

Grave Trippers: History at Our Feet

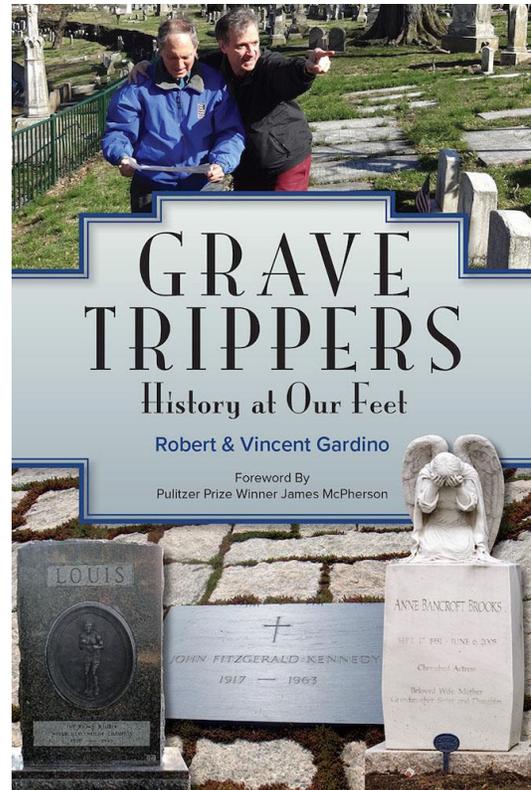
Robert and Vincent Gardino

Forward

James McPherson

Over a period of about a dozen years, my wife Pat and I toured most of the principal Civil War battlefields with the Gardino brothers and their friends Bob and Patrice Martin. As keen students of the American Civil War, we shared the conviction that the best way to learn about and understand those battles was to walk the ground and experience the terrain where they took place. This understanding concerned more than tactics and command decisions, though these things were important. Even more significant was the profound sense of empathy with the men who fought there, why they fought and how their experiences fit into the larger story of the war and its meaning in history. To walk these hallowed grounds connected us with the past through the “mystic chords of memory” that Abraham Lincoln invoked in his first inaugural address.

These emotions were reinforced by our walks through the soldiers’ cemeteries that are part of most Civil War battlefield parks. A poignant awareness of the sacrifice made by soldiers who gave, in Lincoln’s phrase, “the last full measure of devotion” to the cause for which they fought was overwhelming. Cemeteries provide an even more powerful sense of the connection between the present and the past, the living and the dead, than do battlefields, buildings, or any other part of the environment. This is true not only for soldiers who died in war but also for people in all walks of life—and



death. The mortal remains of those who have gone before us help us to comprehend how the world we live in came to be.

In this unique and fascinating book, Vincent and Robert Gardino tell the stories of 70 Americans buried in more than a dozen cemeteries, churches, and tombs in the United States. The lives of these men and women span almost three centuries of American history. Most of them were prominent, some famous; a few were humble and obscure, but their graves evoke uncommon points of interest. They include actors, writers, musicians, athletes, military heroes, politicians, and ten presidents of the United States plus Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The mini-biographies of these people offer important information and sometimes amusing sidelights on their careers. Collectively these biographies constitute a rich tapestry of American history. Many of the graves are adorned by elaborate tombstones or statuary that the Gardinos have photographed for inclusion as illustrations in this book. The authors have also provided precise directions to guide readers who wish to visit the graves themselves.

And if you become a grave tripper in the footsteps of the Gardino brothers, you may soon find your own way to many other graves in these and other cemeteries whose inhabitants' stories can enrich your awareness of those mystic chords of memory that connect the living to the dead. So, *Bon Voyage* for your trip into the past marked by stones of granite and marble.