



Closer Inspection

Much is unknown about **Sally Wood Nixon**, who died in 1937, but her tomb is unique. "It's modeled after her favorite piece of furniture," Roberts says. "There's a little urn in there that I believe holds her ashes. She's in her armoire forever."



Mary Ann Hall, who died in 1886, "ran the nicest bordello in town during the Civil War," at Maryland and Independence avenues, Roberts says. Buried next to Hall are her mother and sisters.

This **limestone marker** — designed to look like a card in a library card catalogue — is for Library of Congress reference librarian **Thomas Mann**. One catch: He's still alive. Mann, 63, says he thought it'd be cool to be buried among notable names.



Louisiana Rep. **Thomas Hale Boggs** was killed in a plane crash in 1972; his remains were never recovered. This stone was placed in his honor in 1981, his granddaughter Rebecca Roberts says.

It is one of 171 sandstone **cenotaphs**, designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, honoring congressmen who died in office (the tradition lasted through 1876). But only 59 are occupied. Many congressmen preferred to be buried in their home state, and "people thought [the cenotaphs] were ugly," Roberts says.



Three years ago, the headstone for **Gen. Alexander Macomb**, a hero of the War of 1812, was leaning. Repairs revealed a vault containing not just Macomb's remains but also those of his second wife, Jane Marshall Rucker Macomb.

"There's a lot of **symbolism** on his stone," Roberts says, including the Spartan helmet, signifying strength in battle, at the top of the marker.



To the grave

At Congressional Cemetery, local history is alive

BY KRIS CORONADO

Rebecca Roberts stands before a marble obelisk. Words engraved on the stone 170 years earlier are no longer legible. "Go granite when you go," she says matter-of-factly. "Marble deteriorates."

As program director at the Historic Congressional Cemetery (1801 E St. SE, www.congressionalcemetery.org), the 41-year-old knows her tombstones — and not just because she leads tours and researches the cemetery's deceased residents. The graveyard has been a part of Roberts's life since she was 10.

"There's a stone for my grandfather here," she says, referring to Louisiana congressman Thomas Hale Boggs, who died in 1972. "I grew up coming here," Roberts says.

Boggs's marker is just one of many overlooked spots at the 204-year-old resting ground. Historic figures lying there include former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and composer John Philip Sousa. You don't have to be famous to be buried at Congressional. With more than 55,000 people interred at the cemetery, there are many long-forgotten stories.



The "Freedom and Liberty" **totem poles** — by a master carver of the Lummi Indian Nation in Bellingham, Wash. — were dedicated at the Pentagon in September 2004 in memory of the 2001 terrorist attacks. They eventually made their way to the cemetery.

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