MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
(Penny Richards)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

REPORT: Improving the Accessibility of Archives for People with Physical Disabilities
(Sara White)

REPORT: Disability History, Welfare Reform and the Media
(David M. Turner)

REPORT: Naming the Forgotten: The Eastern State Hospital Project
(Mary Hatton)
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
Penny L. Richards

WELCOME!

This is a shorter, later spring newsletter than we’ve had recently, but it’s still full of news, links, and content you won’t find anywhere else. I’m especially happy that the reports in this issue span across fields of historical endeavor, beyond the edges of campus: Sara White brings us details about an initiative at the Society of American Archivists to make archives more accessible to disabled scholars. David Turner recounts his experience with offering a disability history perspective to current policy debates in the media. And we have a few words (with links and a photo) from a community history project centered Kentucky’s Eastern State Hospital. Hundreds of patients’ stories are being gathered and shared through open-access websites like findagrave.com, mainly by family historians. And this is for just one hospital cemetery--there are surely many similar projects underway.

The Disability History Association has two awards programs now: a publications award (committee chaired by Michael Rembis) and conference scholarships for graduate students (committee chaired by Susan Burch). Your membership money helps fund these and other efforts to support and promote the work of disability historians at all career levels, and across subject areas.

Finally, speaking of assisting the work of historians... The AHA’s Professional Division’s Taskforce on Disability was founded in 2006 at the urging of Cathy Kudlick (then the president of DHA), and the resulting Advisory Committee on Disability (chaired by DHA board member Sandy Sufian) recently issued its report. Read more about its recommendations and the changes already being made at the AHA’s blog, “Moving Forward: Disability and the AHA” (posted 27 September 2011).
ANNOUNCEMENTS

DHA graduate student scholarship
As part of our commitment to promoting the work of disability historians, DHA is proud to announce this year’s graduate student scholarship to attend professional academic conferences. This award is not restricted by the geographic location or type of professional academic conference. The fellowship committee will award either 2 applicants $250US [or equivalent] or one applicant $500US [or equivalent], depending on strength of proposals and need. The Association will cover expenses to convert currencies if necessary.

To apply for this scholarship applicants should provide a one-page (roughly 250- word) cover letter outlining when, where, and what kind of conference will be attended. Applicants should clearly explain their reason for wanting to attend the conference and what benefits are anticipated by this experience. For example, a candidate may have been accepted to present a paper or may want to interview for jobs at the conference; another may want to do both or may want to learn more about subjects presented that relate to his/her own work.

This year's award covers Summer 2012 through Summer 2013; applications may be submitted beginning on June 4, 2011. The current scholarship review committee includes DHA members Phil Ferguson, Susan Burch, and Graham Warder.

Awardees will be announced on the H-Dis listserv. In accepting the scholarship, winners commit to writing a brief article (500-750 words) about the conference for the next DHA newsletter appearing after the event.

For more information on the scholarship please contact Susan Burch at

sburch@middlebury.edu

Exhibit: Absolutely abNormal
Finnish Labour Museum, Tampere Finland, through 27 May 2012
This exhibition presents the history and present of people with disabilities in Finland. The common discourses of disability in the society are questioned. Who is normal? Who can have a happy life? Interactive and multi-sensory elements play a significant role in the display. Throughout the exhibition there is information in Finnish, Swedish and English, also in Braille and Finnish sign language. More info about the museum in English, Finnish, and Swedish at:
http://www.werstas.fi/?q=en
**Fulbright for an emerging disability historian**
Rebecca Ellis, a Ph.D. student in history at the University of New Mexico, was just awarded a Fulbright to conduct research in Argentina for her dissertation “Constructing Capacity: A Labor and Gender History of Blindness in Argentina, 1890-1956.” Her research compares conceptions and experiences of blindness and deafness during the first half of the twentieth century in Argentina. She is also interested in the ways in which capacity, labor, and gender intersect and how that affects access to education, social services, and economic opportunities. Ellis says she would love to find other scholars working on disability in Latin America.

**Surrey History Centre named “Archive of the Year 2012”**
Pat Reynolds, Surrey Heritage Manager, shares the following good news:

“Surrey History Centre has been voted the outright winner, by a wide margin, of the prestigious Archive of the Year Award 2012 by readers of Your Family History Magazine. Record Offices across the entire United Kingdom were eligible for the award and members of the public were asked to nominate and vote for the archive service which offered:

- the best service from staff
- the best facilities in the search rooms
- the most accessible and highest quality finding aids and catalogues
- the best range of services provided online, including access to digitised records
- the widest range of documents available for consultation
- the strongest connections with the local community
- the best facilities for disabled people

Surrey History Centre includes the archives of many mental health hospitals (see [http://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/mental_hospital_records](http://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/mental_hospital_records) [http://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/mental_hospital_records/early_mental_health_records_quarter_sessions_and_private_asylums](http://www.exploringsurreyspast.org.uk/themes/subjects/mental_hospital_records/early_mental_health_records_quarter_sessions_and_private_asylums))

Surrey had more mental health hospitals than any other county, and our archivists have worked to ensure that records from them are preserved. Our connections with the local community include those to several groups of former patients.”

**Documentary Project Seeking Visual Resources, First-Person Accounts in US Disability History**
A PBS station that is developing an historical TV documentary about public attitudes toward disability seeks assistance in finding visual resources (photos, old news coverage, home movies) as well as 1st person accounts (letters, diaries, scrapbooks) on certain disability topics. If you have a scholarly or personal interest in any of the topics below, and want to participate, please contact the researcher for more details. Topics include:
(1) disabled vets from the Civil War, WWI and WWII; (2) beginnings of rehab medicine after WWII; (3) League of the Physically Handicapped (1935); (4) how the first Social Security Act of 1935 affected people with disabilities; (5) employment of people with disabilities, on the home-front, during WWII; (6) how the 1965 Civil Rights Act affected people with disabilities; (7) public resistance and/or support for school mainstreaming (1970s onward). To find out more about the kinds of visual resources and personal accounts that the film crew needs on any of these topics, please contact:

Mary Malone, Researcher
“I’m Not Broken” (working title), a documentary about disability in America: images, rights and realities
for Illinois Public Media (WILL), the PBS affiliate in Urbana-Champaign, Illinois
Tel: 519. 432. 7395
email: memalone@sympatico.ca
WEBSITE - Illinois Public Media: http://will.illinois.edu/

DIS 687: Representations of Disability in Film
Summer 2012, University of Hawaii at Mānoa
The Center on Disability Studies, University of Hawaii at Mānoa, announces an online graduate seminar, “Representations of Disability in Film,” as part of their summer 2012 extension program, June 21-July 26. The instructor is Dr. Raphael Rafael. The course description reads as follows:

Cinema has long carried on a love affair with disability. This love affair has been a deeply ambivalent one, with people with disabilities portrayed alternately as saints or monsters, asexual or hyper-sexual, as both objects of fear and attraction. It is the intent of this course to interrogate these contradictions.

Students in this online course will view and respond to a series of films that portray disability with the following aims: (1) to interrogate their own assumptions about disability; (2) to deepen their historical understanding of the ways in which the “grammar” of film has shaped depictions of disability; and (3) to consider the ways in which these images may dialog with the ways we think about disability. Films viewed include: Freaks, Coming Home, The Elephant Man, Crash, There’s Something About Mary and The Station Agent.

This course is intended for students across disciplines, including social work, psychology, public health, law, nursing, political science, and especially education. It is presented in an online, asynchronous format designed to accommodate the schedules of working professionals.

This 3-credit graduate seminar is available completely online as part of the Center on Disability Studies’ 15-credit Certificate in Disability and Diversity Studies.

http://www.cds.hawaii.edu/certificates/

Contact the certificate program at the link above, for more information about registering for this online course.
New Website on Disability in the Ancient World
Dorien Meulenijzer and Christian Laes recently announced a new website which “aims to bring together as much scholars as possible who are dealing with the fascinating subject of disabilities in the ancient world.” They are inviting a broader range of participants, and would be especially interested in including scholars familiar with ancient Sumerian, Jewish or Celtic literature.

Disability History Sessions at AHA 2013
The Disability History Association is happy to announce that at least two disability history-related sessions were accepted for the program of the American Historical Association meeting in New Orleans, to be held 3-6 January. “Who Belongs Where? Spaces of Contest in American Conceptions of Disability” includes Kim Nielsen, John Kinder, Lindsey Patterson, and Susan Burch as panelists; and be sure to check out Michael Rembis and Allison Carey on a panel about edited collections.
UPCOMING CONFERENCES

14-15 June 2012
CARE AND CURE: DISEASES, DISABILITIES, AND THERAPIES
Swansea University Centre for Medieval and Early Modern Research (MEMO) presents this interdisciplinary, cross-period conference to examine the continuities and changes between the medieval and early modern periods in the care and cure of sick and disabled individuals and groups. Visit the conference website for further information: http://www.swan.ac.uk/artsandhumanities/riah/researchgroups/memo/

15-16 June 2012
Sensualizing Deformity: Communication and Construction of Monstrous Embodiment will be a two-day interdisciplinary conference at the University of Edinburgh (UK). For more information: http://sensualisingdeformity.blogspot.com/p/call-for-papers.html

20-23 June 2012
Society for Disability Studies will hold its 25th annual conference in Denver, Colorado, with the theme “Collaborations, Cultures, and Communities.” More information here: http://disstudies.org/annual-conference/2012cfp/

27-30 June 2012
Internationalization in Education (18th-20th centuries) is a joint conference of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education, the Society for the History of Children and Youth, and the Disability History Association (yes, that’s us), to be held in Geneva, Switzerland. More information at the conference website: http://cms2.unige.ch/ische34-shcy-dha/crbst_2.html

24-29 July 2012
8th Deaf History International Conference will be held in Toronto, Canada, hosted by the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf, with the theme “Telling Deaf Lives: Biographies and Autobiographies.” Watch the website for the program details as they become available: http://www.dhiconference2012.ca/english/call_papers.html

27-28 July 2012
“Perspectives: Past, Present and Future of Disability Studies” is the theme of this year’s Minnesota Symposium on Disability Studies. Abstracts are due 30 May 2012. The symposium’s website is: http://blog.lib.umn.edu/gara0030/iggds/

30 July-1 August 2012
Disability and the Victorians: Confronting Legacies
Leeds Center for Victorian Studies, Leeds Trinity University College hosts a three-day international conference on disability in the Victorian period. Keynote speakers include Martha Stoddard Holmes, Vanessa Toulmin, and David Wright. For more information: http://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/Disability-Victorians

23-26 August 2012
PASSAGES FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES V
Infirmitas: Social and Cultural Approaches to Cure, Caring and Health
University of Tampere, Finland
Dan Blackie says this is “a conference with a substantial disability history component for those interested in learning more about disability in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. This is an
international conference held in English.” For more information and details about the presentations, see: http://www.uta.fi/trivium/passages/

5-8 September 2012
Celebrating our Past, Creating our Future: NARPA (National Association for Rights Protection and Advocacy) holds its annual conference for advocates, attorneys, and activists this year in Cincinnati, Ohio, with a theme that emphasizes history, change, and continuity. For more information, contact NARPA at narpa@aol.com

8 September 2012
Northern Renaissance Seminar: Disability and the Renaissance
Leeds Trinity University College
A one-day conference on the ways in which disability can be conceptualised in/through/by the Renaissance. Deadline for proposals is June 30. For more information, contact Susan Anderson at s.anderson@leedstrinity.ac.uk
http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/45836

8-9 September 2012
Bodily Functions: The Corpus and Corpora in Ancient Literature
Ioannou Centre for Research in Classical and Byzantine Studies, University of Oxford, hosts this two-day annual meeting for postgraduates in ancient literature. Deadline for proposals was 1 May. For more information, contact:
ampal.oxford.2012@gmail.com

10-12 September 2012
Society for the Social History of Medicine will hold its biannual, international, interdisciplinary meeting at the University of London, with the topic “Emotions, Health, and Wellbeing.” More information:

17-18 September 2012
Theatre, Performance, Madness, and Psychiatry at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is an interdisciplinary conference, part of an AHRC funded project to investigate the history of performance in, and about, psychiatric asylums and hospitals since the 19th century.

27 October 2012
Pain and Old Age: 3 Centuries of Suffering in Silence? is a public conference to be held at the Birkbeck Pain Project and the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities at Birkbeck, University of London. Proposal deadline is 1 June. More details:
http://www.bbk.ac.uk/history/our-research/birkbeckpainproject/events

10-11 December 2012
Deaf World/Hearing World: Spaces, Techniques, and Things in Culture and History is a two-day conference in Berlin, sponsored by the Max Planck Institute in Berlin and Project Biocultures at the University of Chicago. Deadline for abstracts is 3 July 2012. More information, please contact Sabine Arnaud at sarnaud@mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de, or Lennard Davis at lendavis@uic.edu
Improving the Accessibility of Archives for People with Physical Disabilities: Initiatives at the Society of American Archivists

Sara White

In 1997, the Society of American Archivists identified diversity as a strategic initiative and at that year’s annual meeting the SAA Council voted to create the Task Force on Diversity. With this in mind, in 2007, Russell James, then Chair of the SAA Records Management Roundtable, contacted Daria D’Arienzo, then co-chair of the SAA Archives Management Roundtable, to propose that together the roundtables create a grass roots joint working group to consider the issues of physical impairments as part of their diversity initiative and focus specifically in this area. Originally called the Joint Archives Management/Records Management Roundtables Working Group on Diversity, the group is comprised of archivists, records managers, librarians, and students. Welcomed by SAA leadership, the group considers and addresses the question of accessibility of archives for employees and patrons, particularly mobility, hearing and visual accessibility. Although the group recognizes the importance of providing assistance to people with cognitive and mental disabilities, the first charge was:

To contact and network with persons with physical impairments in the archives and records management profession (archivists, records managers, and researchers / patrons), identify and study the challenges for them in the same, and develop tools to assist them in overcoming these challenges.

The group developed a survey in July 2008 to gain a better understanding of the difficulties faced by people with disabilities working or doing research in archives. The survey was posted on the SAA website for twenty-nine days and respondents willing to be contacted were interviewed. The survey results revealed that the primary challenges facing employees with disabilities are ergonomics, while patrons with disabilities encounter mobility problems. Survey results can be found at:

http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/archmgmt/dtf_110108_article.pdf

Based on the survey’s findings, working group members concluded that further steps were needed to make archives accessible to employees and patrons with disabilities. Although actually willing to do what was needed to help a colleague or patrons with disabilities in their archives, many institutions offered little beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

After the survey’s results were analyzed, the next step was to share the findings with the SAA and the profession. The Group developed “Recommendations for Working with Archives Employees with Physical Disabilities” and “Recommendations for Working with Archives Researchers with Physical Disabilities.” In 2010, SAA Council approved the recommendations as Best Practices. See:
In order to both disseminate its findings and get feedback from other archivists on accessibility issues in the archives profession, the Group hosted an information table and two community forums at the SAA annual meetings in 2010 and 2011. The first SAA Accessibility Forum, held in Washington D.C. on August 12, 2010 was titled “Archival Accessibility for All: An Awareness Forum.” The forum featured Daria D’Arienzo as a speaker from the working group, active SAA members, and presenters James Patrick Timony and Venetia Demson from the D.C. Public Libraries. Former SAA President, Mark Greene, spoke on accessibility and how his own disability affects his work, while Timony and Demson discussed their efforts at adaptive technology and services in public libraries. The Group made available its L.O.V.E. card (Listen, Observe, Validate, and Empathize) and its new brochure: “Accessibility is for Everyone! A Quick Guide to Accessibility and Archives.” See


http://www2.archivists.org/groups/amrtrmrt-working-group-on-accessibility/a-quick-guide-to-accessibility-and-archives

Based on feedback from SAA members, the second Accessibility Forum was held in Chicago on August 25, 2011 and was titled “Accessibility for All: Practical Tips for Creating Access in Archives.” It included short presentations from working group members Debra Kimok, Lisa Snider, Michele Pacifico and Daria D’Arienzo and breakout discussion sessions on practical steps archivists could take to make their archives more accessible for both staff and patrons. For further information about both forums please see the following site:

http://www2.archivists.org/groups/amrtrmrt-working-group-on-accessibility/saa-conference-presentation-downloads

While these Best Practices, additional tools and resources, and several annual meeting session and forums are effective tools that the Group uses in continuing to promote accessibility for individuals of all abilities, this work is only the beginning. Another survey to determine the advances in archival accessibility since 2007 is underway. In addition, members are exploring ways to reach out to other allied professional organizations in order to find out how others are addressing physical accessibility issues and share research and resources. Currently, we are researching sources used to make
archives more accessible to people with disabilities with the goal of creating an online resource to assist archivists when making their archives more accessible to all people.

In the past five years, the Joint Working Group has continued its research and steps at making archives more accessible to people with disabilities. Our 2008 survey of people with disabilities led to recommendations to working with employees and researchers with disabilities that the SAA Council approved as Best Practices in 2010. In addition to developing the Best Practices, the Joint Working Group held accessibility forums at the 2010 and 2011 SAA Annual Conferences. These forums provided archivists with information on how to make their archives more accessible to people with disabilities and the group continues this work. The group will soon begin a new survey in April to ask for input from individuals that have found accessibility in archives a challenge. If you want to learn more about the Joint Working Group and find out more about the upcoming survey, visit the following site:

http://www2.archivists.org/groups/amrtrmrt-working-group-on-accessibility

Disability History, Welfare Reform and the Media

David M. Turner
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What role can disability history play in public policy debate? Can media portrayals of disability be informed by historical perspectives, and can the lessons of history provide our policy makers and the general public with a better understanding of disability issues today? These questions lay behind an article I published in February 2012 for History and Policy, an online forum that aims to connect historians, policymakers and the media: “‘Fraudulent’ Disability in Historical Perspective” http://www.historyandpolicy.org/papers/policy-paper-130.html

The backdrop to the article was the UK Government’s attempt to reduce the number of claimants of sickness and disability benefits in its Welfare Reform Bill, and the concerns raised about these reforms by people with disabilities, their families, advocates and NGOs acting in their interests. The Government’s statements on disability and welfare have often appealed to a populist rhetoric about ‘scroungers’, fostering the perception that benefit fraud is common and that welfare creates a ‘culture of dependency’ in which a life on benefits is preferable to work. Policymakers and the media have encouraged divisive attitudes towards claimants, in which the ‘genuinely needy’ are distinguished from those whose incapacities are judged to be their own ‘fault’ (such as through alcoholism, drug abuse or obesity). In contrast, disability charities have warned that the
media focus on the fraudulent or over-claiming of disability and other benefits is fuelling the abuse of people with disabilities, in spite of the Government’s own evidence that disability benefit fraud only represents a small proportion of total welfare expenditure.

I wanted to use the article to make sense of this obsession with fraud by looking at its history. Research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for my book, Disability in Eighteenth-Century England (Routledge 2012), had alerted me to the longevity of stereotypes of imposture: in fact, the concern with authenticity seems to be one of the most enduring aspects of disability’s history in Britain and elsewhere. Furthermore, my research found that perceptions of the ‘genuinely needy’ have long been based on cultural variables about what a ‘disabled person’ should look like or how they should behave, rather than impairment alone. I wanted to show how these stereotypes weigh heavily on people with disabilities today, and to highlight how the intensification of efforts to identify the ‘deserving’ disabled poor since the late eighteenth century have increased the power of professional gatekeepers in determining eligibility for support. Contrary to popular media images of widespread abuse of the system, I argued that although benefit fraud is a problem that has always existed it needs to be put in context and that there is little evidence that many people have preferred a life on benefits where opportunities to work have been available. The divisive social attitudes towards disability caused by an unhelpful fixation with abusers of the system impedes progress towards genuinely enabling policy that focuses on the barriers that many sick and disabled people face in accessing employment.

History and Policy published the article on February 14th to coincide with debate of the Welfare Reform Bill in Parliament. Twitter was used to connect with an online community concerned with disability and social policy. Apart from reaching History and Policy’s 1450 or so followers, news of the article was shared 17 times, including re-tweets by Labour Member of Parliament Ann McGuire, Shadow (Opposition) Minister for Disabled People and Assembly Member Rebecca Evans, Chair of the Cross Party Group on Disability in the Welsh Assembly. Various disability groups also helped to publicise the article, with links published on the Facebook pages of Disability Wales and ACT NOW, Autism Campaigners Together.

A press release issued via my university’s website led to further media attention. I was interviewed about the research for an article published on the BBC News Wales website, “Benefit Cheats: David Turner on ‘history of distrust of disability’” (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17067379). In spite of the somewhat ambivalent headline (which led to one anxious reader emailing me for clarification about whether I believed that historical evidence actually supported the view that people with disabilities should not be trusted) the article highlighted some of my main points, and included an official response from a Department of Work and Pensions spokesperson. A story was run in the Western Mail, the national newspaper of Wales, with a comment from the policy officer of Disability Rights UK. The BBC article led to two daytime radio interviews: a 30 minute feature on BBC Radio Wales, and an interview on BBC Kent as
part of a feature on a family who were about to lose some of their state benefits for their disabled son.

The response in the media and on social networking sites showed that my research had engaged the public in ways that work published in academic monographs or journal articles doesn’t often achieve. But what effect did it have? Some of the interest in the research seemed to derive from the ‘colourful’ labels applied to alleged welfare fraudsters in the past, such as the Elizabethan slang terms ‘palliard’ and ‘clapperdogleon’ for impostor beggars rather than its political message. But the interest in the research from politicians, anti-cuts campaigners, disability organisations and activists – together with the opportunities it gave me to discuss disability history in mainstream media outlets - convinced me that this kind of engagement was worthwhile. Monitoring the ways in which the BBC news website story had been shared on Twitter (http://topsy.com/www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17067379) showed the wide reach of the research and indicated that the lessons from history were seen an important contribution to public debate about disability and welfare. One person facing reassessment of their eligibility for support emailed to say that ‘we need the help of people like yourself and your colleagues’ to highlight the struggles faced by people with disabilities and to challenge negative stereotyping and conventional wisdom. Taking opportunities for constructive public engagement such as those offered by History and Policy is an important part of our work as historians.

Naming the Forgotten: The Eastern State Hospital Project

Mary Hatton

My name is Mary Hatton and a retired RN from state service of 28 1/2 years. Out of my 28 1/2 years, 20 years was working in direct patient care at Eastern State Hospital. I am a genealogist since my retirement. This project was started in late 2006. The project was started on the KYGenWeb-Fayette Co. The Project moved from KYGenWeb-Fayette Co. to the KYGenWeb as a Special Project on KYGenWeb after a year or two. We now have 10 pages for the project. The link to the project is: http://kykinfolk.com/esh/.

Without the former patients’ relatives this project would not grow so rapidly. I am currently working with Jane Colmenares. Our pages are: main page, what’s new, deaths, census, letters, records, newspapers accounts, images, links, ESH form, ESH register, guestbook, and archives. Several years ago a relative started a Find-A-Grave cemetery. As of May 2, 2012 there are 1,808 names in the Find A Grave cemetery. The newspaper articles include obits and miscellaneous articles. The census includes the Mortality Schedules of 1860 and 1870, the census of 1870 and the 1890 census. The records index includes: Committal Records/Lunacy Bonds/Personal Records, the
1873, 1874, and 1887 Annual Report. There are patient names, ages, race, and who paid for the patient’s care.

Images include reburial of remains 2007, 1975 pictures of the hospital, current pictures, and a map of Eastern State Hospital. Links are for links to other old hospitals. Letters are collections of letters to the Superintendent from relatives or to the Superintendent to the relatives. Relatives can add names to the ESH Register. We have a guest book and archives (for the first guestbook).

Anyone can contact me and I will help them have a relative at Eastern State Hospital. My e-mail is Hatton2020@gmail.com. I have the process that can be used to obtain medical records for a relative.

Above: Tombstone erected in the 1980s in the Cemetery at Eastern State Hospital, to remember patients who were buried on the grounds. The tombstone reads: “Eastern State Hospital Cemetery; Celebrating Their Dignity; We erect this monument in memory of those persons who are buried here. While alive they knew the suffering of inner pain, confusion, despair. They found satisfaction in simple pleasures. Now they are at peace. ’The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God. No torment shall ever touch them. In the eyes of the unwise, they appear to die, their going looked like a disaster, their leaving us, like annihilation; but they are at peace.’—Book of Wisdom 3:1-6”