

Voices of the Past will tell interesting stories at Woodlawn Cemetery in October

August 31 2016 6:03 AM



EDWARDSVILLE - Every stone has a story. It is life's tragedies and triumphs and loves lost and found that make both history and cemeteries so interesting.

That's the basis behind the third annual "Voices of the Past" at **Woodlawn Cemetery** in **Edwardsville**. On Columbus Day weekend, actors will recount stories of some of those buried at Woodlawn, next to the grave stones of the very people they are portraying.

Along with the human element including the lives of influential people such as Dr. Pogue, Edna Weir and Louise Travous, this year's "Voices of the Past" highlights a few of the many interesting and sometimes mysterious monuments in the cemetery. What is Ghost Tunnel? Where did Abraham Lincoln sleep? How was a confederate soldier buried by the GAR? And what really happened to the "Angel"?

The stories were researched and written by **Edwardsville resident Mary T. Westerhold**. Researching lives and genealogy has been a passion and a career for Westerhold, the historian at the Madison County Archival Library. She examines census records, newspaper articles, obituaries, centennial books, and especially the social columns from early newspapers that described parties, travels and what people were wearing to events. According to Westerhold, "It's all fascinating to me, especially the 1800's when so many of the immigrants came to this area sight unseen for new opportunities. They found work or farmed, they opened businesses, raised children, got involved in their communities — when you stop to think about it, that's not so different from our lives today."

Returning actors portraying characters in this year's "Voices of the Past" include Edwardsville residents Cara Lytle, Carol Peterson, Cathy Weiss, Rusty Lucy, Judi Robbins, and Loren Fear, as well as "new comers" Nathan Gibson and City Alderman Barb Stamer.

Voices of the Past not only tells the history of Edwardsville, but also features Woodlawn Cemetery itself, which is located at 1400 St. Louis Street. 2016 marks the 50th anniversary of Woodlawn's beautiful glass chapel, designed by renowned Edwardsville architect Edward A. Kane Senior. According to Kathleen Medder, Woodlawn Cemetery Association president, "Through the generous donations made by community members, the chapel has been beautifully restored with a new roof and guttering, refinished pews, flooring and interior painting. There's more still to do, but we are grateful to those who have made this possible."

Many neighborhood residents walk the cemetery for exercise, enjoying peaceful walks with their pets, but few have the opportunity to visit inside the chapel. According to Woodlawn board member Barb Pizzini, "On Saturday evening, Voices of the Past will offer about 40 visitors the rare opportunity to experience the chapel after dark. At night, the chapel interior glows and it is truly magical."

Voices of the Past will be presented both Saturday, Oct. 8, and Sunday, Oct. 9, beginning at 1:00pm with the last tour leaving at 2:30pm. Guides will lead group walking tours through the older portion of Woodlawn. The tours will last approximately one hour and include some uneven but not strenuous walking, with stops at seven gravesides to listen to the portrayals. A special evening candlelit presentation will be held on Saturday, Oct. 8 at 7 p.m. Listeners will be seated indoors in Woodlawn's hillside chapel near the cemetery entrance. Seating for the evening event is very limited, so tickets must be purchased in advance. In case of rain, the afternoon tours will also be presented in the chapel.

Afternoon ticket prices "at the door" are \$13 for adults and \$6 for children. Advance discounted tickets for the afternoon tours are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children (11 and younger). Evening presentation tickets are \$15 for all ages, and will also include light refreshments.

Advance tickets are available at the Edwardsville Public Library, Glen Carbon Centennial Library, First Clover Leaf Bank (Edwardsville Locations) & Madison County Archival Library (on Main Street next to the Historical Museum).



