

ST. JOHN'S HISTORIC CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.
718 Jackson St.
Thibodaux, LA 70301

ST. JOHN'S HISTORIC CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023 NEWS AND UPDATES

Greetings from the St John's Historic Cemetery Association (SJHCA)! This year is already off to a good start and we would be remiss if we didn't mention some noticeable changes within the Associations Committee. More specifically, David Plater has stepped down as the editor of the SJHCA Newsletter. John Dennis has stepped in to resume the work that David diligently worked on. In addition to David's departure, there have been some other departures from the SJHCA and some new additions. After many years of faithful service, Fred Sollars, our Treasurer, has decided to step down. We are very grateful for the hard work, knowledge and integrity Fred has brought to the financial operations of the Association over the years. Dr. Benny R. Zachry has agreed to assume the Treasurer's office for the Cemetery Association. Benny is a retired professor of Accounting at Nicholls and Tulane Universities. We are all very grateful to Benny for agreeing to take on this responsibility for us.

The SJHCA Annual Meeting will be held on March 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the St. John's Parish Hall.

The SJHCA encourages you to visit the website <http://www.stjhca.org/> to get involved with the Association and to help share the beautiful and sacred history. As always, through your generous support of the St. John's Historic Cemetery Association, we are able to continue with preserving and celebrating this legacy and significance of this historic place.

ADIEU (OF A SORT): DAVID PLATER

Twelve or thirteen years ago, I took on writing the semi-annual Newsletter for the Cemetery Association. Our newsletter will carry on with a new editor and a new "Story" writer. I remain to give advice. But it need not be sought. John Dennis, teaching at Nicholls State and our editor, and Denis Gaubert, a local historian and author of this issue's Story, are experienced and dedicated.

The Newsletter helps expand our membership. Doing so continues the difficult task of funding the Vestry of St. John's in preserving and maintaining a place that we all love. By this, too, we hold onto and share the memory of those who are buried here. They came from everywhere, from different states of our nation and from different countries, especially of Europe. Blessed with talents and a will to work, they literally built Thibodaux and environs. Credit must be given to the contributors to this Newsletter and to me, personally. I am especially grateful to Alice Strausser, our diligent Secretary; to Betsy Magee, who helped edit and write Stories; and to David Cassard, St. John's recent Cemetery Warden.

A FAMILY VISIT

Several members of the SJHCA Cemetery Committee met with Mrs Marion Lifsey, along with her two daughters and other members of her family as they visited the grave of her first husband Ewell Walther, Jr.

Mr. Walther was a lawyer in New Orleans, graduate of Thibodaux High School, Tulane U. Law and a Fulbright Scholar. Mrs Lifsey and her two daughters are gracious contributors to the cemetery and it was a pleasure showing them around the cemetery and highlighting some of the recent improvements to the cemetery grounds, including the recently installed gravel drive.



Marion Lifsey visit with Clyde Foust about the St. John's Cemetery

GIVENOLA DAY IS COMING

St. John's Historic Cemetery Association will be participating in the 2023 GiveNOLA Day, on Tuesday, May 2nd. It is a one-day online giving event that allows people to give generously to nonprofit organizations. SJHCA has benefited greatly from previous GiveNOLA days. The minimum gift is \$10 and there is no maximum size or number of donations that can be made. GiveNOLA.org is the website for donating—mark your calendar! TUESDAY, MAY 2nd!

THE REV. CHARLES FELIX DIXON LYNE: FROM AN ENGLISH VILLAGE TO ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

**This is the first part of a 2-part article written by Mr. Denis Gaubert. It is an interesting, yet heartbreaking story about a brief moment in the history of St. John's Church and Cemetery.*

***Rev. Lyne and his second wife Eleanor Day Cole are buried in the St. John's Cemetery*

Charles Felix Dixon Lyne was born on May 31, 1818, in the village of East Marden in Sussex, England, and was baptized in the parish church on June 24, 1818. His parents were the Rev. Charles Philip Lyne and Maria Ann Harriot Lyne. He was the couple's firstborn child. The elder Rev. Lyne graduated from Queen's College, Oxford, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1808, and in 1826 he received a Master of Arts degree from the same college. In 1830, the elder Rev. Lyne was serving as rector of East Marden. As was so often the case in that era, the younger Charles seemed destined to follow his father's steps to the priesthood.

The younger Charles graduated from Pembroke College of the University of Oxford with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He was ordained as a deacon on June 6, 1841, at the Cathedral of Chichester by its Lord Bishop, the Right Rev. Philip Nicholas. He was then residing in the village of Warblington, in Hampshire, about 10 miles southwest of his birthplace. He was ordained as an Episcopal priest on September 25, 1842, in the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter in Exeter by its Lord Bishop. At some point, he seemed to have continued his studies and acquired a Master of Arts degree. Details regarding his subsequent ecclesiastic career in England are uncertain, but his career path probably followed the typical course of initial appointment as a curate and later parish priest.

Reverend Lyne emigrated from England to the United States in 1856, accompanying the family of John Markham from the island of Guernsey in the English Channel. At that time, Rev. Lyne was serving as tutor to the Markhams' sons George and Arthur. The details of the passage and the port of arrival are currently unknown, but it seems probable that the party arrived in New York City or another major port of the eastern seaboard.

The year 1858 found the Markhams and Rev. Lyne living in Trempeleau County, Wisconsin. Rev. Lyne accompanied his pupil, George Markham, on a trailblazing trip between the towns of Independence and Arcadia in Wisconsin in order for Mr. Markham to cast his first vote in an election. Rivers and creeks along the way were swollen. In order to cross them it was necessary for the travelers to construct temporary bridges for their oxen to pass over, and then to carry their disassembled wagon over and reassemble it. Their rough path later became a well-traveled wagon road. Rev. Lyne made a land claim near Independence and settled there. On October 1, 1863, probably while residing in Wisconsin, Rev. Lyne married Eleanor Day Cole. Eleanor had also been born in England, on September 12, 1839; the groom was 45 years old and the bride was 24. Nothing else is currently known about Mrs. Lyne's background.

A few years later the Lynes moved to Missouri, where Rev. Lyne was elected in 1867 as assistant rector at St. Joseph's Parish in St. Joseph. St. Joseph at the time was still a frontier town, serving as a major point of departure for Western immigrants beginning in the 1840s. During his brief tenure there, Rev. Lyne established a church school and served as its principal. Later that year, Rev. and Mrs. Lyne relocated to Milton, Florida, where he founded the parish of St. Mary's Church and served as its first rector. In 1868, he had the church's original bell cast by a foundry in West Troy, New York, and delivered to the church. The bell is still used there.

Reverend Lyne was named as rector of St. John's Church in Thibodaux on February 1, 1871. Reverend Lyne and his wife were still in Milton, Florida, in March. On March 13, at the request of Mrs. Lyne and a young girl's mother, the county judge approved the indenture of the girl as Mrs. Lyne's house servant until she turned 18. The servant girl was brought to Thibodaux and lived with the Lynes. In May, using a legacy from the will of R. G. Nicholls, the Church's vestry acquired a house and lot on Jackson Street, about a block away from the Church. Reverend and Mrs. Lyne used the house as their residence during their time in Thibodaux.



**TO BE CONTINUED
NEXT NEWSLETTER**