

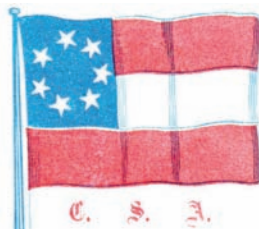


# **NORTH AND SOUTH IN EAST AND WEST**



## **HIGHGATE CEMETERY AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (1861-1865)**

MICHAEL HAMMERSON



I have always been fascinated by the era of the American Civil War – not just the dramatic years of battle from 1861-1865, but the whole social and political background of its causes, the senseless and massive waste of life, the enormous interest and the bitterly partisan views it generated in England, and its long-term effects, not only on the most powerful nation on earth, but on western history down to the present day.

The recent discovery of three burials in Highgate Cemetery, each illuminating some aspect of that era in very different ways, introduces cemetery visitors to an era which has affected our lives significantly, yet which is now neglected by our educational system and virtually forgotten in Britain.

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*“The country between the Rappahannock and the Potomac has become as familiar to the English public as the space between St. Paul’s and South Kensington.”*

Thus wrote the London Times of August 12, 1864 when reporting the latest battles in war-torn Virginia to a public who for three years had followed with horror the slaughter in

across the globe and were buried in their adopted or native countries - and many Englishmen fought in the war, on both sides.

The three recently-rediscovered graves in Highgate Cemetery, all of a very different nature, are a fascinating reflection on this pivotal period of world history.

The inscription on the first, grave 113876 in Square 30 of the Western Cemetery, tells its own story:

*“Here rest the remains of SAMUEL LUCAS, aged 54. He died on the 16th of April, 1865, a few hours after hearing the tidings of the destruction of the slave power in the United States, by the fall of Richmond; an object which he had unceasingly laboured to promote as Managing-Proprietor of the ‘Morning Star’”.*

The American Civil War was precipitated by the secession of thirteen Southern States to form their own country - the Confederate States of America. It did not start as a war to free the slaves, but to suppress what the Northern states saw as a rebellion, and to restore the Union. *“Therefore”*, reasoned most Englishmen, *“if slavery is not the issue,*



*Samuel Lucas' Grave, Western Cemetery*

America which was to claim 600,000 lives before the war's end in April 1865. After the war, most veterans of the war returned to their homes or sought new lives in the expanding West. However, many dispersed

*we must support the gallant little South, fighting for its freedom against the Yankee aggression threatening its rights.”* The fact that foremost among those was the right to own slaves somehow evaded their reasoning.

It was not until President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1 1863 that Southern efforts to secure British intervention foundered, although British sympathies, including among the press, mostly remained with the South, and the London Morning Star was the only major national newspaper which supported the Union.

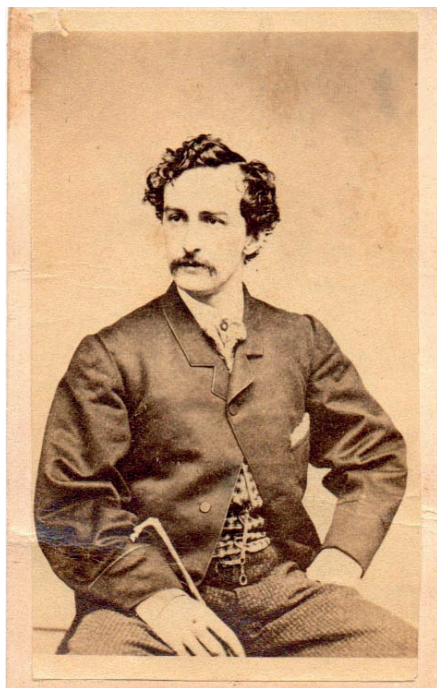
After four bloody years, in which 20% of all men of military age in the defeated South died, the main Rebel army surrendered on April 9, 1865. Sadly, with the Transatlantic Cable a year from completion, Lucas died too soon for the news, which would have taken 7-10 days to arrive by ship, to reach him. However, he had the satisfaction of learning of the fall of the Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia, on April 2. We are fortunate that his work and aspirations are so dramatically recorded on his gravestone, and we were delighted when English Heritage considered the grave to be sufficiently important to merit Listing as a Grade II historic monument.



*Grave of Richard Booth (in foreground )  
Eastern Cemetery*

The second grave, 16340 Square 111 is, appropriately, in the Eastern Cemetery, since the two men would surely not have wished to be buried near each other. Beneath its small, eroded stone lies Richard Booth, born in 1818, who died of typhoid fever in 1868.

In 1821 Richard's father, actor-manager Junius Brutus Booth, abandoned his wife and three children and ran off to America with a common-law wife, Mary Anne Holmes, with whom he had ten children. In the late 1830s Richard went to America to find his father, after which Junius' first wife divorced him. Richard lived in Baltimore until 1860, when he returned to England.



*John Wilkes Booth, half-brother of Richard Booth and assassin of President Lincoln*

Two of his American half-brothers, Edwin and John Wilkes, became famous actors in 19th-century America. It is not known whether Richard ever met them - but whether or not he did, it is unlikely that

Samuel Lucas would have been happy to know that he would be buried in the same cemetery as the half-brother of one of the century's most notorious men – John Wilkes Booth, the man who assassinated victorious Union President Abraham Lincoln five days after the end of the war: a deed which shocked the whole western world as deeply as did President John F. Kennedy's assassination 98 years later. It might even be considered a mercy that by dying two days after Lincoln's assassination, he was spared the terrible news of the death of the man whom he probably admired more than any other.

The third grave, 39390 in Square 106 of the Eastern Cemetery, was discovered as a result of a chance conversation between the writer and cemetery photographer Alan Peters, who revealed that he had found a gravestone stating that the deceased fought in the American Civil War. The stone, in excellent condition, with crossed English and American flags carved into it, bears the following inscription:

*"IN LOVING MEMORY OF FERDINAND THOMAS BARZETTI, who fought under the name of THOMAS SHEPHERD in the AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. Died February 1914, in his 78th Year."*

(Research shows the date to be the 13th).

Twenty-nine men named Thomas Shepherd served in the Northern army, but it was not difficult, with a little research, to identify him and reveal his story. A son of John Barzetti, a moulder, and his wife Sophia, he was born in Mortimer Market, a small street just off Tottenham Court Road, on September 25th, 1836 and baptised in St. Pancras Parish Church. According to his own 1911 pension statement, he left England for America when he was about 25, probably during the early to middle part of 1861. Finding himself in New York on the outbreak of war, he enlisted in the 13th New York Light Artillery, which was formed in August 1861 – so his claim that he enlisted

"*about March 1861*" is a lapse of memory on the part of a 75-year-old man, since he actually volunteered to serve, for three years, on November 4 1861. "*I assumed the name of Shepherd*", he tells us, "*so that my mother should not know that I had enlisted,*" suggesting that he may even have gone to America to fight.



*Grave of Ferdinand Barzetti, alias Thomas Shepherd, Eastern Cemetery*

The 13th left New York on October 17th, 1861, arriving at its training camp north of Washington DC, the heavily-fortified Northern capital, on the 20th. The battery served in the defences of Washington, but in early 1862 it was assigned to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, where the Northern army was being generally outmanoeuvred and outfought by Confederates under General Thomas Jonathan Jackson, nicknamed "Stonewall", who was to earn a reputation as one of the most aggressive, inventive and successful generals of modern history; some claim that the South lost the war only because Jackson was accidentally mortally wounded by his own men in mid-1863.

Barzetti notes that he was slightly wounded at Cross Keys, a battle of the so-called Valley Campaign, and fought in other skirmishes and engagements. However, when the Confederate army launched its first attack northward in early August, and the armies clashed at the Second Battle of Bull Run on the 30th, Barzetti was severely

wounded during the Union army's retreat to Washington. He was treated in a field hospital at Fairfax Court House, now a suburb west of Washington, and finally invalided out for disability on April 3rd 1863, returning to England as soon as he could. *"The marks of these wounds"*, he adds, *"I still bear"*. The war continued for two more violent years, the 13th New York Artillery fighting in some of its most desperate campaigns: the bloody battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, Ulysses Grant's Chattanooga Campaign and Sherman's campaign to capture the vital railroad centre of Atlanta, Georgia, familiar to the public from "Gone with the Wind."

Barzetti married Annie Elizabeth Cox on August 14th, 1870. They had three children,

retained the name Thomas Shepherd, and his real name remained known only to relatives and a few friends. So well did he keep this secret that even his comrades in the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans – a little-known body currently being researched – were unaware of his real name. As its Secretary, US Navy veteran John Davis, wrote when supporting Barzetti's widow's pension application: *"I witnessed the burial of my old comrade...Thomas Shepherd, and I did not know him by any other name until the day of the funeral, when I saw the name of Thomas Ferdinand Barzetti on his coffin!"*

In supporting Annie's application for a widow's pension, Elizabeth Gray, of "14 Salisbury Road, Highgate Hill", attested that she had known both since her childhood. Salisbury Road occupied what is now the



*The retreat of the Union Army from the second battle of Bull Run, August 30, 1862. The wounded Barzetti / Shepherd would probably have been transported back over this bridge to hospital.*

though by 1911 only one, Annie Florence, was still alive. His first application for a Federal Pension was on September 30th, 1890, updated on June 20th, 1901. By 1899 their address was 43 Werrington Street, just off Eversholt Street, Camden Town.

However, on his return to England, he

eastern half of Magdala Avenue, off Highgate Hill and below the Whittington Hospital, before the area was redeveloped in the mid-20th century; the name is preserved in Salisbury Walk, not a stone's throw from Highgate Cemetery. Gray knew them because "my father was half brother to the deceased... my grandmother being left a

widow and married a second time” [to Barzetti’s father]. Another declaration attests that Thomas and Annie had lived in St. Pancras since 1887.



*Notepaper of the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans, 1916*

While the Federal authorities were generous to their Civil War veterans, the bureaucracy in applying for a pension was considerable, and when a man had fought under an assumed name, then, as John Davis wrote to Barzetti’s widow, “There is always a lot of trouble when there are two names. If you would send your late husband’s declaration it would carry a great weight with our... Pension Office.”



*Postcard issued by the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans c1910*

Barzetti’s grave plot was purchased on February 18th, 1914 by a Joseph Osborne Pearson of 534 Caledonian Road, Islington. It is not yet known who he was, but Barzetti’s 1911 pension declaration bears the address 554 Caledonian Road (presumably Barzetti was in error); possibly he was the husband of their surviving daughter, with whom Thomas and Annie may have been

living. Annie Elizabeth was buried in Highgate on November 20th, 1927.

The significance of the crossed flags on the gravestone would undoubtedly have been lost, but for the recent rediscovery of the London Branch of American Civil War Veterans, a group of comrades founded in 1910 to secure Federal Pensions for veterans living in the U.K. With as many as 130 members at one time, they met four times a year, and on Abraham Lincoln’s birthday, to talk over old times. The discovery of their letterhead shows that their “logo” was the crossed flags of England and the United States; perhaps the Branch made a contribution to enable the carving, which must have entailed some extra expense, to be added; or perhaps Barzetti was proud of his membership and requested it. The last member of the London veterans died in 1933, although it appears that the last veteran of the war died as late as 1951. Incredibly, there was one widow of a veteran living in America as late as 2007, although she married him as a young woman during the Depression years of the 1930s, when an old man with a steady pension was a better bet than a young man with no chance of finding employment.



*The London Veterans in 1917, from the Daily Sketch. The man immediately below “FOR” appears to be a Sikh – a complete mystery, as none are noted as serving in the Civil War. Barzetti had died three years previously.*

Research into Barzetti has not been entirely straightforward. His name is variously spelled Barzetti, Barsetti, Bazzetti, Bazatti, Shepherd, Shephard, Shepard, Shephard, Sheppard and even Shepland!

Much too remains to be researched - immigration records showing when he arrived in America and returned to England; his work; his addresses; and whether his daughter became Mrs. Joseph Pearston; but the above is sufficient to give us a fascinating insight into the role which circumstances led a young Englishman to play in one of the defining eras of modern history; the part which one of his countrymen played in trying to promote the cause of Union and the ending of Slavery;

and the fate which made another the half-brother of one of the most notorious men of the nineteenth century who, with a mad obsession and a single bullet from a tiny gun no larger than the palm of his hand, undoubtedly impacted upon the whole course of modern world events.

It is fortuitous that these three men rest in Highgate Cemetery, to remind us of this dramatic era of world history. It is not impossible that others remain to be identified there, and perhaps one day we will be able to balance up Highgate's part in telling the story of those turbulent times, with the discovery of the grave of a man who fought in the Confederate Army.



*The aftermath of the American Civil War – an early view of one of the cemeteries where the 600,000 dead of the war were buried.*

...ss, pursued them in compelled the uncon- fugitive remnant, every musket, every ssed. The spectacle rid of what an army, and the force which free institutions, defence. While the k of society formed del and founded on reaker every year, the develop its strength, ing its antagonist, has navy rivalling that of owers, a full treasury, ple as undaunted as made the first eager

to GRANT will be fol- f JOHNSTON to SHER- diers which JOHNSTON dy departed for their Weldon, doubtless to ason, and Raleigh is dated. In the west done to complete the s is in the course of a siege of Mobile for the Federals, bama River Selma ar to have fallen son's cavalry, along the Confederate gene-

It is not premature, OLIN to express his and speedy peace. ne was undismayed f danger, he looks m, conscious of the but urging mode- y for success. Pre- ed a proud place in Republic distracted by he fruitful source of a- ury empty, and foreign take advantage of the

He has quelled the ry, built up the power that none dare ques- s now gladly hail him worthy head of a great years ago they could

A M E R I C A.

THE SURRENDER OF GENERAL LEE.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

NEW YORK, APRIL 11.

April 9 will for ever hereafter be a marked day in the history of the Republic, for it witnessed the surrender to General Grant of the Confederate army under General Robert E. Lee, which for nearly five years has stood as an impassable barrier between the Federal forces and the rebel capital. Such an event as this was very far from being generally anticipated. Even when I last wrote to you—no longer ago than April 8—the impression was general that if the Confederate army did not succeed in eluding pursuit it would avoid the humiliation of a formal surrender by breaking up the soldiers who composed it, finding temporary refuge in the mountains of South-West Virginia until a cessation of the pursuit should give them an opportunity to seek their homes. But even this method of mitigating the humiliation, which has so suddenly overtaken them, has been refused to the soldiers who have so long fought under General Lee. Their leader finding that Grant was hanging upon his rear, like a hound that had tasted blood, and would not cease pursuit until it had brought its victim to the ground; that Sheridan was cutting and slashing into the wasted ranks of his wearied soldiers at such a rate that no organized force would be left him after a few days, at last responded to General Grant's demand for a surrender. It is a noticeable fact, and one which will increase General Grant's reputation for candour and moderation in his official reports, that at the time he telegraphed Secretary Stanton, on March 8, from Farnville, twelve miles west of Burkesville, that he hoped soon to receive General Lee's surrender, at this very time he had in his possession Lee's first letter, intimating a willingness to institute negotiations. As the terms of this remarkable convention will have a permanent place in history I must put them on record here as follows:—

the offer contained in your letter of yesterday for that purpose.—Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"R. E. LEE, General.

"To Lieutenant-General Grant, Commanding United States' Army."

"GENERAL GRANT TO GENERAL LEE.

"April 9.

"General R. E. Lee, Commanding Confederate States' Army,—Your note of this day is but this moment, 11.50 a.m., received, in consequence of my having passed from the Richmond and Lynchburg-road to the Farmville and Lynchburg road, and am at this writing about four miles off Watter's Church, and will push forward to the front for the purpose of meeting you. Notice sent to me on the road where you wish the interview to take place will meet me.—Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"U. S. GRANT, Lieutenant-General."

THE TERMS.

Appomattox Court House, April 9, 1865.

General R. E. Lee, Commanding, C.S.A.:

"In accordance with the substance of my letters to you of the 8th inst., I propose to receive the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on the following terms, to wit:—

"Rolls of all the officers and men to be made in duplicate, one copy to be given to an officer designated by me, the other to be retained by such officers as you may designate.

"The officers to give their individual paroles not to take arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands.

"The arms, artillery, and public property to be parked and stacked and turned over to the officers appointed by me to receive them.

"This will not embrace the side-arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage.

"This done, each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their parole and the laws in force where they reside.—Very respectfully,

"U. S. GRANT, Lieut.-General."

THE SURRENDER.

Headquarters Army of Northern

Virginia, April 9, 1865.

"Lieutenant-General U. S. Grant, Commanding United States Army,

"General,—I have received your letter of this date containing the terms of surrender of the army of Northern Virginia, as proposed by you. As they are substantially the same as those expressed in your letter of the 8th inst., they are accepted. I will proceed to designate the proper officers to carry the stipulations into effect.—Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"R. E. LEE, General."

For such a termination as this to the long, the

*The news which Samuel Lucas never lived to see, published in his own newspaper eight days after his death – tidings of the end of the American Civil War with the surrender of the main Rebel army on April 9, 1865.*