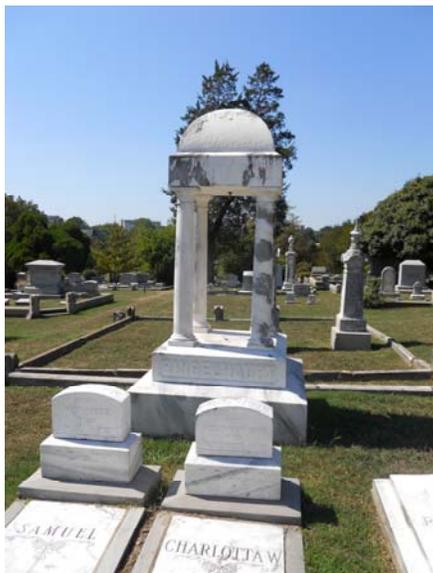


**Sandwiching in History  
Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery  
2101 Barber St., LR**

**Tour begins at corner of Veterans Blvd. & Main St. in the B'nai Israel section  
October 1, 2010  
By: Rachel Silva**



### **Intro**

Hi, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the Sandwiching in History tour of Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery! Before we get started, I'd like to recognize and thank Lakresha Diaz for her work in the cemetery. Lakresha wrote the National Register nomination for the cemetery and was instrumental in obtaining grants from both the Arkansas Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund the cemetery's new cell phone tour (you may pick up tour brochures from the cemetery office).

Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in April 2010 for its association with the growth of the City of LR in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and for its vast collection of funerary art. As of October 2009, Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery contained a total of 38,064 burials, 87 percent of which are historic burials dating from 1861 to 1959.

### **History of Oakland-Fraternal**

In actuality, Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery consists of 7 separate cemeteries: Oakland Cemetery, Fraternal Cemetery, National Cemetery, Confederate Cemetery (11-acre), Confederate Cemetery (1-acre), and 2 Jewish cemeteries. Because the LR National Cemetery and 11-acre Confederate Cemetery were listed on the National Register in 1996, they were not included in the nomination for Oakland-Fraternal.

By the early 1860s, public health concerns over private burials in the city limits, overcrowding at Mount Holly Cemetery, and the increasing number of soldiers dying in LR's hospitals during the Civil War prompted the City of LR to seek additional land for a public cemetery. On December 31, 1862, the City purchased the 160-acre Starbuck Estate from titleholders William Woodruff, Jane Woodruff, and Mary Starbuck for \$5,000 in order to fulfill this purpose. The cemetery was called Oakland because it was situated in a natural forest, wooded principally with oaks. [Keep in mind that Peter Hanger's home was called Oakwood—no longer extant, but was located nearby at present-day 9<sup>th</sup> & Hanger streets.] In the early years, Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery was located 1 and ½ miles outside the city limits and was surrounded by farmland.

### *Civil War era*

Much of the cemetery's early history is associated with the Civil War. First of all, one of the main reasons that the City needed another public cemetery was to accommodate the number of Civil War soldiers dying almost daily in LR's hospitals. In addition, the U.S. Arsenal Building (now in MacArthur Park) was taken over by local Confederate regiments in 1861. Peter Hanger's plantation house, Oakwood, was used as a headquarters for Confederate General Sterling Price, and St. John's College (was located in the middle of I-30 near 10<sup>th</sup> St.) was used as a Confederate hospital. After LR was occupied by Union troops in Sept. 1863, all three of these buildings continued their military use under Union control. There were even Union encampments on the site of Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery. Although cemetery records do not exist before 1878, it is likely that the first burials were Union and Confederate soldiers (many headstones date to 1863, but it is uncertain if the burials are original or were reinterred after the war).

Shootout in the Cemetery: An 1869 *Arkansas Gazette* article recounted a shootout in Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery. While in the cemetery, Mr. W. M. Woolford was repeatedly fired upon, and he and others were forced to hide behind tombstones to avoid being shot. Woolford later found out that the shooters were soldiers from the Arsenal. Although he complained to the garrison, no disciplinary action was taken.

The soldiers claimed that they had been target shooting and did not intentionally shoot at Mr. Woolford...although bullets whizzed past his ear any time he tried to move from behind a tombstone.

National Cemetery: The National Cemetery occupies the southern section of Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery. In 1862 the U.S. Congress passed legislation to purchase land in southern states for cemeteries for the Union dead because it was cost prohibitive to ship bodies back north. So this was the beginning of National Cemeteries in the United States. In 1866 the U.S. government purchased 9.1 acres of the 160 acres previously purchased by the City of LR for use as a Union Cemetery. However, this site had already been used to bury the Union dead while their encampment was located here. After purchasing an additional 3.2 acres in 1868, this portion of Oakland officially became known as the LR National Cemetery...they have acquired additional land over the years as well.

Confederate Cemeteries: Confederate soldiers were interred at Oakland as well, but in a different section of the cemetery just west of the National Cemetery. This 11-acre area also includes the graves of 640 Confederate soldiers moved in 1884 from Mount Holly to Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery. In 1913 an act of Congress allowed the Confederate Cemetery to become part of the National Cemetery, but burials were segregated—only Confederates would be buried in the 11-acre Confederate section. This restriction was finally removed in 1938.

A separate 1-acre Confederate cemetery containing the mass grave of 900 Confederate soldiers is still technically part of Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery, although the National Cemetery has maintained the land since the mid-1990s. This section is located on the far northeastern edge of the National Cemetery.

### ***Oakland “Proper” (oldest public sections)***

Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery originated to provide a place for the Civil War dead, but it quickly became the new city cemetery. The original entrance to the cemetery was at College & E. 17<sup>th</sup> streets. The old gate was constructed about 1885 and was made to accommodate a horse & carriage. It also features 2 pedestrian gates. By 1910 a streetcar operated by the Little Rock Traction & Electric Company (I have a map of the line from 1913 when it was operated by the LR Railway & Electric Co.) ran east on 14<sup>th</sup> St. to College and then headed south, dead-ending at the cemetery gate. There was a turn-around for the streetcars in the area just NW of the gate (grown up with vegetation now). There was a flower shop just to the NE of the old gate as well—the 1913 Sanborn map shows two buildings with front-

gabled roofs labeled “H. Meyer Florist.” But in 1902 the City of LR extended Barber Ave. south through Oakland Cemetery to 25<sup>th</sup> Street. After this, the orientation of the cemetery slowly shifted west to Barber, and the gate at College & 17<sup>th</sup> fell into disuse.

Oakland Proper comprises the central and eastern sections of the cemetery and includes some of the oldest non-Jewish and non-military burials. Sections A through D were originally designated as white only, while sections E, F, and H were listed as black.

### **Other Sections...**

Oakland, West Side Addition—added 1901. Located between Barber Ave. and the creek.

Jewish Sections—Hebrew Cemetery located west of Oakland proper in early days. 1913 Sanborn map shows it labeled as “Hebrew Cemetery” and has a 1-story structure labeled “Jewish Chapel” in center of Hebrew section.

B’nai Israel (B’nA)—purchased land for Jewish cemetery in 1874.

Agudath Achim—purchased land in 1904.

Fraternal Cemetery (located west of Barber Ave.)—City granted land to the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, an African-American fraternal organization, in 1888. Became known as Fraternal Cemetery in 1893.

There are many other small sections in the cemetery, such as several Baby Lands for the interment of infants and children, a pauper’s section, and a special section for the Sons of Ham, an African-American fraternal order.

### **Jewish Cemetery**

#### ***B’nai Israel (pronounced B’nA)***

Jewish settlers began arriving in LR in the 1830s, but didn’t organize a congregation until the 1860s. In 1867 the group formally incorporated as B’nai Israel. In 1874 they purchased 5 acres in the NW corner of Oakland Cemetery to serve as a Jewish burial ground. Jews had previously been buried at Mount Holly, but between 1874 and 1915, an effort was made to move those burials to the B’nai Israel section at Oakland Cemetery.

The establishment of a Jewish burial ground is of the utmost importance for the formation of a formal congregation. The selection of a burial ground even takes precedence over the selection of a congregational meeting place...Jews see the dead as holy vessels, even though the body is no longer useable. Must be treated with dignity and respect.

Over the years, B'nai Israel expanded their section to its current size of 9.5 acres. In order to be buried here, you must be a member of the congregation in good standing. B'nai Israel maintains its section separate from the rest of Oakland-Fraternal. B'nai Israel is a reformed Jewish congregation. The Jewish practice of placing stones on graves is like leaving a calling card to say that you were there and the deceased is not forgotten.

### ***Agudath Achim***

In 1879 several members of the B'nai Israel congregation decided to split off and form a new congregation that would practice more conservative orthodox (traditional) Jewish services. The group formally organized as Agudath Achim in 1904 and purchased 1 and ½ acres directly south of the B'nai Israel section in Oakland-Fraternal Cemetery. In 1948 Agudath Achim purchased an additional 3 acres, making their section 4.5 acres in size.

### **Biographical sketches...**

#### **Mark M. Cohn Mausoleum #61**

Mark Matthews Cohn came from a town in present-day Poland to Arkansas in 1872. He opened a clothing store in Little Rock and just 3 years after it opened, it was known as "the most expensive in the city." The M. M. Cohn Department Store was one of the outstanding department stores in the South. In LR, it competed with the Pfeifer, Kempner, and Blass department stores. [Pfeifer-Blass later combined and eventually became Dillard's.]

The Cohn mausoleum (1910) features Classical detailing in its triangular pediment, Corinthian columns, and draped garland swags. Supposedly has Tiffany windows. No Jewish characters.

#### **Ringelhaupt family plot**

Markers feature Hebrew writing, a large flat marker resembling the open Bible or Torah, and another marker resembling a traditional Jewish huppah (structure the couple stands underneath during a Jewish wedding—symbolizes the home they will build together).

### **SRW Mausoleum (Louis Reinman) #70**

Louis Reinman was a German-Jewish immigrant who came to LR in 1861 at the age of 14. He started a business dealing horses and mules in LR and after partnering with Louis Wolfort, their firm was one of the best known stock businesses in the state. They later helped the British cause during World War I by supplying them with Arkansas mules (sent 120 each week to a stockade in NLR, where British agents would inspect them before shipment). Louis Reinman's sister, Julia, married Charles M. Simon. This explains the "SRW"—Simon, Reinman, and Wolfort family members are interred here.

### **Mathias Abraham Cohn #60**

Came to LR in 1873. Was a successful attorney who sponsored a bill whereby rabbis could perform marriage services in AR. Prior to this, only Christian clergy had the privilege.

Large obelisk—symbolizing a ray of sunlight beaming down directly to earth. Also became popular stock grave markers because they took up a small amount of space on the ground, but could be very tall, conveying a higher status for the deceased individual.

### **Charles T. Abeles #58**

Born in 1854. Established in 1880 a lumber company that manufactured beautiful staircases, woodwork, and wood products. He handled the largest stock of windows and plate glass in the area. He furnished the sashes, doors, and windows for the construction of the new state capitol building, Camp Pike, and Fort Logan H. Roots. He built the first luxury apartments in LR, the Abeles Apartments, at 1403 Louisiana St. (still there today). He died in 1933.

Although his grave marker is simple and flush with the ground, his family plot contains some interesting funerary art, such as a cherub atop the grave of a child.

### **Bluma D. Gans #62**

Settled in LR around 1872. By the 1880s, she had established a millinery, fancy dry goods, and dress making business on Main St. Possibly the first woman in the state to operate a factory—she had a dressmaking factory with 86 employees. Her store was considered one of the most expensive of its kind south of St. Louis. Company slogan was “outfitters for all womankind.”

### **World War I monument (~1925)**

Dedicated to Lt. Robert Russell Fox and Captain Charles Sol Narkinski, both killed during service in WWI or immediately following. Lt. Fox was killed in Honolulu, Territory of Hawaii, while serving as a pilot. Capt. Narkinski died of wounds suffered in battle while he was serving in the Fifth Trench Mortar Battery...tragically, he died after the armistice was signed and just 6 days before his unit was sent home. The commemorative monument features Daffodil blossoms, an icon of resurrection or rebirth as well as a lamp with a burning flame, meaning eternal vigilance.

### **North on Veterans Blvd. to Philip Pfeifer #69**

Rumor has it that Philip Pfeifer chose this burial plot because it was at the front of the cemetery by the main gate, so he would be there to greet every visitor...however, the main gate shifted to the west side off Barber Ave., so he is tucked quietly in the back. He was one of the founding members of LR's first Jewish congregation and supervised construction of the first Jewish temple in the city. In addition to these things, he was a prominent businessman, operating a store in the River Market area for steamboats, where he provided fuel and supplies.

### **Max Hilb #64**

German immigrant who came to LR in 1864. He served as acting mayor during the 1870s and 1880s. He and his business partner, William Probst, operated a wholesale grocery and liquor distributorship at 409 Markham (now President Clinton Ave.). Hilb and Probst allowed the Concordia Club (a Jewish social club) to meet upstairs in their commercial building. This building is now part of the Arkansas Studies Institute. Hilb has one of the only grave markers in the cemetery featuring engraved portraits of the deceased.

**Go east on A St. to Camellia Ave.**

### **Fletcher family plot on Camellia—Susan Bricelin Fletcher**

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, Susan Bricelin Fletcher was only 24 years old. She had been married 6 years and was living with her family about 20 miles west of LR. But when her husband, Henry Lewis Fletcher, joined Capt. Ed Nowland's Company in the Confederate Army, she was left alone with her son, her niece, and a few of their most trusted slaves. Union soldiers often raided homes in the area, including the home of Mrs. Fletcher—they killed her cattle, burned her cotton, took all of her food, and stole or broke her valuables. When her son became ill, Susan Fletcher was desperate to obtain medicine for him. So she marched into town carrying her son, all the while being escorted by two armed Union soldiers. They took her to the old Arsenal Building where she was forced to swear allegiance to the Union in order to get a voucher for medicine. In 1864 Union soldiers threatened to burn her home if she did not leave, so she moved her family into LR. She later obtained a permit to travel further south to join other family members, and in order to smuggle her money across Union lines, she sewed gold coins into her (and her niece's) corset. However, when the war was over and the family returned to their beloved home, it was burned to the ground.

### **Baby Land #3**

There are 3 small sections of the cemetery dedicated for the burial of children and called Baby Land. This is the original Baby Land. The grave markers are appropriately small and some feature carved lambs or angels. There are over 8,000 children buried in the Oakland section of the cemetery (not adequate records to include Fraternal). It is assumed that many more children were buried in the pauper's field with no markings at all. Most of these children died in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the infant mortality rates were very high (from 1890-1899, 42% of the interments in Oakland were infants and children).

### **African-American section of Oakland proper—east & south of Baby Land (Sections F, E & H)**

### **Walk across Baby Land to East St. to see unmarked graves of Asa Richmond (#29) and Charlotte Stephens (#36)**

#### **Asa L. Richmond**

Born a slave in 1831 in North Carolina. Was brought to AR in 1848 as property of Nat Richmond. He was freed by the Union Army when they came into LR on

Sept. 10, 1863. After the Civil War, Richmond contracted out as a carpenter and was a very successful businessman. At one time, he owned 33 houses in LR, bringing in \$200 each month in rent. In 1869 he was elected alderman for LR's 3<sup>rd</sup> ward, making him one of the first African-Americans to serve on the LR City Council.

### **Charlotte Stephens**

She was the first African-American teacher in LR. Stephens Elementary School was named after her.

### **Go west on Spring St. to Gillam family plot—Isaac T. Gillam, Sr. #12**

Isaac T. Gillam, Sr., was born a slave in 1839 in Tennessee. During the Civil War, he came to LR in 1863 and joined the U.S. Colored Infantry. After the war, he worked as a blacksmith and also spent time as a guard at the city jail and as a policeman. He was elected to the LR City Council in 1877 and to the AR State House of Representatives in 1878, serving concurrent terms. He was active in the establishment of Shorter College in NLR. Gillam Park and Gillam School were named after him.

### **On Grace St. see Annie Schoppach #33**

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Arkansas, there were very few female physicians. It was definitely a male-dominated profession. However, in 1901 Annie Schoppach became the first female to graduate from the University of Arkansas Medical Dept. (now UAMS). She was often harassed by the male students in her class. After graduation, she practiced medicine out of her home at 1401 S. State St. Her primary focus was obstetrics and gynecology. She was known for treating both black and white patients, as well as both rich and poor.

### **West on Grace St. to Logan H. Roots #31**

Logan Holt Roots was born in 1841 in Illinois. He served in the 81<sup>st</sup> Illinois Infantry during the Civil War and was on General William Sherman's staff in Georgia. After the war, Roots traveled west with Sherman and formed a military attachment in AR. He was elected to the Arkansas Legislature in 1868 and served until 1871. In 1871 Roots was appointed by President Grant to serve as Marshall for the U.S. Court for the Western District of AR (Fort Smith). He returned to LR in 1872 and became president of Merchants National Bank. He was a major

stockholder in the Southwestern Telegraph Company and in 1892 negotiated the property trade which established a federal military fort on Big Rock and gave LR its first city park. After Roots's death in 1893, the fort on Big Rock was named Fort Logan H. Roots in his honor.

### **Frederick Kramer #19**

Born in Germany in 1829. Came to LR in the 1850s. A successful merchant, Kramer served as Mayor of LR from 1873-75 and from 1881-87. He was an enthusiastic supporter of public education and served on the LR School Board from 1866-1894, serving as chairman (president) from 1870-1894. Kramer Elementary School on Sherman St. was named after him. He was also a founding member of Temple B'nai Israel.

**Go west on Grace St. to 7<sup>th</sup> to see the group of old markers moved here from Mount Holly Cemetery.**

**Point out Agudath Achim section south of Grace or G St. Agudath Achim means "Society of Brothers." Notice how tightly packed the markers are in this section—very concerned about having enough space for burials.**

**End by walking north on Veterans Blvd. to point of beginning.**