

Abolitionism and African American Life in Amsterdam

A Tour of Green Hill Cemetery

Amsterdam, referred to by some as “the abolition hole,”¹ was a hotbed of activity in the anti-slavery movement that swept the country in the years leading up to the Civil War. Many of the local prominent residents participated in the cause to assist those seeking a life of freedom. The area’s black residents also participated in the fight to end slavery with the Civil War. A number of those participants, black and white, have their final resting place here at Green Hill Cemetery.



A. **Bruce Anderson (1845-1922)** [section #33] – Believed to have been born in Mexico, Bruce Anderson was one of the few African Americans to have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in the Civil War, participating in the assault on Fort Fisher in North Carolina. Julia Anderson (1858 - 1914), Bruce’s second wife, was descended from former slaves.

B. **Charles (?-1903) & John Caesar (1843-1906)** [section #SG635 & 637] – Longtime residents of Amsterdam who may have been descended from those who were locally held in slavery. The Caesar family attended the A.M.E. Zion Church on Cedar Street.



C. **Helen Blood (1830-1901) & Henry Blood (?-1876)** [section #SG606]

[section #SG156] – Longtime residents of Amsterdam. Henry may have been born into slavery



D. **Ellis Clizbe (1797-1878)** [section #2] – Abolitionist and lecturer; Member of the Eastern New York Anti-Slavery Society and founding member of the Amsterdam and Montgomery County Anti-Slavery Societies, Clizbe sheltered fugitive slaves at his Rockton farm. His views on slavery rooted in his Christian faith, Clizbe organized anti-slavery meetings across New York State.



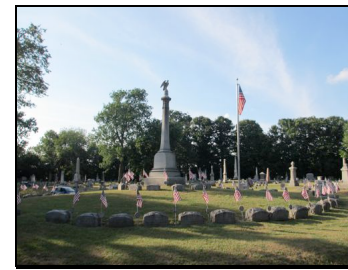
E. **Chandler Bartlett (1800-1884)** [section #3] – Abolitionist; operated a shoe store on Main Street in Amsterdam from 1820 until after 1870. Bartlett reportedly sheltered fugitive slaves in his store before sending them on their journey to freedom.

F. **George Washington J. Brownson (1800-1867)** [section # 3] – Prominent resident of Amsterdam; broom corn grower/manufacturer and “enthusiastic abolitionist” who assisted Chandler Bartlett with sending “freedom seekers” along to Canada



G. **John / James Dennis (1843-1914)** [Civil War Circle – section #6] – Born in Rockton, Dennis was likely a neighbor of Ellis Clizbe. He was a Civil War veteran of the 31st NY Regiment US Colored Troops and member of the E.S. Young Post Grand Army of the Republic

H. **Benjamin H. Dennis (1844-1872)** [Civil War Circle – section #6] – Born in Rock City section of Amsterdam, Dennis was likely a neighbor of Ellis Clizbe. He served as a Private in Co. I of the 31st NY Regt. of the US Colored Troops.



I. **Amos King (? -1908)** [Civil War Circle – section #6] – King settled in the North Bush section of the Town of Caroga in Fulton County before enlisting and serving in Co. G of the famed 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment where he fought valiantly in many battles including Olustee.

J. **James H. Bronson (1826-1909)** [section #8] – Broom manufacturer and member of Green Hill Cemetery Association board; abolitionist who helped to establish St. Paul’s A.M.E. Zion Church on Cedar Street near his home & place of business

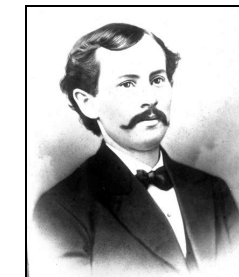
K. **Henry M. Neff (?-?)** [section #15] – Along with Ellis Clizbe and others, Neff signed an “Action on Slavery” in 1849 address to the Presbyterian Church refusing an ecclesiastical authority that allowed slaveholders as members



L. **John Kellogg (1826-1911)** [section #21] – Industrialist and prominent resident of Amsterdam, Kellogg was part of the movement for temperance reform and he may have been involved in anti-slavery activity at his home on Church Street, along with neighbor Chandler Bartlett.



M. **Betsy Reynolds Voorhees (1790-1858)** [section #28] – Abolitionist; Prominent Amsterdam resident who, while raising four sons, took an active role in social causes, including abolition.

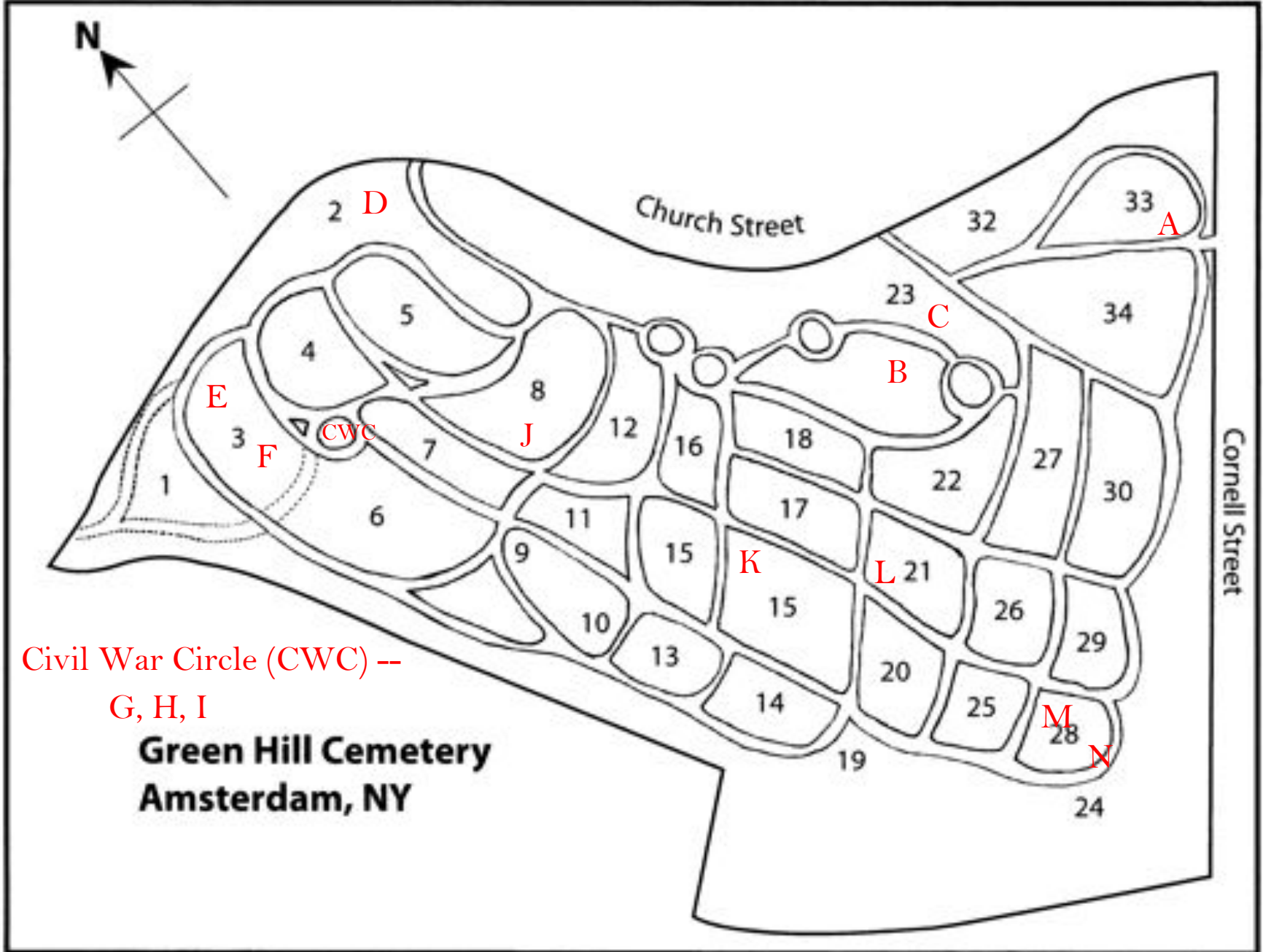


N. **John S. Maxwell (1845-1929)** [section #28] – Knitting mill manufacturer turned attorney and city judge, Maxwell, himself a Civil War veteran, filed for pensions for other local veterans of the Civil War including Bruce Anderson.

For more information on the Underground Railroad, Abolitionism and African American Life in Montgomery County project, please contact the Montgomery County Dept. of History & Archives
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https://www.co.montgomery.ny.us/sites/public/government/historian/Historian_Development/default.aspx

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¹ E.B.M., “Underground Railroad Again: Its Operations as Seen at Amsterdam, New York,” *Springfield Republican*, April 9, 1900



Civil War Circle (CWC) --
G, H, I

**Green Hill Cemetery
Amsterdam, NY**