



A VERY SPECIAL PARK

Heritage

The Newsletter of Green Lawn Cemetery
Winter 2025

Daniel Lewis Firefighter Monument

Article by Jeff Smith

The fire alarm came at 2:13 a.m., Sunday, April 26, 1903. It was a huge fire in a congested section of downtown at the corner of West Long and North High. Firefighters worked some twelve hours to quell the blaze, six buildings were destroyed and one man died, Captain Daniel Lewis. His gravestone at Green Lawn is a striking one featuring firemen's tools intersecting with a ladder, surrounded by a hose not unlike the one Lewis carried into a burning building around 4:00 a.m. that fateful day. But there's more to the story of Lewis and this marker than meets the eye.

Daniel Lewis, a 48-year-old balding man with a walrus mustache, had risen to the rank of captain in the Columbus Fire Department over a 21-year career. He was near retirement. He entered the burning Brunson building to extinguish it when a wall collapsed, crushing him. His wife Catharine learned of the news when he didn't come downstairs for breakfast around 8:00 a.m. and she called the engine house and heard the grim news.

Citizens rallied almost immediately to help the widow, creating a fund to assist her. The "Fashionable Vaudeville" Empire Theater held a special matinee on the 30th, the same day as the funeral, with proceeds of some \$300 going to the fund. By May 1, donations exceeded \$4,000—some \$147,000 today. Firemen started selling tickets at local stores for a baseball game on May 20, planning to raise another \$2,000, promising the team would be "entirely of firemen, and there will be no ringers;" with mayor-elect Robert Jeffrey agreeing to umpire.

But controversy arose almost immediately. Less than two weeks after Lewis died, some folks felt misled. They thought the money would all go to Catharine Lewis, but instead she was to receive only the interest, with the money becoming a fund for "firemen or their beneficiaries" after she died.

Meantime, the fire department created a committee to plan an appropriate commemoration. When they met



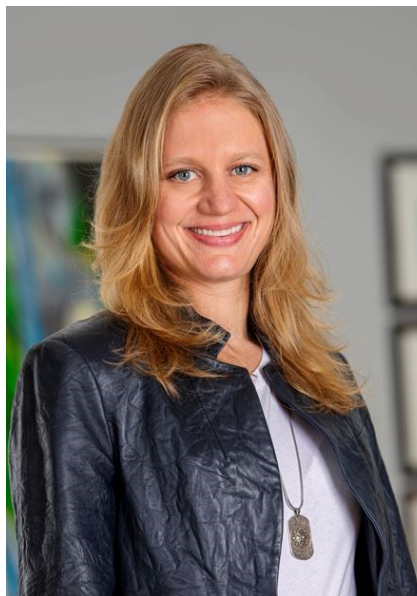
The themed monument of Fire Capt. Daniel Lewis

on May 8, Fire Chief Charles Lauer (buried in Section 68) became a "committee of one" to "consult with marble workers with a view to placing the order at home if possible."

The result was the monument we have today, paid for by the Board of Trade, designed by local landscape painter Maurice Hague and fabricated by the Charles Wege Marble and Tile Company, whose offices were near the west entrance of Green Lawn.

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President's Message Annual Campaign Is Underway!



*Kelly Casto, President
Green Lawn Cemetery Association*

A few weeks ago our annual donors should have received our annual request, many of whom have already generously donated this year.

Since 1984 the annual campaign has been critical to the mission of preserving, beautifying, and sharing our very special park, and 2025 was no different!

While a few smaller projects were also achieved, the donations from 2024 were vital to the restoration project in the Huntington Chapel. As is typical with such projects, the deeper we dug the more we found needed done, until we were faced with either exceeding our budget or scaling back the scope of work.

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to continue not only the full scope of work, but also add the restoration of a small but wonderful section of the original Tiffany tile floor!

The chapel will reopen in a few months (currently late March or early April), and an event will be planned to show off this gem in the heart of the cemetery, but of course our work will never end and we sincerely thank you all for that!

Green Lawn Fall Images



Left: Children line up for the Columbus Rotary "Walk With the Dead 5K", hosted annually at Green Lawn. About 250 participants came out to support Rotary and the cemetery.

Right: Dancers at this year's Latino Arts for Humanity Day of the Dead celebration, which this year drew an estimated 3,800 visitors to celebrate family living and deceased.

News from Memorial Properties *Operating Green Lawn since 2019!*

A Visitor Brings New Perspective During Day of the Dead Celebration...

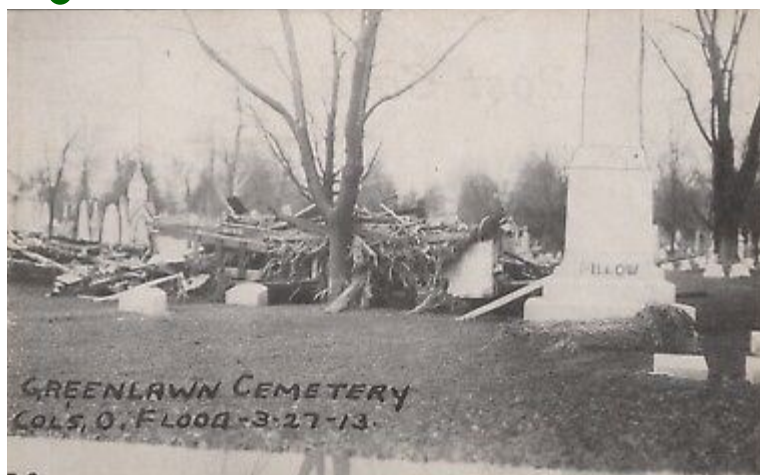
On October 18th we hosted Latino Arts for Humanity's annual Day of the Dead celebration. The weather was beautiful and about 3,800 folks showed up to experience Latino culture through music, food, dance, art, costumes, and the traditional remembrance of departed loved ones.

This year one attendee made a unique observation to our team of family counselors in noting that our glass-fronted niches, which allow for decorative urns, photos, and other tokens of a loved one's life, very much resemble the ofrendas created to memorialize family members on Day of the Dead!

How had we missed that? Ofrenda frequently include photos and items belonging to the deceased as well as decorations and offerings in their memory. This is exactly what the glass-fronted niches do - Mom's favorite ring, a piece of wedding China, Dad's medals, a religious or club icon, a sports emblem - these niches offer an enhanced ability to share the things that were important to our loved ones in a way that preserves that story in perpetuity.

Questions about glass-fronted niches or any of Green Lawn's traditional or creative options can be explored by contacting our staff at (614) 444-1123.

Right: an ofrenda from this year's celebration, glass fronted niches with decorative urns and personal mementos can be seen behind and to the right.



Left: On a recent tour we stopped at this spot on the east side of section 35 and discussed the impact of the 1913 flood on Green Lawn Cemetery. In one of the worst events in our community history, over 100 people were killed, including at least 3 in the cemetery and the two children of one of our staff.

In the area shown the water is estimated to have been over 10' deep. No significant damage was done to the grounds other than a lot of debris like the wooden structures shown here that had to be cleaned up.

The Pillow obelisk in the foreground and the Gay mausoleum and chapel (left rear) help identify the exact spot, and note that flood water can still be seen on the road along the bottom edge.

Oddfellows Building Fire Affected Green Lawn Cemetery

Article by Randy Rogers

Green Lawn was established outside of the downtown as a feature of the Rural Cemetery Movement and to address the issues of more central burying grounds. For this reason, from the selling of the first subscriptions to the Green Lawn Cemetery Association in 1848, most cemetery business, meetings, and sales were conducted at a downtown office. In 1868 that office was moved into the new Oddfellows Building at 198 S. High.

That arrangement came to a tragic end on the cold morning of February 19th, 1936, when a fire razed the grand old building. It is believed the fire started with faulty wiring in the furnace.

More tragically, several firefighters were injured and five killed when the west wall collapsed, including the four-story steel fire escape they were using to access the top floors. Two of these men, Otto Ignatze and Oliver Metzger, were buried at Green Lawn.

It appears that both the cemetery operations and the business of the Oddfellows temporarily moved to the home of Adam Stephens, the on-site grounds superintendent living beside the cemetery's Brown Road entrance.

This fire probably explains the construction of the cemetery office in 1940 and may also be why we no longer have some of the older maps and correspondence files for Green Lawn.



Clockwise from upper left: The Oddfellows Building; Firefighters respond the early morning of April 26, 1936; The collapsed back wall later in the day; One of the victims being removed.



The first Columbus firefighter to die in the line of duty was Mark Newman when a wall collapsed while fighting the Woolen Mill Fire on August 4, 1870.

His story is similar to Capt. Lewis in that he was crushed under a collapsing wall and that the community responded by raising funds for his widow and family. In his case the family was desperate for the support, and his grave went unmarked until local firefighters and the cemetery teamed up to provide a marker in 2020 on the 150th anniversary of his death.

Mark Newman is interred on the west end of section E.

Upcoming Green Lawn Events

Saturday, December 6, 2025, 2:30pm-6:00 pm, Holiday Remembrance. Families who have interred a loved one at Green Lawn over the last year are invited to pick up an ornament in their loved one's memory. Look for the tent by the Gazebo. Enjoy a warm refreshment with our caring staff. Note: Huntington Chapel is undergoing a major restoration, so there will be no formal service this year.

Saturday, December 13, 2025, 11:00am, Wreaths Across America. Wreaths Across America will be at Green Lawn Cemetery to remember and honor our Veterans through the laying of remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes. This year we will decorate Soldiers Circle in Section M. Green Lawn is the final resting place of over 6000 veterans in 7 military sections, including 5 Medal of Honor recipients. This event proceeds rain, sleet, or snow.

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 2:00pm-4:00pm, Landscapes, Landmarks, & Legacies Walking Tour. Join us for a guided walking tour of the cemetery as we uncover some of the best kept secrets of Green Lawn. The walk starts and ends at the Gazebo. We'll then stroll deep into Green Lawn to visit unique monuments, hear fascinating history, and experience the enchanting winter landscape. \$25/person.

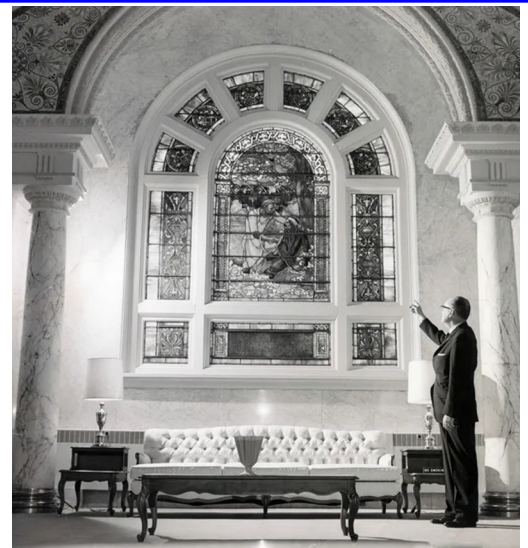
Register at: www.greenlawncemetery.org Proceeds directly fund restoration projects in the cemetery.

Saturday, April 11, 2026, 10:00am-12:00pm, Green Lawn Cemetery Litter Cleanup. Help keep Green Lawn clean, green, and dignified. Volunteers are needed to help pick up litter, especially along the boundaries and approach to Ohio's second largest cemetery. Held in proud partnership with **Earth Day Columbus 2026.**

More Events and Updates

Website: <https://www.greenlawncemetery.org/events/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GreenLawnCemeteryColumbus>



Left: A 1950's photo from the Columbus Dispatch of the Huntington Chapel - one of the clearest photos we have of the dome during this period, and what we hope our current restoration will look like in the spring. Right: General Manager Ed Sloan shows off the Dalton window in the chapel circa 1960, after the first modifications were made to the building and this furniture was purchased at Lazarus Department Store - also a Columbus Dispatch photo.

1000 Greenlawn Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43223

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Open 7 Days/Week

Summer - Starts March 15th:

7:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Winter - Starts October 20th:

7:00 AM - 5:00 PM



OFFICE

Monday - Friday

9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Saturday

9:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Sunday

By appointment



CHAPEL

visit office for access



Phone: (614) 444-1123

Email: greenlawncemeteryassoc@gmail.com

website: greenlawncemetery.org

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Green Lawn Heritage Newsletter

Matthew Wolf, *Community Outreach & Events*

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