Ivy Hill Cemetery
Historical Preservation Society

ivyhillcemetery.net or IHCHPS.org
2823 King St, Alexandria, VA 22302

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703-549-7413

Hugh Charles Smith: A Leader in Alexandria's Early Industry
By Catherine Weinraub

Hugh C. Smith was born in 1804 in Virginia. Raised in a family active in Alexandria's commercial and civic life, he grew up amid enterprises that shaped his own career. The Smiths were involved in local industry, property ownership, and civic affairs, providing the foundation for Hugh's later prominence as a businessman.



Smith became an influential figure in Alexandria's early business community. His family operated the Wilkes Street Pottery from 1825 to 1841, with Hugh taking primary management in 1831. Under his direction, the pottery became known for its distinctive "H. C. Smith/Alexa DC" mark, used until Alexandria's retrocession in 1847.

In 1830, Smith married Isabella Keightley, with whom he built a household and raised four children. He endured the loss of his wife and three of their children, sorrows that marked his later years, though he remained active in business and civic life.

Smith lived at 111 North Alfred Street, a property once tied to a sugar refinery. His will provides insight into his household and his views on slavery, particularly his provisions for Addison Webster, the only African American in his home, whom he ordered freed at age 25 and granted $100, recommending Liberia as a future residence. Although not a member, he donated $5 to the American Colonization Society in 1853. His manumission practices were unusual for the period: in 1840 he freed a woman and her three children purchased from Franklin and Armfield, required that all people he enslaved be emancipated by age 25, allowed self-purchase of freedom, and recognized marriages among them.



Upon his death in 1854, Hugh C. Smith established a deed that set the foundation for creating a cemetery on his property. The process by which his land was transformed into a burial ground—and the key decisions that shaped that transition—will be detailed in an upcoming newsletter.

Preservation at Work

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of volunteers, contract workers, and generous donors, we have successfully initiated several projects at the cemetery, contributing to its upkeep and enhancement.

Two scouts arrived to complete their Eagle Scout Project, skillfully organizing groups to transcribe and photograph various sections of the cemetery. This collaborative effort not only enhances the site's documentation but also fosters community involvement and teamwork among participants.





Descendants and volunteers from the apothecary museum recently undertook the vital task of cleaning the Stabler lot, building on their impactful cleanup of the Leadbeater lot last spring. Their efforts improve the cemetery's appearance and help preserve local heritage.





We successfully cleaned and restored two sections of the cemetery—Veterans Section of T and the Fairfax-Harrison Lot—thanks to a generous donation and the collaborative efforts of our landscaper and tombstone preservationist. This project has helped preserve the integrity of these areas for future generations.




We are celebrating our 170th Anniversary this Year!

We are excited to announce that we will be hosting a series of engaging events throughout the year, with our first event kicking off in February. Mark your calendars!

Where History Rests: The Grave of Philip Richard Fendall, Sr.:
Tuesday, February 17 - 7:00 PM
$10.00 - Limited seating. Please RSVP via our Facebook page or our website www.ivyhillcemetery.net/events

Where is Philip Richard Fendall I buried? For over two centuries, the answer remained uncertain. In 2023, public historian David Heiby began unraveling the mystery after discovering contradictory records about Fendall's burial. With help from Ivy Hill's archives and a ground-penetrating radar study conducted on site, the evidence now points to Section B, Lot 1.
In this February program, David will share how a long-vanished family cemetery, shifting transportation routes, and mid-20th-century redevelopment all contributed to the displacement—and eventual rediscovery—of the Fendall burials.
Join us at Ivy Hill for a compelling exploration of history, archaeology, and the preservation of Alexandria's past.

David Heiby is a public historian and founder of Gravestone Stories, a digital archive and tour program that reaches thousands of readers, researchers, and visitors each year. His website—featuring interactive maps, hundreds of documented biographies, and a four-century historical timeline—has become one of Alexandria's most trusted resources for original historical research.
As Superintendent of the historic Presbyterian Cemetery, David has devoted more than a decade to uncovering overlooked chapters of Alexandria's past—from Revolutionary-era figures to Civil War soldiers, frontier families, Cold War espionage cases, and the everyday Alexandrians who shaped the nation. His research led to the rediscovery of Col. George Gilpin, George Washington's lost pallbearer, and the identification of Philip Richard Fendall I's long-unrecognized grave at Ivy Hill Cemetery.
David also serves as Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society, Treasurer of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation, and as a member of Alexandria's America250 Committee.

A Taste of Virginia: A Cemetery Wine Experience:
Friday, March 20 – 7:00 PM
$50 – Limited seating. Please register via our Facebook page or our website.

Experience a wine tasting unlike any other, set against the backdrop of the cemetery's quiet landscape and the historic 1858 house. This unique event blends history, ambiance and curated wines for an evening that celebrates heritage and hospitality.

Carol Kaufmann is a Rosemont resident and certified wine consultant with a passion for showcasing Virginia's growing wine industry. With more than 300 wineries across the state, Virginia has emerged as a thriving American wine region, gaining national recognition for wines that reflect the character of its land and soil. Often compared to Napa Valley in its early years, the industry is also a rapidly expanding economic driver.

Carol will guide guests through a tasting of six Virginia wines, highlighting what makes the state's grapes stand out, while attendees also enjoy a selection of appetizers.

For questions regarding events, please email Jennifer Hooff executivedirector@ihchps.org.

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