

FIREMEN'S CHARITABLE & BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

*Founded in 1834*

History of  
Cypress Grove Cemetery  
Greenwood Cemetery  
& Mausoleum

*Where Heroes Rest®*



# Firemen's Charitable & Benevolent

## 1807

"Fire!" This call for aid rang out numerous times in New Orleans' early history, but to no avail. In 1788, when Louisiana still was governed by Spain, nine hundred houses were burned to the ground in a historic fire. In 1794, another fire almost equally disastrous practically destroyed the rebuilt city. Finally, the city fathers passed the "Bucket Ordinance" in 1807. Every citizen had to keep at least two fire buckets at his home and at the ready; at the same time, a loosely organized brigade was mandated.

Terrible fires continued to strike the city. It wasn't until the spring of 1829 that Volunteer Company No. 1, the first real fire company, was formed. Its first trial came soon after. Five thousand bales of cotton blazed at the Hart's Cotton Press on St. Charles Avenue in 1830. The brave volunteers aimed a stream of water from their hand pump engine as a group of citizens rushed to aid the volunteer company. Soon after they formed Mississippi Co. No. 2.

## 1834

On November 17, 1834, six bands of volunteers organized and formed the Firemen's Charitable Association. The importance of this step probably did not occur to the thirty gentlemen who gathered to set up a system of relief for needy members and the families of their deceased members.

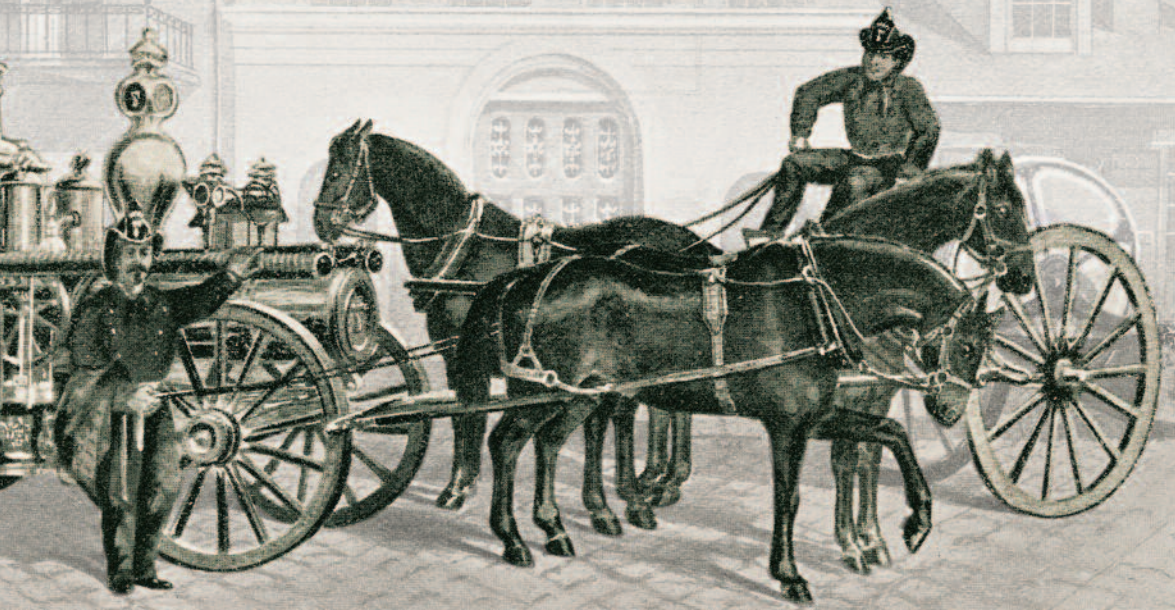
It is impossible to separate the history of the fire department from that of the Association ... for thirty-six years, the FCBA administered





# Association

Eagle Company No. 7, 1836



the city's fire department as an independent civic body while maintaining its activities as a charitable fraternity.

## 1837

The Association was incorporated March 4, 1835. About 1837-38, the Department began the celebration of its anniversary on the Fourth of March, inaugurating the

### Fourth of March Celebration





Cypress Grove Entrance, designed by Frederick Wilkinson, 1840

series of pageants that for over fifty years were marked by the participation of high dignitaries of the City and State. This recognition of the value and character of the Volunteer Fire Department secured recruits to its membership among the best citizens of New Orleans.

1840

Using the proceeds of a bequest made to them by Stephen Henderson, a wealthy New Orleans citizen, the Association founded Cypress Grove Cemetery in 1840 on the banks of Bayou Metairie. This was to be a permanent memorial to the many brave volunteer firemen who gave their courage and, sometimes, their lives to protect their neighbors.

At one time, this motto crowned the imposing entrance to Cypress Grove Cemetery: *“Here to their bosom mother earth, take back in peace what thou has given, and, all that is of heavenly birth, God in peace recall to heaven.”*

Cypress Grove Cemetery







Perseverance Fire Company No. 13

Irada Ferry Monument, 1840

The grand entrance pylons and lodges, designed by the architect Frederick Wilkinson, were patterned after Egyptian ceremonial architecture. Time has worn the brick wall of the burial vaults lining the cemetery, much of the marble facing has long since fallen and many vault doors are missing. But, within are still several well-preserved vaults, tombs and monuments of historical significance to the city.

Among the most important of these is the monument to the memory of Irad Ferry, located just beyond the entrance. Ferry, a leading businessman and a volunteer with Mississippi Co. No. 2, as well as a treasurer of the Association, lost his life on New Year's Day, 1837, while fighting a fire on Camp Street. He was the first of many Association members and among the many brave volunteer and professional firemen to lose his life in the line of duty. Dignitaries participating in Irad Ferry's funeral procession included Louisiana's governor, members of the Legislature and Supreme Court, and New Orleans' mayor and members of the City Council. His remains



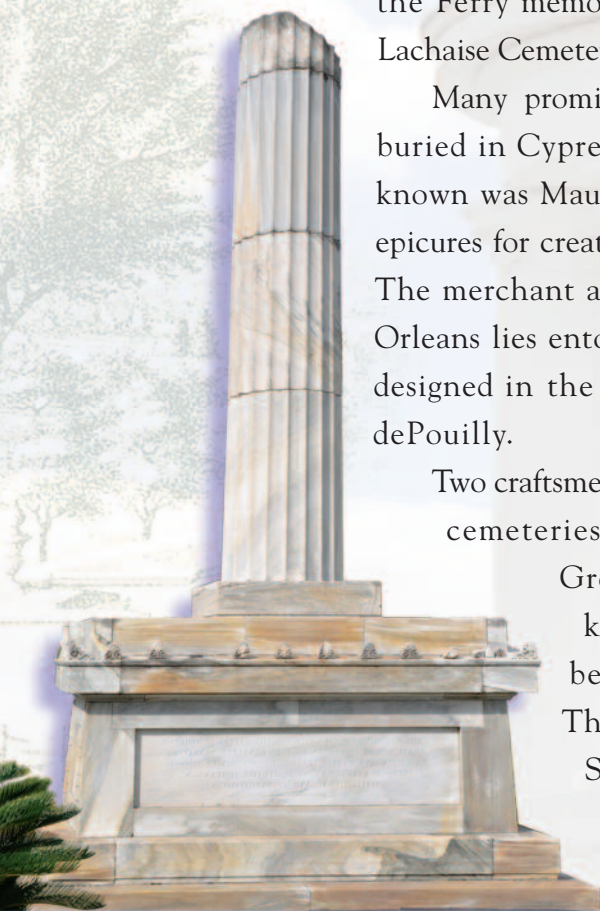
*"Here to their bosom mother earth, take  
has given, and, all that is of heavenly*

were moved to the new cemetery during its dedication ceremony in 1841.

The Irad Ferry monument symbolizes a life cut short ... a broken Doric column planted atop the classical sarcophagus. The stone coffin depicts a 19th Century fire engine in crisp relief. It was designed by the famed architect Jacques dePouilly who modeled the Ferry memorial after a monument in the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris.

Many prominent New Orleans citizens were buried in Cypress Grove. One of the more well-known was Maunsel White, immortalized among epicures for creation, Maunsel White Peppersauce. The merchant and veteran of the Battle of New Orleans lies entombed in a fine marble memorial designed in the Greek Revival style, again, by dePouilly.

Two craftsmen, whose works grace New Orleans' cemeteries, are also buried in Cypress Grove. Newton Richards was well-known as a memorial craftsman because of his pioneering designs. The family entombment of George Stroud, monument builder, is set along the main aisle.



**Irad Ferry Monument**



*back in peace what thou  
birth, God in peace recall to heaven."*



**Maunsel White**

The grave of another important New Orleanian, physician Dr. Warren Stone, is in Cypress Grove as is the burial site of James H. Caldwell, builder of the First American Theater Company and founder of the New Orleans Gas Light Company. The leading Presbyterian minister, Reverend Sylvester Larned, was also interred in Cypress Grove. Indeed the cemetery became the major burial choice for many

Protestant families.

There are several multivault tombs of volunteer companies in Cypress Grove. The twin tombs of the Philadelphia Fire Engine Co. No. 14 and that of the Eagle Co. No. 7 were erected in the 1840s. The remains of the Reverend Theodore Clapp who ministered to the sick and dying during the great epidemics of the 1830s are interred with those of his friends in the Eagle Company.



**Maunsel White Memorial**



### Perseverance Fire Co. No.13

Erected at the entrance are the vaults of the Perseverance Fire Co. No. 13. This tomb was designed by architect John Barrett

in 1840. In the design, a small dome is supported by eight pillars.

Cypress Grove's two most ornate tombs are the memorials of Robert Slark and W.H. Letchford families. The builder is unknown. However, from the character of their construction, it is thought that these tombs were most likely designed by Theodore Brune and erected by George Stroud, both men being prominent in the field of cemetery memorials during the mid-1860s.

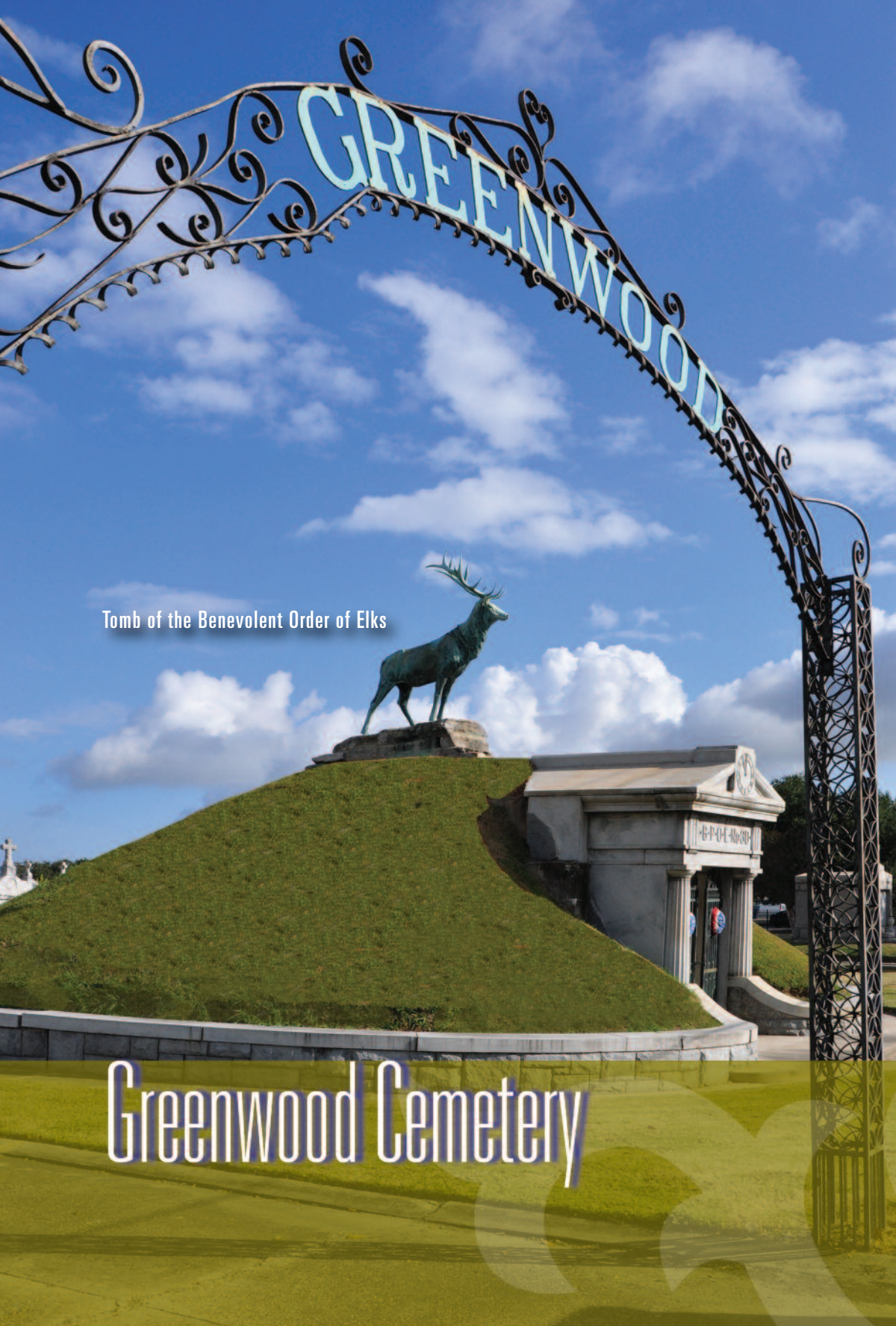
"Unusual for its classic simplicity and perfection of workmanship," the Leeds family tomb dated 1844, is an exquisite example of Greek Revival form. Charles L. Leeds was mayor of New Orleans and he headed the Leeds foundry, then one of the largest in the region. All of the elements of the tomb and its enclosure were cast in iron. Floral forms and wreaths, urns and downspout grotesque are of incomparably quality. A large pediment urn recalls traditional, memorial architecture.



Robert Slark and W.H. Letchford Family Memorials







Tomb of the Benevolent Order of Elks

# Greenwood Cemetery

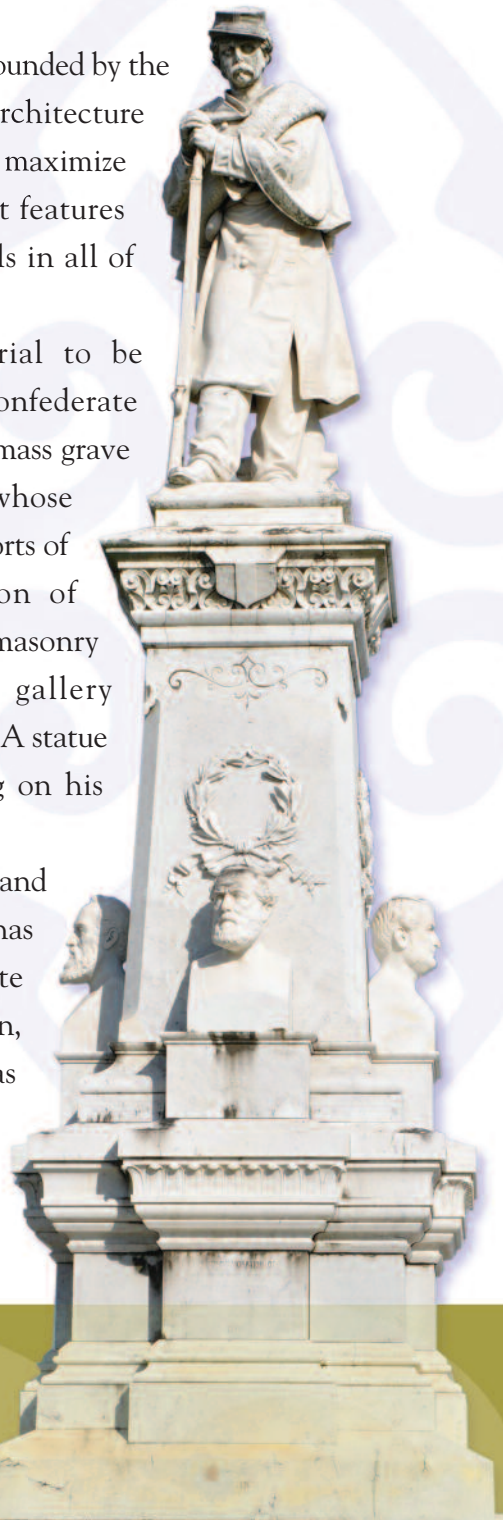


# 1852

Greenwood Cemetery, founded by the Association in 1852, is sparse in its architecture and landscaping ... it was designed to maximize its acreage for grave lots. However, it features five of the most impressive memorials in all of New Orleans.

The first Civil War memorial to be erected in the city is Greenwood's Confederate Monument. A low mound marks the mass grave of six hundred Confederate soldiers whose remains were gathered through the efforts of the Ladies Benevolent Association of Louisiana. Dedicated in 1874, the masonry mausoleum is topped by a granite gallery enclosing an imposing marble pedestal. A statue of a Confederate infantryman resting on his rifle, surmounts this pedestal.

The statuary is Cararra marble and was carved in Italy. The pedestal base has integral, carved busts of Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Leonidas Polk. Architect Benjamin M. Harrod was the designer; the memorial contractor was George Stroud.



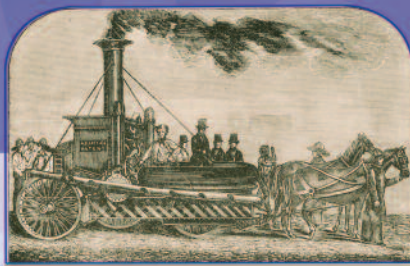
Confederate Monument, 1874



FIREMEN'S  
CHARITABLE  
ASSOCIATION



**The First Steam Fire Engine, 1855**



Featured on the cover is the Firemen's Monument, designed and constructed by Charles Orleans, and erected by the Association in 1887. The figure of a volunteer fireman is enshrined beneath a cluster of Gothic arches crowned by a steeple. The six-foot-high Italian marble statue was created by Alexander Doyle of New York and carved by the artist Nicoli.

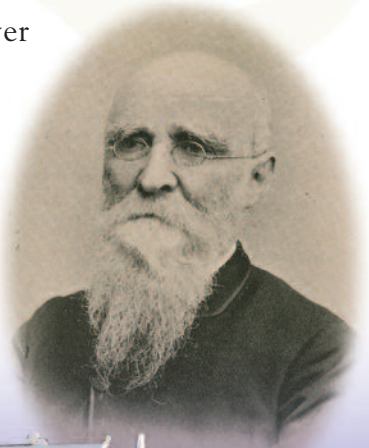
The monument is centered atop a mound which rises five feet above surrounding paths; from its base, the height is 46 feet. A light gray, Hallowell, Maine, granite was used in the original construction not only for its structural integrity and longevity, but also for its meditative, respectful tones. It has been theorized that a monument to Sir Walter Scott in Edinburg, Scotland, was the probable inspiration for the Firemen's Monument.

The monument was dedicated on October 27, 1887 as a memorial to deceased firemen and in commemoration of the Association's fiftieth anniversary. Judge Lawrence O'Donnell's dedication oration honored the heroes who rest on these hallowed grounds, *"Mr. President, I join you and the whole fire department in dedicating this statue to our honored dead, and trust it will cause us to emulate their virtues, practice their deeds of charity, and prove our chivalric devotion to duty and right when we too put the armor off to lie among our honored dead."*

The use of cast iron for the tombs came in vogue in mid-19th Century cemeteries, and Greenwood has its share of stunning examples. An iron tomb enclosed by a Gothic-styled fence holds the remains of Isaac Newton Marks, a former president of the Firemen's Association. Marks, a successful businessman, became a volunteer firefighter with Perseverance Fire Co. No. 13 in 1843.

The A.D. Crossman plot is also bordered by a cast iron fence. Abial Daily Crossman was mayor of New Orleans from 1846-54, a period that witnessed the city's tragic yellow fever epidemic. A symbolic urn is borne atop a gracefully fluted Doric column in this elegant marker, designed by Jacques de Pouilly.

Directly opposite the Firemen's Monument is the tomb of Lodge No. 30 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. The mounded structure



I.N. Marks Family Tomb

Above: Isaac Newton Marks



is graced by a bronzed figure of an elk, the symbol of the fraternity. A clock with hands indicating the 11th hour, another symbol of the Elks adorns the pediment.

Among the many interesting tombs to be found within the borders of Greenwood is the beautiful double tomb of A.T. and W.O. Thompson. The white carved marble tomb was restored, having suffered damage during a hurricane. Another of Greenwood's outstanding examples of the classical column form, a cenotaph, was erected to the memory of John Oliver Locke who was killed during the Civil War.

These monuments and memorials of Greenwood and its predecessor, Cypress Grove, are part of the history and spirit of New Orleans.



Leeds Family Tomb



A.D. Crossman Monument, 1863

# Hommage to the Memory

1855

On December 15, 1855, the City Council unanimously approved a contract with the Firemen's Charitable Association to take control of the New Orleans Fire Department – an arrangement that lasted for thirty-six years. Throughout this period (1855-1891), the Association and the New Orleans Fire Department were guided under the dedicated leadership of its longest serving president and Commissioner, Isaac Newton Marks. The dedication of the Firemen's Monument in Greenwood Cemetery in 1887 was as much a tribute to Isaac Marks as it was to the deceased firemen. In his dedication oration, Judge Lawrence O'Donnell said of Marks, *"For half a century you have assisted to guide our Association, and now, with integrity unquestioned you stand with the general public as a peer among the good and great men of the city, while with us firemen you are a pillar of our existence and have won a place in our hearts forever, and our future leaders will ever be directed to your example, not only for your unswerving loyalty to principle, but inflexible honesty and wise administration."*





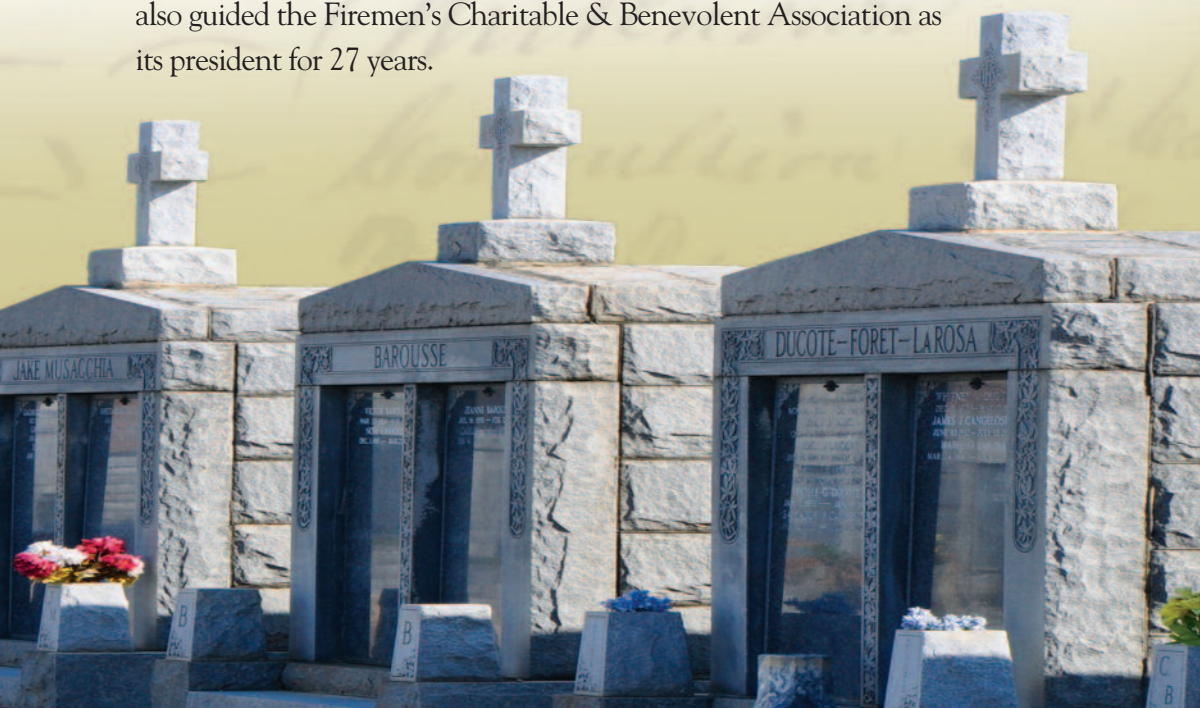
# *of Those Departed*

Mayor John Fitzpatrick



## 1892

The Firemen's Charitable Association's long and distinguished administration of the New Orleans Fire Department ended in December of 1891. New Orleans joined other major cities across the nation and replaced its volunteers with a paid, professional fire department. On May 9, 1892 the Association reorganized as the Firemen's Charitable & Benevolent Association to continue its charitable works and the administration of its two cemetery properties, Cypress Grove and Greenwood. May of 1892 also marked the inauguration of John Fitzpatrick as Mayor of New Orleans. His tenure as mayor ushered in a new era for New Orleans, with railcars no longer being powered by mules, but electricity. He founded the present public library system and was called the Father of the Sewerage and Water System. He served as a State Legislator, State President of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and an organizer of the Knights of Columbus. His leadership also guided the Firemen's Charitable & Benevolent Association as its president for 27 years.





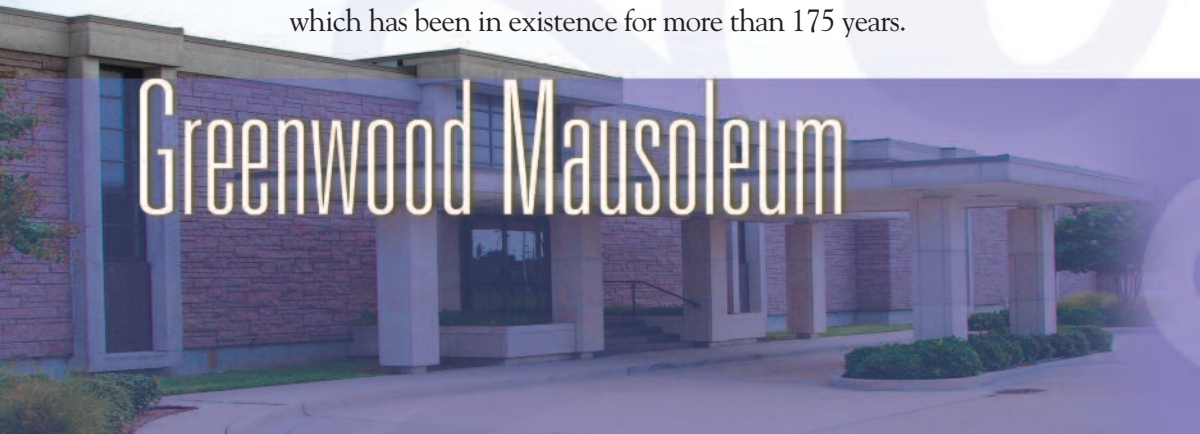
1982

Today, the addition of a magnificent mausoleum represents an extension of the philosophy that guided the early development of the Firemen's Charitable & Benevolent Association. The expansion program began in 1982, to continue the ever-growing needs of the community.

The construction was planned in eighteen phases. When completed, the mausoleum will accommodate 14,000 burial spaces as well as areas for meditation and services. In addition to crypts that can accommodate single as well as multiple burials, the mausoleum also features niches and cremorial units to receive the ashes of loved ones who desire a dignified, respectful, and distinctive cremation memorial at an affordable price.

The memorials, the monuments, the grounds ... all honor the history of New Orleans, its bravest citizens, its industrious leaders, and all serve the families who come here with their private memories. Timelessness, serenity, dignity ... these words describe the distinctive design of the new mausoleum and its manicured environs. Peace, comfort, security ... these words describe our goals in helping families choose a final resting place for their beloved and for themselves. Complete, caring services are the hallmark of the Association which has been in existence for more than 175 years.

Greenwood Mausoleum







Greenwood Mausoleum

2009

The Firemen's Charitable and Benevolent Association celebrated 175 years of service to the community on March 4, 2009. The Association's President, Hon. James F. McKay III, re-dedicated Cypress Grove and Greenwood Cemeteries in honor of the fallen heroes who rest in those hallowed grounds. The 175th Celebration was also marked by the dedication of a magnificent funerary fountain which stands prominently near the Firemen's Monument in Greenwood Cemetery.

The allegorical figures on the Greenwood funerary fountain display the torch of triumphant life, symbolizing immortality and life versus death; the trumpet, symbolizing the harbinger of the Resurrection; the harp, symbolizing praise to God; grapes, representing Christ's miracles and abundance; horses, symbolizing guides and messengers to the afterlife and reminding us of the horse-drawn fire trucks that protected our city; and the angel, symbolizing spirituality and guardian of the tomb.



Funerary Fountain, 2009

Michael McKay, Designer

Kemper Construction, Builder

Joe Taranova, Engraver

JAMES F. MCKAY III - PRESIDENT  
ROBERT S. GOERTZ - 1ST VP - LEONARD E. GATELY JR. - 2ND VP  
ROBERT C. DANNER - 3RD VP - JOSEPH B. MCKAY JR. - 4TH VP  
JOHN C. FREESE JR. - SECRETARY TREASURER

## 175th Anniversary Committee

Hon. James F. McKay III,

Chairman

Robert S. Goertz

Leonard E. Gately, Jr.

Robert G. Danner

Joseph T. McKay, Jr.

Alvin J. Seeger

John C. Freese, Jr. —

Secretary-Treasurer

## The Firemen's Charitable & Benevolent Association

Our organization has been in existence since 1834, and has served New Orleans firefighters and their families for all that time. Since, 1849, we have owned Cypress Grove Cemetery, a historic landmark. In 1852, our Association enhanced its funerary services with the founding of Greenwood Cemetery; its growth has paralleled that of the city. And, we have expanded again with the development of Greenwood Mausoleum.

We shall continue, with pride, our services to this community.

*All antique images are courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection. All monument and memorial photography courtesy of John C. Freese, Jr.*

Cypress Grove Cemetery  
Greenwood Cemetery & Mausoleum  
Where Heroes Rest ®

5200 Canal Boulevard  
New Orleans, LA 70124  
greenwoodnola.com  
(504) 482-8983



## Engine Co. No. 14

L. Martin, M.J. Drady, S. Timlin, C. Burke, M. Clifford, W.J. Wearlein,  
M.H. Mebriens, J.F. McKay

## In Memoriam The Volunteer Firemen of New Orleans

*“Here all good firemen who desire it are buried. Here repose the ashes of as brave a band of heroes as ever fought for home and fireside. Here rest the last remains of our brothers in the noble cause of charity. They have heard their last alarm. Never again will they ‘man the brakes.’ But their last moments on earth were passed with the full knowledge that their remains would repose in this beautiful city of the dead; that they would be escorted here with all the honors heroes receive; their last agonies soothed with the tenderest care, and the charity door of the Association standing wide open to supply every want, either to prolong their stay or to ease their journey to the setting sun...”*

— Hon. Lawrence O'Donnell,  
Firemen's Monument dedication oration, 1887.