTORY OF SHILOH CEMETERY

In 1855, Allen Osteen was granted 80 acres of land, which included the present location of Shiloh Cemetery, as payment by the United States federal government for his military service in two tours of duty in the Second Seminole War. Osteen did not want the land and subsequently it was conveyed to William Yearty.

When Yearty died in 1875, his widow, Caroline, buried him on the land that has become Shiloh Cemetery. Prior to her death in 1887, she set aside one acre of land from the 80 acres for a family cemetery. You can find the Yearty's graves in the Ancestral Grounds of the Cemetery; Section II, Lot K, Spaces 19 and 20.

In the following years, the 80 acres surrounding Shiloh Cemetery were sold in various parcels. In the early 1900s, the property surrounding Shiloh Cemetery was acquired by Cummer and Sons Cypress Company of Jacksonville, Florida and later by Usher Land and Timber Company of Chiefland, Florida. The deed to the Ancestral Grounds of the Cemetery itself was held at various times by several families as trustees. Shiloh became deeded as a cemetery on January 21, 1907 when W. B. Ellis deeded a parcel for burial of the dead with W. R. Hodges, J. M. Wright (I I 53), William F. Ingram (II N 15), Robert L. Smith as trustees. On October 21, 1920, another adjacent parcel was deeded by W. R. Hodges for burial of the dead with Jesse Ford (II H 38.1), and Charlie Miller (I L 30), trustees.

As the economy of Levy County declined in the 1920s, the Cemetery was used less and less until by the 1970s, only some of the gravesites were maintained and much of the Cemetery was overgrown with Florida scrublands and trees. Many graves fell into disrepair and information about those marked with wooden memorials was lost. Grave markers, particularly those graves marked only with clamshells, sank into the white sugar sand; some may still be lost. In those days, the common areas and boundaries of the cemetery, marked by a field wire fence, were not consistently maintained, though some individual families cared for the graves of family and friends. Notable in this service were the Ingram, Morgan, King, Surls, Ishie, Beckham and Smallwood families.

In 1977, Mr. R. V. Webster (I I 23), took it upon himself to become caretaker for the Cemetery and along with his family and friends reclaimed the Cemetery from the woodlands. Together, they removed the dilapidated fencing and replaced it with chain link fence, righted overturned headstones and restored many of the graves, locating those covered with sand by probing with an iron rod. At that time, Mr. Webster established the tradition of spring and fall cemetery cleaning events, which continue to this day.

Re-fencing, electrical service, water pumps, periodic for-hire mowing and other expenses were paid with donations from volunteers solicited by the Webster family and at the Cemetery cleaning events when Mr. Crofton Bryant passed his hat, admonishing folks with a stern look - "And don't you spit in my hat!"

When Mr. Webster died in 1997, interest in maintaining the Cemetery again dwindled and his wife, Arno (I I 22,) became its primary advocate, cajoling family and friends into continuing the bi-annual cemetery cleaning events and guiding families in the placement of graves in the Cemetery.

In 2003, Mr. Etter T. Usher desired to donate nine acres surrounding the Cemetery, but in order to do so, requested the formation of a not-for-profit association to administer it. That year, the Shiloh Cemetery Association, Inc., was formed with the assistance of Mr. P. K. Beck, legal counsel. Shiloh's former property owners and Mr. E. T. Usher selected the first Trustees of the Association who were

Jerald Beckham,

Faye Fenton,

David King,

Caren W. Smith and

Mark W. Webster and

then, all legal rights to the Cemetery grounds and activities therein were bestowed on the non-profit association, Shiloh Cemetery Association, Inc. Immediately thereafter, the Cemetery properties were transferred by warranty deed to Shiloh Cemetery Association, Inc. making it the ten-acre cemetery it is today.

In 2003, though the Trustees were responsible for management of the Cemetery, Arno Webster continued to lead the efforts for its overall maintenance and act as defacto Trustee for assignment of grave spaces. The new cemetery lands remained undeveloped and unsuitable for grave spaces. In 2009, because of increasing demands by non-ancestral families for grave spaces in the Ancestral Grounds, Mrs. Webster convened the Board of Trustees appealing to them to take steps to open new areas of the cemetery for non-ancestral families.

In 2010, the Board of Trustees reaffirmed their commitment to management of the Cemetery. David King (deceased) and Caren W. Smith (moved out of State) were replaced with Trustees Charles P. King and Arno Webster.

From the Trustees, officers were elected:

Charles P. King – President

Jerald Beckham – Vice President

Arno Webster – Secretary/Treasurer

Faye Fenton – Trustee at-Large

Mark Webster – Trustee at-Large

At that time, the decision was made to set and collect fees for burial privileges in order to raise funds necessary for the development of the grounds donated by Mr. Usher as well as on-going maintenance and management of the entire Cemetery. Procedures for requesting reservations were prepared and the first fees were collected in 2010. Since then, information about the cemetery is provided at the cemetery cleaning events and in the Newsletter distributed in April and October each year.

Mark Webster and Alan Chancey surveyed the property and developed a plat map of the 10-acre parcel.

In 2011, using the plat map, Arno Webster and Ginger Oliver developed a grave space map of the cemetery, demarcating the Ancestral Grounds, East, South and West Grounds, including addressed grave spaces, driveways, the perimeter chain link fence, walkways, and the utility building. They developed a detailed database recording names and available data assigned to each burial site; in many cases, 'unknown' is used where there is evidence of a grave. The grave space map is now used for all

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

burials, conforming to the plat map for uniform placement of graves.

Lacking sufficient funds from donations and grave space fees, later in 2011, under the supervision of Arno Webster, the pine trees on the undeveloped areas were harvested and sold. Then, Gilbert McCain was engaged to clear the South and East areas to be developed for grave spaces and parking respectively. These activities led to the Trustees beginning to conceive the long range development plan for the Cemetery and over time, discussions included ideas about fencing, mapping and preparing the grounds for grave spaces, roadways, walkways, a funeral pavilion, restroom, parking improvements, landscaping, signage and similar improvements.

In 2012, clearing the south area was completed.

In 2013, after serving as Trustee for ten years, Faye Fenton resigned her position and Thelma McCain was selected by the Trustees as a new Trustee.

In 2014, the stumps in the south area were removed, then it was disked and seeded by James Beauchamp and Charles King.

In February 2015, Jerold Beckham resigned his position and was given the position as Honorary Trustee in recognition of his service to Shiloh Cemetery. Randy Beckham was elected as a new Trustee.

Later that year, supervised by Arno Webster, fencing the South Area of the Cemetery was completed and it was opened to reservations. The Ancestral grounds are available for reservations only to those who have relatives buried there. The South grounds are open to reservations by the general community. Also in 2015, work was started to begin marking the grave spaces of the Unknowns with a simple granite stone, and working toward restoring these sites that are so vulnerable to the elements. To-date, 40 of the 81 unknown graves have been marked.

In 2015, after the opening of the South area, Arno Webster (age 90) resigned her position on the Board and was given the position of Honorary Trustee in recognition of her lifetime of service to Shiloh Cemetery. Ginger Oliver was elected as a new Trustee.

Officers elected in 2015 were:

- Charles King, President
- Randy Beckham, Vice President
- Ginger Oliver, Secretary/Treasurer
- Mark Webster, At-Large
- Thelma McCain, At-Large

In 2017, Thelma McCain died and her position remained vacant until 2018. For her replacement and in preparation for eventual retirement of Charles King, Gerald Morgan and Elaine Rains were elected Trustees.

In 2021, the Ancestral Grounds were expanded to the north border of the property, making some 250 additional grave spaces available to Ancestral families.

In July, 2021, a new Trustee officer position of Treasurer was created and Elaine Rains was elected to the office. Ginger Oliver retained the position of Secretary.

Present Board of Trustees includes:

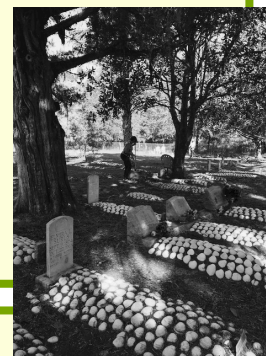
- Charles King, President
- Randy Beckham, Vice President
- Ginger Oliver, Secretary
- Elaine Rains, Treasurer
- Mark Webster - Trustee at Large
- Gerald Morgan - Trustee at Large

The Association is presently engaged in developing a respite garden in the northeast corner of the cemetery property. The garden will be dedicated in honor of R.V. and Arno Webster for their lifelong work at the cemetery. The primary purpose of the garden is to provide a serene place for quiet reflection, but also to be a place where families and friends can enjoy each other's company.

Throughout the history of Shiloh Cemetery, family and friends have spent countless hours caring for the grave spaces of loved ones. Even strangers to the area sometimes stop by and pick up fallen limbs and rake leaves. It is one of the things that make Shiloh so special.

Since 2010, the Board of Trustees has been actively engaged in managing Shiloh Cemetery, meeting each January and July as well as conducting the Spring Cemetery Cleaning in April and the Fall Cemetery Cleaning in October, and meeting in between as needs arise. Notably, in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting hardship on families, the Board suspended collection of grave space fees for immediate burials, regardless of cause. Fees are still required for future reservations. It is anticipated that with the lessening impact of Covid-19, the fees for immediate burials will be reinstated later this year.

As new chapters in the Cemetery's history unfold, we the Trustees, pledge to do our best to provide affordable grave spaces for those who need them while retaining the rural and historical character of Shiloh Cemetery.



**PRESENT GRAVE SPACE UTILIZATION**

Interments and interred cremations	311
Reservations	49
<u>Memorial only</u>	<u>2</u>
<b>Total Grave Spaces Assigned</b>	<b>362</b>
Named individuals	232
Unknown Adults	28
Unknown Children	53



## PROJECT REPORTS

**IDENTIFICATION OF UNKNOWN GRAVES AND GRAVE RESTORATIONS:** In 2010, there were 33 unknown adult graves and 72 unknown graves of children in the cemetery. By talking with folks who visit the cemetery, we have discovered and recorded the identity of 5 adults and 19 children. We are marking the graves of the unknowns with granite markers inscribed with "GRAVE" and have so marked about half of them, a project that will continue until all are marked so that the graves can be restored and maintained. If you are interested in volunteering to participate in this work, please contact Ginger Oliver.

**RECOGNITION OF ROBERT VERNON AND ARNO WEBSTER** - to honor the years of service at Shiloh by Mr. and Mrs. Webster, the Board of Trustees is developing a respite garden on the northeast corner of the cemetery. A kiosk will be placed at the entrance to the garden to provide information and maps for the public. The garden is intended for quiet reflection and solace of the grieving, but also as a place of joy and celebration of the lives of those buried in Shiloh. The dedication of the garden will be conducted at the Spring Cemetery Cleaning on April 23, 2022, and all are welcome to attend.

**RETENTION POND IN THE WEST AREA** - Work is planned to dig a retention pond in the West Area of the cemetery and use the soil as fill to make low-lying areas in the Ancestral grounds and a South area more suitable for grave spaces. Not started.

**ALIGNMENT OF THE EAST FENCE** - moving a section of the chain link fence on the east border of the Ancestral area closer to the margin of the roadway will make about 70 additional grave spaces available in the Ancestral area. Not started.

## MAINTENANCE OF GROUNDS

The Board is responsible for seeing that the Cemetery's common and unimproved areas, and unidentified historical graves in the cemetery are maintained. The Board may delegate its authority or hire a maintenance contractor or other entity to maintain the grounds in good repair, though this work is routinely done by volunteers.

Families and friends of the deceased are expected to care for the individual grave spaces and remove leaves, tree limbs, trash, and similar debris from the Cemetery property when cleaning around grave spaces. Loose, degradable vegetation may be piled in the burn pit on the west of the South area, but whether loose or bagged, refuse, trash and debris may not be left anywhere on the grounds for others to remove.

***PLEASE TAKE NON-BIODEGRADABLE TRASH WITH YOU WHEN YOU LEAVE; TAKE BRANCHES, LEAVES, AND PALM FRONDS TO THE BURN PILE AT THE WEST SIDE OF THE SOUTH AREA OF THE CEMETERY. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE TRASH OR DEBRIS BY THE ENTRANCE GATE. Remember, anything that is piled up outside of a grave space is piled on someone else's grave space or on the common grounds. Please respect the grave spaces of others.***

All equipment and materials used in maintenance activities are to be removed from the Cemetery when not actively being used. No equipment may be stored in a grave space or common areas of the Cemetery.

Only the Board and their agents may authorize any changes to the Cemetery that include such actions as grading, planting, landscaping, pruning and so forth.

Do not plant trees in the cemetery. Small shrubs and flowers may be planted, but must be within the 5x10 individual grave spaces and not in the common areas or on other grave spaces.

Any tree, shrub or plant already standing anywhere on the property, including individual grave spaces, that encroaches by its roots, branches or otherwise and becomes or may become detrimental to its surroundings for any reason, the Board may order its removal or take such action necessary to change or correct the problem.

The vegetation of Shiloh Cemetery shall depend on rain as its source of water.

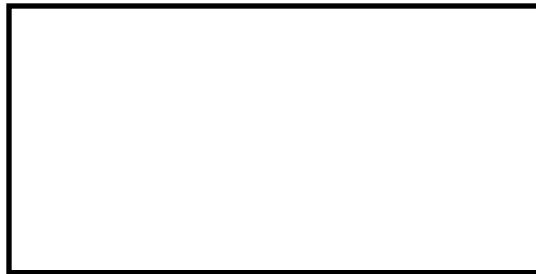
## Shiloh Cemetery Assoc., Inc.

Ginger Webster Oliver

PO Box 634

San Antonio, Florida 33576

**Interested in Shiloh? Join us at the Spring Cemetery Cleaning on April 23, 2022, 9 am until noon and let us know your interests! We need help doing research to identify unknown graves and to find other data that is missing in our files. We also need to document the presence/absence of headstones and ID on grave spaces, as well as restoring the graves of our unknowns. Contact Ginger Oliver for more information.**



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AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, AND IN THE MORNING, WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

SHILOH CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2022



Shiloh Cemetery Association, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit institution organized for the management, maintenance and improvement of Shiloh Cemetery in Sumner, Florida.

Supported by private donations and modest grave space privilege fees, Shiloh provides an affordable option for those needing its services.

The ten-acre cemetery is located at 12690 SW Shiloh Road Cedar Key, Florida 32625

Mailing Address

Ginger Oliver, Secretary  
PO Box 634  
San Antonio, Florida 33576

### Board of Trustees

- Charles King, President
- Randy Beckham, Vice President
- Ginger Oliver, Secretary
- Elaine Rains, Treasurer
- Mark Webster, At-Large
- Gerald Morgan, At-Large

To speak with a Trustee about reservations, interments, donations or topics of interest or concern,

Email us at  
[trustee@shilohcemetery.org](mailto:trustee@shilohcemetery.org)

### Calendar

#### April 23, 2022

Spring Cemetery Cleaning and Public Forum

#### July 30, 2022

Summer Meeting Board of Trustees

#### October 22, 2022

Fall Cemetery Cleaning and Public Forum

#### January 21, 2023

Winter Meeting Board of Trustees