

The Battle Is Over

Yankees, Rebels, and perhaps a notorious assassin, repose together at Baltimore's Green Mount Cemetery

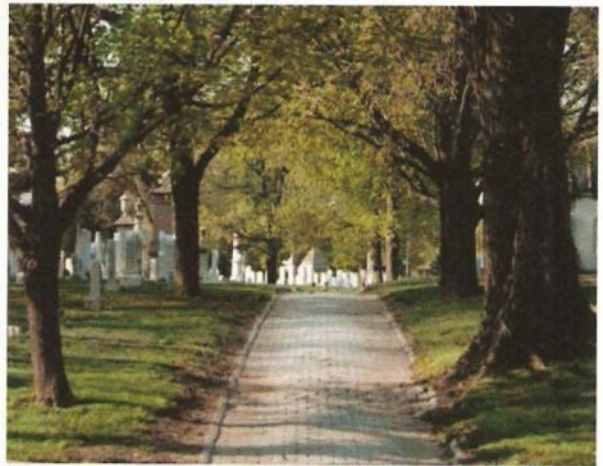
By Kim A. O'Connell

On a bright October morning in downtown Baltimore, I find myself surrounded by tombstones. Like obstacles in a funhouse, the grave markers crowd the senses—a dizzying array of obelisks and cherubs, crypts and crosses. So I am a little surprised when I am led to a small, nondescript marker only inches above the ground. "This is Samuel Arnold, one of the co-conspirators in the Lincoln assassination," says my guide, Michael Tuite. "Look—do you see what's on top?"

I lean over and see three pennies lined up on the stone. "Lincoln pennies," Tuite explains. "People leave them here as a way of honoring the president." Sure enough, when we walk over to the more elaborate grave of another co-conspirator, Michael O'Laughlen, there's another penny. Tuite jokes about how members of the grounds crew know where to go when they need spare change.

Humor is apparently part of the job when you surround yourself with dead people, as Tuite has for the past 43 years. He is the longtime superintendent of Green Mount Cemetery, a historic graveyard tucked away in an inner-city residential neighborhood not far from Baltimore's main jail. Established in 1839, the cemetery is noted for being one of the first rural, or so-called "garden cemeteries," to be established in the United States. The bucolic 70-acre site was designed by civil engineer Benjamin Latrobe II, son of the famed architect of the U.S. Capitol.

Now listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the cemetery is the final resting place for no less than 65,000 people, including



Green Mount was dedicated in July 1839 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

many historical figures from the military, arts and literature, government, philanthropy and other fields. More than a dozen Civil War generals—mostly Confederate—are buried here, including Joseph E. Johnston, Isaac R. Trimble and John H. Winder, not to mention countless other lesser-known soldiers. Philanthropist Johns Hopkins, Napoleon Bonaparte's sister-in-law Betsy Patterson, and historian Walter Lord are here, too.

"No such distinguished company has ever been received by any other estate in the city," wrote Gerald W. Johnson in a 1938 history of the cemetery, "for here are gathered the eminent men and women, not of a generation, but of a century."

Eminent, for sure, and also notorious. One of the most famous permanent residents of



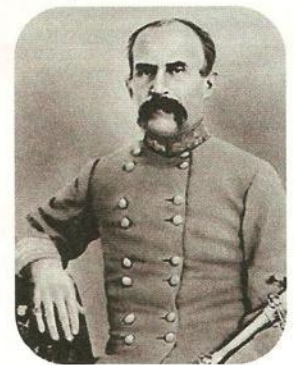
Whether Lincoln assassin John Wilkes Booth is indeed buried alongside his family members at Baltimore's Green Mount Cemetery remains a mystery.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIM A. O'CONNELL



Joe Johnston served as a pallbearer at the funeral of his old adversary, William T. Sherman, in February 1891, and kept his head uncovered as a sign of respect. He caught pneumonia and died several weeks later.

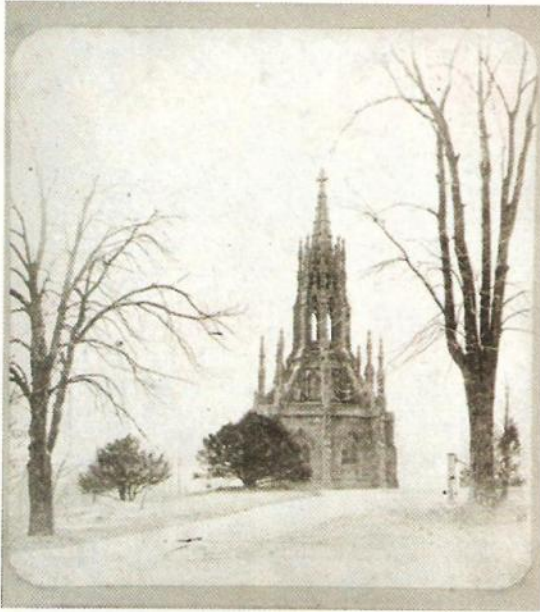


One of Isaac Trimble's claims to fame: Oldest general to serve either side at Gettysburg.



Sam Arnold received a life sentence for his role in the Lincoln conspiracy. He died in 1906.





This vintage photograph from the Maryland Historical Society shows the cemetery's chapel in winter.

Green Mount, many believe, is in fact not a decorated general or former governor, but John Wilkes Booth. The sometime actor and one-time assassin is believed to be buried alongside his parents and other relatives in the Booth family lot, prominently marked with an obelisk at its center. Legend has it that an unmarked tombstone in the corner of the lot is Booth's gravesite, but Tuite insists that it isn't true. Then again, the cemetery staff cannot even be absolutely sure that Booth is buried there, since the only record of the burial was reported by Booth's mother. Some conspiracy theorists want to excavate the gravesite to be sure Booth is there, but such efforts have been so far unsuccessful.

It's just as well; Green Mount Cemetery is far too serene and beautiful—not to mention eerily quiet, its high stone walls effectively shutting out the sounds of the city—to be disturbed by controversy. Clearly, most people prefer to stage a more quiet form of protest. As I get a closer look at the Booth family obelisk, I see one more Lincoln penny. □

For more information on Green Mount Cemetery, hours and tours, visit greenmountcemetery.com.

Since its opening in 1839, Green Mount Cemetery has become the final resting place for more than 65,000—including eight former governors and at least 17 Civil War commanders.

