Downham

Presbyterian Cemetery and Ivy Hill Cemetery · a mayor, a gold-rush 59er, and the Lee-Fendall House

Presbyterian Cemetery · Ivy Hill Cemetery · Context, or burial not confirmed

Family tree by Gravestone Stories · gravestonestories.com

Emanuel Ethelbert “E. E.” Downham

(Mar 23, 1839 – Sept 17, 1921) · born in Bridgeton, N.J.; orphaned, with the Lores, 1850
A “59er”: panned for gold at Golden and Russell Gulch, Colorado; worked for grain
broker John W. Casey in Pekin, Ill.; back in New Jersey by mid-1861 · did not enlist
First Alexandria record, Aug 1865: a license to sell wine and liquor
Common Council, 30 years; president of the Board of Aldermen; appointed **mayor** on
John B. Smoot’s death, then elected in 1888 · WWI draft board; city electoral board
Past master, Andrew Jackson Lodge; past eminent commander, Old Dominion Commandery;
Acca Temple representative 23 years · president, Friendship Veterans Fire Assn.
and German Co-operative Building Assn. · died at home, 411 N. Washington St.
Burial: *Presbyterian Cemetery, 25:22, with full Masonic honors*

Married

Sarah Miranda Price Downham

(Apr 2, 1845 – Nov 10, 1937) · born in Alexandria
Daughter of Alexandria merchant George Price
Six children; five grew up
Burial: *Presbyterian Cemetery, 25:22*

E. E.’s parents: Downham family records name his father as Emanuel; the family suspects his mother was the Eleanor listed in Downe Township, N.J., in the 1840 census. When he married, he named Richard and Sina Downam of Newport, Downe Township, as his parents; the family believes they were his grandparents.

Harry Downham

Henry A. (1867 – 1918)
Bookkeeper for his father
Hydraulion Fire Co.;
president, Alexandria
Fire Wardens
m. Dec 18, 1888
Burial: *Presbyterian, 25:21*

Frank Downham

Emanuel Francis (1869 – 1950)
Bookkeeper, then agent, for the
Robert Portner Brewing Co., from
1889 until Prohibition
m. Esther Madeline Benson; St. Mary’s
Died suddenly in Dearborn, Mich.
Burial: *Presbyterian Cemetery,*
Border (41 West), 213, with Esther

Horace

(1871 – 1872)
Third son;
died in infancy
Burial: *25:21*

Horace English Downham

(1874 – 1902)
Named for the brother who died
To the silver and lead mines
near Villa Ahumada, Chihuahua,
Mexico, 1896; later a clerk
for his father
Burial: *Presbyterian Cemetery, 25:21*

Sarah Maude Downham Aitcheson

(1877 – 1964)
Miss Baird’s Home School for Girls, Norwalk, Conn.
m. Benjamin Meknew Aitcheson, head of the pattern
shop at the Washington Navy Yard, Apr 29, 1907
Lived at 411 N. Washington St.; her school photograph
hangs in the Lee-Fendall House’s southwest bedroom
Burial: *Presbyterian Cemetery, 25:22*

Frank and Esther’s children

E. E. “Bert” (May 12, 1896 – Sept 30, 1941),
St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery
George Francis (July 9, 1898 – Nov 7, 1975),
Ivy Hill Cemetery, O-271-5
Esther M. (1900), an infant; Presbyterian
Cemetery, Border (41 West), 213, with her parents
Lawrence Purvis (Sept 30, 1901 – May 23, 1990),
St. John the Evangelist Cemetery, Hydes, Md.

Mai Greenwell Downham

Mary Regina (May 23, 1878 – Aug 10, 1959)
Trained voice teacher; toured in
musicals and operettas; sang with the
Sharps and Flats; Christ Church soloist
Daughter of William Henry Greenwell
(d. 1907) and Mary Teresa Bradley
(c. 1840 – 1925), both at St. Mary’s
Catholic Cemetery; niece of Joseph A. Bradley
Sister: Annie Laurie “Lottie”
Greenwell (1876 – 1961), Ivy Hill
Burial: *Ivy Hill, with Robert*

Married

Robert Forsythe “Bob” Downham

(Mar 2, 1876 – 1956)
Liquor business with his father until Virginia’s
Prohibition; then a clothier at Pitt and King; grocer, realtor
Bought the Lee-Fendall House from the Fleming
heirs, Oct 30, 1903, for $5,500; added its first
bathrooms, shingles and an oil furnace
Hosted President Wilson at the 1914 Washington
Birthday Parade, with drinks from the basement
President, Friendship Fire Co., 1903; City Council, 1920
Shriner, Knight Templar; raised funds for the Masonic Memorial
Burial: *Ivy Hill Cemetery, Section R, Lot 60*

The Lee-Fendall House line: built by Philip Richard Fendall I in 1785; home to Lees and to Louis Cazenove’s family; bought by the Flemings in 1870 (see the Fendall, Lee, Cazenove and Fleming trees). Myra Civalier, a Fleming niece, urged Mai to acquire it, and Robert offered to buy the house if Mai would marry him. About 1931 they moved to Oronoco and St. Asaph Streets and leased the house out until it was sold in 1937.