

# CTPA QUARTERLY MEETING

## MINUTES for June 9, 2014

### CTPA Business Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 5:55pm by president Donna Primas. Worthy news items included:

- It was mentioned at the last meeting that someone inquired why we have decaf coffee. Who drinks coffee at night and what is your preference: Decaf or Regular?
- Soon, there will be emails sent with more meeting and event write ups and a CTPA Member Directory Addendum showing changes and new members.
- Jenifer Robertson of About Tours has been continuing her battle with cancer; please keep her in your thoughts.
- It is time again in September for certification study sessions and tests. The certification committee is putting together a study guide for those who want to prepare for the test.
- There is currently no topic for the October quarterly meeting. It has been suggested that we have a panel discussion or an open forum to talk about issues of interest to guides.
- June 10 is the last day to experience "Tilt" at 360 Chicago (formerly the Hancock Observatory) at the free open house. All CTPA members were sent the email invitation.
- Program Chair Sharon Sylvester is working on an invite to LUMA, the downtown art museum on the Loyola campus. Other future meetings planned are: a behind the scenes tour of Buckingham Fountain and a chance to see the David Bowie exhibition at the MCA in September.
- Donna brought two posters which were on display at the check-in desk. The posters showed two Tiffany 1893 World's Fair church décor—the altar and baptistery, both of which are on display at the Morse Museum in Winter Park, FL. Donna purchased a DVD about the Morse Museum, the life and works of Louis Comfort Tiffany and the World Fair items of their collection. She said she would host a "movie night" for interested parties to see the DVD.
- As we often do, CTPA Associate Members and guests were introduced.
- It was mentioned that BlackFinn restaurant is now open in River North at 65 West Kinzie (at Clark). The restaurant sales representative, Nicole DeGasparis, called recently and indicated that it has large private meeting and banquet space and that their menu has "affordable, craveable American food." <http://blackfinnameripub.com/>
- Also "new around town" is the installation of the Jaume Plensa's "1004 Portraits," including four large sculptures in Millennium Park (plus the original 1,000 faces of Chicagoans on Crown Fountain). We had an excellent view of the large white head on Madison Street from the Roosevelt University meeting space. The heads are to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Millennium Park and will be on display until October 2015.

### Guest Speaker Pamela Bannos – Hidden Truths of Lincoln Park

Our guest speaker for the evening was Pamela Bannos professor at Northwestern University in the Department of Art Theory and Practice. Ms. Bannos recently presented at Lawrence University's Wriston Art Center in Appleton, WI, on *Vivian Maier's Fractured Archive* as well as *Garden of the Dead: The History of Lincoln Park's Elusive Graves* as part of *Chicago 24*, Chicago History Museum's 24-hours of Chicago tours. She has spent 20 years at Northwestern in the photography department.

Ms. Bannos' presentation was ***Hidden Truths: The Chicago City Cemetery and Lincoln Park***. The project's inception in 2008 took 15 months to complete. The result is a 120 page website (<http://hiddentruths.northwestern.edu>) which took nine months to put together. The Chicago History Museum is a partner with her on this project. She is on page 300 of a companion book.

She has also designed a sequel project, ***Shifting Grounds: Block 21 & Chicago's MCA***, and was part of the recent Museum of Contemporary Art exhibit ***The Way of the Shovel: Art as Archaeology***. (<http://shifting-grounds.net>). *Shifting Grounds* is an investigation of the history and transformation of Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and the land upon which it sits. Lake Shore Drive connects her two areas of research.

Ms. Bannos does tours as a result of her research and says it would seem that there could be 10 to 12,000 graves left in the park from the Potter's Field, where the Latin School soccer field is now. Bannos had six historic markers placed as part of her project. Four of the six are still there, two were stolen. There are podcasts (free downloadable audio files) about the markers, which makes a 1 hour Lincoln Park tour. <http://hiddentruths.northwestern.edu/podcasts.html>

The Couch tomb is the most visible reminder of the Cemetery. It has been updated and cleaned up. At one time there was a chain link fence around it and there was also dense foliage planted to hide it.

Old records now available to savvy internet users were main sources for Ms. Bannos. Key among the sources is the **ProQuest** website. Her university credentials permitted her to research the Couch family back to 1849 and access old books, print records and maps showing the history of the area as a cemetery.

Per Wikipedia: "*ProQuest was founded as a microfilm publisher. It began publishing doctoral dissertations in 1939, has published more than 3 million searchable dissertations and theses, and is designated as the offsite digital archive for the United States Library of Congress.*" [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)

Bannos saw original survey documents on the ProQuest site, noting the first Jewish cemetery in Chicago was on the Lincoln Park site and the Catholic cemeteries were south of North Avenue. The timeline she mentioned was the incorporation of Chicago in 1837, then between 1838 and 1839 when there were burial areas south by the land where McCormick Place is now. By 1849 it was recommended to get the grave yards out of the area where people were living. The city was growing: North Avenue was the northern most part of the Chicago with Western Avenue being the west boundary and Division Street the dividing line.

In that time you needed to buy a deed to the burial ground as well as maintain it. Also 30 to 35 thousand people were buried in the area until 1859. The Cardinal's mansion sits on 1/8 of the cemetery which was assessed in a 2002 appraisal as the most expensive piece of property in Chicago: assessed value of \$15 million. Astor Street was the shoreline at one point, which made the burial area close to the lakeshore.

Ms. Bannos mentioned she used all primary resources such as vintage map and surveys, photographs, newspaper articles, mortuary records and original documents from common council records, Lincoln Park Commissioner records, original brochures and publications. It was during the Harold Washington administration when the Freedom of Information Act came to be, which helped uncover and release more information.

From the Hidden Truths website:

*The early papers presented on this Web Site are officially called the Chicago City Council Proceedings Files, 1833–1871. Known as the Common Council files in the records of their day, these documents contain every act and ordinance, and a great quantity of other detailed information that passed through the hands of the early city officials.*

She gave a time line as well of how things developed:

- 1850-1870 Lincoln Park was an active cemetery.
- 1859 No more sales of family lots
- 1860's Camp Douglas sent confederate casualties to be buried. There were more than 1,000 rebel graves left near the baseball diamond area.
- 1864 There was cemetery reform.
- 1866 Further burials were prohibited due to sanitary concerns.
- 1860's (late) Cemetery was closed/gone.
- 1866 Originally named Lake Park, Lincoln Park was named for Abraham Lincoln after his death.
- 1869 Lincoln Park Act - details how the park land was acquired and how acquisition of further land was to progress.
- 1871 Chicago Fire, many markers were damaged and later removed
- 1874 150 grave markers were still left. Moved behind the field house and soccer field.
- 1931 Chicago History Museum construction finds bones from cemetery
- 1938 LaSalle Street was put in by the WPA
- 1983 Bodies were still being found
- 1989 Anything older than 100 years old found in the area goes to Springfield to the Illinois State Museum.

Where did the bodies go? It was estimated that 1,500 bodies could fit in one acre. Cows and pigs came into the cemetery to graze in the area where the Farm in the Zoo is now. Bodies were left in the Catholic area of Lincoln Park, which is where the Cardinal's residence (constructed in 1885) still sits. Its boundaries were North Avenue, Burton Place, Astor Street which at one time was on the lake shore. Graceland accepted bodies from Lincoln Park as well as Rose Hill and Oakwood, where the many confederate soldiers were buried. It took 17 days for German grave diggers to remove 3,000 people from Lincoln Park by shovel according to a work invoice from 1874.

Ms. Bannos also mentioned the Couch family tomb, still visible in the park, is the oldest structure left standing in the path of the Chicago fire. Built in 1858, Mr. Couch died in Cuba in 1857. Mr. Couch owned the Tremont House Hotel. The tomb was built to hold eleven people. There have been many changes around the tomb. The original fence went missing from 1911 and 1929. Large amounts of foliage at one time surrounded the tomb and the original decorative fence was replaced with a taller cyclone fence, in attempts to hide the tomb. A replica of the original fence that surrounded the tomb was recreated for its 1999 restoration, which was paid for by a private trust. It's not sure if there is anyone still interred there as the door is welded shut. In 1877 it was deemed too expensive to move the tomb for a cost of \$3,000.

Ms Bannos took questions until 7:40 pm, when the meeting ended and members continued to network.

Respectfully submitted by  
Gina V Driskell, Co-Secretary