

“Grave Matters”

Historic Oakwood Cemetery

Preservation Association

Syracuse, New York

Fall, 2018 Volume 26, Number 2

President's Message ...



... **Connie Palumb**

We are saddened to say good bye to long serving Board member, Mary Iversen. For decades Mary has served as our historian, recording secretary, tour guide and gardener. Many thanks to you, Mary, for many years of dedicated service to Oakwood as well as to the Syracuse community.

As we say adieu to Mary, we welcome David Haas as our newest Board member. David was born and raised in the city of Syracuse, living in the Eastwood neighborhood, an area he continues to call home. He graduated from Bishop Grimes High School before completing undergraduate and graduate degrees at SUNY Oswego and SUNY Cortland. David owns and operates the popular Instagram account, @SyracuseHistory. There he shares stories of our city's past in an effort to unlock mystery and evoke pride in Syracuse. His account has been featured in various media outlets and garnered several local awards including: "Best Blog," and

"Best Use of Social Media by an Individual." He also contributes articles to the *Syracuse New Times*. Most recently, *The Post-Standard* named David as one of Syracuse's leading innovators.

We are thrilled to have David bring his aptitude for storytelling and penchant for engaging the community to the team. He can be reached via email at: davidhaaswmw@gmail.com.

I'd like to take a moment to show my appreciation to all of our HOCPA Board Members. They are a devoted group, each with their own special talents. Collectively they work dozens of volunteer hours each year without complaint. Together with volunteer groups from the community, they have accomplished so much in so many areas of Oakwood Cemetery.

Last, let me again thank all of you for your enthusiastic support through your attendance at tours...(including off-site virtual tours offered by Sue Greenhagen) and your continued generous financial donations. We appreciate you!

Editor's Notes ...

... **Sue Greenhagen**

I've seen the first snowflakes out here in Morrisville (aka "higher elevation"). That can mean only one thing - time to start planning for next year. That means putting together five Sunday tours and doing all the research necessary. So far we've been thinking about a tour of the Civil War veterans section for May, Section 66 for June, Section 51 for July, the 40s on the hill for August, and our annual nature walk in September. Nothing is written in stone (pun intended).

There are many things that need to be continued. We are working on the stabilization of Silsbee Chapel. Built in 1879, the chapel has had to deal not only with age but with vandals who have repeatedly broken in and done damage, not to mention the detestable act of spray-painting graffiti on the building.

We are collaborating with numerous organizations: ESF, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Cornell Cooperative Extension, to name just a few. Oakwood is a community treasure, and the work that these groups do makes it even more so. The coming year will see these folks out and about, cleaning, clearing, planting. We are so grateful to them.

The next time you're in Dedication Valley, check out the new kiosk. HOCPA worked with the Boy Scouts to create it for trail maps, schedules and general information.

Another on-going project is cutting saplings that are growing out of the mausoleums. A little twig, if allowed to grow into a tree, will crack the masonry of the structure. These old buildings have enough issues without unwanted twigs/trees cracking them.

Well, as certain baseball teams are fond of saying, "Wait til next year." Can't wait...



The Lincoln Connection in Oakwood ...

... by Diane Medvitz

Circumstances have tied three men in Section 6 to the same incident – the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

Charles Hyde (1849-1928) was a young man in the naval reserves during the Civil War. On the fateful night he was one of the guards at Ford's Theater when Abraham Lincoln was shot. Hyde's brother William was shot to death on a box car travelling with a companion in 1876. He was a foreman at a lumber mill in Syracuse prior to his death.

Clarence Bolton (1846-1925) was a telegraph operator at Acme Oil Company in Baltimore. He was one of the first to receive a wire telling of the assassination of Lincoln. He was an employee of the T. M. Gafney Printing Company on Fayette Street prior to his death.



John Holland Brown (1830-1908) served for three years in Company E, 149th NY Volunteers, was wounded at the Battle of Peach Tree Creek and given an honorable discharge. He returned to Syracuse and his job as an employee of New York Central railroad. Prior to the war he drove Lincoln's inauguration train and as a special honor he was chosen, in 1865, as the engineer of the train carrying the body of President Lincoln from Syracuse and Rochester. He often told of this honor with great pride.

Although it is not known if these men were acquainted in life, in death they are buried in the same section. John Brown is the only one with a marker.

Tours by Appointment ...



These tours were popular again this year. We welcomed Melissa Chessher's writing class from S.U., and the Wolfe Travel Club. An enthusiastic group from the Central NY Library Resources Council posed for a group picture at the Haggerty Lion (left). An Honors class from S.U. was surprised to be greeted by tour guide Austin K. Hoyt, a 19th century Syracuse undertaker (aka Sue Greenhagen). Hoyt is seen telling the students about his good friend, Amos Granger in Section 3 (right).



If your group is interested in a walking tour, contact Sue Greenhagen at: greenhsh@morrisville.edu



Research Tips. ...

There are a couple of websites that are invaluable for folks doing cemetery research. Some have been mentioned before, but are worth mentioning again. For research here at Oakwood Cemetery, go to this URL: <http://www.nortonresearch.com/CemLists/Oakwood.pdf>. This is an online roster of our "residents.". The names are alphabetical with section, lot, date of death and interment number. Equally invaluable is www.findagrave.com. The volunteers, including HOCPA board member Diane Medvitz, have done remarkable work getting Oakwood into the Findagrave database. This site provides date of birth and place (if known), date of death and place, section, lot, and also pictures of headstones, and even a portrait of the subject if available.

Another site we can't live without is www.fultonhistory.com. You can search newspapers from all over New York State well back into the nineteenth century. Tom Tryniski, the webmaster, is constantly adding newspapers. He has also provided a link to his help and FAQ pages. A quick and easy search is usually "jeremy jackson" 1912 . Put the name in quotation marks, add the date, or other key words. One of the issues with fultonhistory, however, is sometimes it's really slow, or just plain down. To see if the site is down, try going to www.isitdownrightnow.com and type in fultonhistory.com or the URL of any site that is not loading and it will tell you if it's the website or a problem with your connection.

An inflation calculator can be useful when a newspaper clipping mentions the value of an estate, or the price of a monument at a particular time. Go to <https://westegg.com/inflation/> . Sometimes we want to know on what day of the week a particular event happened. A good perpetual calendar can be found at: <https://www.infoplease.com/calendar>.

If you have any "must have" websites for research, let us know. Email Sue Greenhagen at greenhsh@morrisville.edu .



1918 in Oakwood

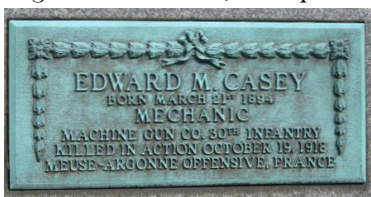
It was quite a year, that 1918. The threads of history became so entangled that it was hard to tell when one event ended and another began. Chronology fails as events intertwine. Merit cannot justify one event being more important than another. Yet, all along the way, Oakwood Cemetery leads us from one story to the next. Local newspapers provided the headlines of events, but numerous Syracusans resting in Oakwood can tell us the rest of the story...

Anna M. Whittic (6 September 1874 - 24 January 1947). In 1918, women were able to vote for the first time. November would bring the hotly contested gubernatorial campaign between Governor Charles Whitman and Democratic challenger, Alfred E. Smith. On April 6, 40,000 women registered to vote in Syracuse, including activist Anna Whittic.¹ Anna would not have to wait, however, until November to strike a blow for women's rights. Syracuse women got to cast their very first ballot in a state-wide "local option vote" on April 17. The issue? Prohibition. There were four questions to be decided. The first was whether liquor could be consumed on the premises where sold. The other three were variations including whether a pharmacist could sell liquor with a physician's perscription. Despite a last minute visit by evangelist Billy Sunday who railed against the evils of alcohol, the "wets" won the day in Syracuse by over 11,000 votes.²



Anna Whittic no doubt voted in that April election and again in November. Al Smith was elected governor in the first election for state-wide office in which women could vote. Throughout her life Anna pushed for women's rights. She became Speaker of the Syracuse Women's Congress, a member of the National Women's Party, and in 1928 was the chair of the New York branch of the National Women's Party.³ She spoke frequently before the New York State legislature, advocating for the right of women to serve on juries, for labor unions to end discrimination against women, and for men to be equally guilty in prostitution cases.⁴ As late as 1944, three years before her death, she wrote a letter to the editor of the *Syracuse Herald Journal* dated January 3 advocating for an Equal Rights amendment to the Constitution. In closing her letter she said, "Women throughout the country may be relied upon to bombard House representatives with a call to bestir themselves and register their signatures in furtherance of this timely, merited and just legislation." Anna Whittic is buried in Section 15, Lot 6.

The year 1918 was dominated by newspaper coverage of the Great War, the "war to end all wars," World War I. It was front page news day after day. However, you had to look a few pages into the paper to find the true story of what war meant to the families of central New York. There would be found the notices of those who died of disease or of wounds received in battle. One of those notices was for **Edward M. Casey (21 March 1894 - 19 October 1918)**. Casey was wounded severely in the head on October 9 while engaged in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the operation that brought about the end of the war. His wife of just 14 months, Viola, received a letter from Captain R.S. Mitler, detailing the circumstances of Casey's death.⁵ The medical officer wrote, "I am taking a moment to write you of the passing of your very heroic husband this morning at 7 o'clock, October 19, 1918. He was seriously wounded early last week and was speeded to my ward Oct. 11...He was so handsome and cheerful that I loved him from the first and used to sit by him whenever I had any time. He spoke so wonderfully of you...I hope this may be a little comfort to you." Casey was a mechanic in the machine gun company of the 30th Infantry when he was wounded. He was buried in a military cemetery in France, but was removed back to Syracuse in January of 1921.⁶ He is buried in Section 67, Lot 132 of Oakwood Cemetery.





Disease was the other great killer during the year 1918, especially the Spanish Influenza. The story of **George F. Sharp (1884 - 1 October 1918)** is particularly poignant. After trying to enlist twice in the U.S. Army, but turned away because of a hand injury received during service in the Spanish American War, Sharp traveled to Canada and enlisted in the Canadian Railway Troops.⁷ On the eve of his departure for the European theatre, he was struck down by the Spanish flu. The *Syracuse Herald* of 7 October reported that among his effects was a piece of paper with a poem written on it called "Good Old Syracuse:"

I heard the thundering of the guns
 And saw the battle's glare;
 I saw the horde of murdering Huns
 Burning, pillaging everywhere.
 People crazed with war's alarms;
 Murdered children strewed the
 ground;
 Houses wrecked and burned out farms
 Where ravished women oft were
 found.
 Men I knew were fighting there,
 Fighting for the right to live.
 America's sons were everywhere
 Giving all they had to give.
 'Twas then I thought of old Syracuse
 And happy days that used to be,
 When with the Herald and a pipe
 That would comfort me.
 I nevermore may pass that way,
 To feel the friendly clasp of hand;
 For long before my soldier day
 I'd settled in another land.
 But still my thoughts must ever be
 With days I spent in boyhood there.
 And all the boys so dear to me
 That now are scattered everywhere.
 In other lands my feet may tread;
 Oh! it will be no use,
 For everywhere I lay my head
 I dream of Syracuse.

George Sharp dreamed of Syracuse. He is buried in Section G-2, Section 132.

The year 1918 was the year of the Spanish Influenza, and Syracuse was particularly hard hit. The epicenter of the epidemic was Camp Syracuse, located at the State Fairgrounds and which housed 12,000 soldiers.⁸ Many of the soldiers were from Massachusetts, Boston being a main port where returning soldiers debarked. As the flu gained a foothold at the camp in September, a decision was made to transfer sick soldiers to city hospitals rather than quarantine them at the camp. Many medical personnel were overseas, and hospitals found themselves short-staffed. The flu quickly spread through the hospitals to the general population. By October 4, Syracuse had 8,000 reported cases. By the end of the epidemic, it is estimated that almost 1000 Syracusans had died. The mayor, Walter Stone, imposed a quarantine on the city starting on October 7. No school, no church services, no movies, no public gatherings. The time passed slowly, especially for children. When the quarantine was finally lifted on October 25,¹¹ a nine year-old youngster named **Theodore Schoen (9 September 1909 - 25 October 1918)** was ready to let off steam outdoors, with his friends.⁹ He went to his grandmother's and played with his cousins for a while. He was headed back home down Tallman Street with some friends when the group spied a chicken running loose. They chased the bird which ran into the J.B. Caldwell Lumber yard.¹⁰ The chicken raced around the yard and finally perched itself on top of a large pile of lumber about 15 feet high. Not deterred the boys began to climb the pile. Two made it to the top, and "Ted" was about eight feet from the ground when the pile gave way. Ted Schoen was crushed under the falling lumber, receiving a fractured skull and internal injuries. The Spanish flu had indirectly claimed another victim. Theodore Schoen is buried in Section 60, Lot 14.



The Spanish Influenza of 1918 killed almost 700,000 Americans. The toll world-wide was between 20 and 50 million. We often think of the flu attacking the very young and the very old, but the Spanish Influenza was different. This flu had a high mortality in adults from 18 to 45.¹² In 1918 there were three waves of this pandemic, the worst occurring in September and October. It was in September that a young woman named **Cordelia Dana Jannaris (26 February 1893 - 29 September 1918)** was well on her way to a career as an opera singer. She had attended the prestigious Burlingame-Goodyear School, then



went on to study music at Syracuse University.¹³ She traveled with stage and film star Kitty Gordon, to learn the craft of stage performances. By 1913 Cordelia was in California and had entered the world of professional opera. In January of 1914 she made her first professional appearance in Syracuse on a visit home.¹⁴ In 1917, Cordelia signed with the Chicago Opera Company and moved to Chicago. The career she worked so hard for, however, was not to be. On 29 September 1918, Cordelia Dana Jannaris, age 27, succumbed to the Spanish Influenza. She is buried in Section 22, Lot 23.

As if war and pestilence weren't enough for the year 1918, a disaster occurred on the night of July 2 that literally shook the community to its foundation. Since 1915 the quarry at Split Rock in the Town of Onondaga had been used as a munitions factory to aid the war effort. On the evening of July 2, at about 8:45, a fire broke out in the plant. Employees and then firemen rushed in to douse the flames. At 9:30 a storehouse of TNT exploded.¹⁵ The following day news of the disaster was in newspapers across the nation. By July 30, the coroner put the death toll officially at fifty.¹⁶ Among the dead was a 21 year-old chemist who worked for Semet-Solvay named **Laverne C. Gibson, Sr. (27 April 1897 – 2 July 1918)**. He had attended Syracuse University, and was married in February, 1918. He and his wife, Geraldine, were expecting their first child in November. Their son (shown at left), **Laverne C. Gibson, Jr. (8 November 1918 – 25 June 1936)** never knew his father. A bright lad, he graduated from Marcellus High School in June of 1936.¹⁷ The boy, however, had developed a blood disease, and was a patient at University Hospital when the school principal delivered his diploma to him on Wednesday, June 24. The next day Laverne, Jr., died at the age of 17. He and his father are buried in Section G-1, Lot 126.



Mercifully, the year 1918 eventually came to an end, and all those threads, Anna, Edward, George, little Ted, Cordelia, Laverne Senior and Junior, managed to weave themselves into the fabric of our history. Rest in peace, my friends, in Oakwood Cemetery.

1918 in Oakwood: footnotes

- ¹ "40,000 Women in Syracuse Register," *Syracuse Herald*, April 7, 1918.
- ² "Final Tabulation Gives 'Wet' Majority of 11,508," *Syracuse Herald*, April 18, 1918.
- ³ "Mrs. Whittic, Feminist, Dies," *Tarrytown Daily News*, January 27, 1947.
- ⁴ "Let Wives Vote From Own Residences," *Syracuse Journal*, January 26, 1928.
- ⁶ "Military Funeral Held for Private E.M. Casey," *Syracuse Journal*, January 14, 1921.
- ⁷ "Private Sharp Leaves a Poem for Syracuse," *Syracuse Herald*, October 7, 1918.
- ⁸ Croyle, Jonathan, "1918: the Flu in a 'Silent City,'" *Post-Standard*, (Syracuse, NY), February 1, 2018.
- ⁹ "Death Claims Boy Hurt When Lumber Topples," *Syracuse Journal*, October 26, 1918.
- ¹⁰ "Fatally Hurt Under Falling Pile of Lumber," *Syracuse Herald*, October 27, 1918.
- ¹¹ "Influenza Quarantine to be Lifted Friday," *Syracuse Herald*, October 23, 1918.
- ¹² Taubenberger, J. K., & Morens, D. M. (2006). "1918 Influenza: the Mother of All Pandemics." *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 12(1), 15–22. <http://doi.org/10.3201/eid1201.050979>
- ¹³ "Miss Jannaris, 27, is Victim of Influenza," *Post-Standard*, (Syracuse, NY), October 1, 1918.
- ¹⁴ "Miss Jannaris to Make First Home Appearance," *Post-Standard*, (Syracuse, NY), January 8, 1914.
- ¹⁵ "Devastation Following Fire and Explosion at Great TNT Plant at Split Rock," *Syracuse Herald*, July 3, 1918.
- ¹⁶ "Death Toll at Split Rock Fixed at 50," *Syracuse Herald*, July 30, 1918.
- ¹⁷ "Marcellus Student, 17, Dies of Blood Disease," *Syracuse Journal*, June 26, 1936.

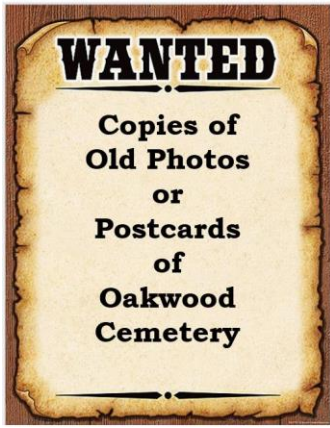
SUNY/ESF Students Strike Again!

Not a month after their first big Cemetery cleanup of the Fall, they were back again. On September 22nd a worthy group (shown at right) grabbed the tools and went to work. Clearing a group of graves that have been covered by brush for at least fifty years, they uncovered sad and sweet stories from the past and discovered in themselves the real joy that such an effort contains. At the end? They spent a half hour selecting their next goal. What a job these students did and will continue to do. If your youth, adult service or family group would like to come help, we provide tools, refreshments and a free tour of the old Chapel complete with ghost stories. Contact Paul Harvey at luludoodah@aol.com.

... Paul Harvey



HOCPA is looking for copies of any old images of the cemetery. They could be photographs, slides, or old postcards. It's one thing to read about the past, but another to actually see it. For example, we have talked about the old main entrance to Oakwood on the west side of the cemetery. Yes, you can see the very top of it driving on Route 81. Well, what did it really look like? This postcard (right) shows the original entrance as it looked around 1900. So, does "old" mean a hundred years ago, one hundred fifty? Not necessarily. Because Oakwood is constantly changing due to Mother Nature, vandalism, wear and tear, or just unforeseen events, all images are valuable. For example, the Labor Day Storm of 1998 certainly changed the look of Oakwood. Having pictures from pre-1998 to compare with the damage done by the storm is an important archival resource. As HOCPA strives to preserve Oakwood as it was, we rely on those old (however old) images. If you can contribute to our archives, contact Connie Palumb at cspalumb@hotmail.com.



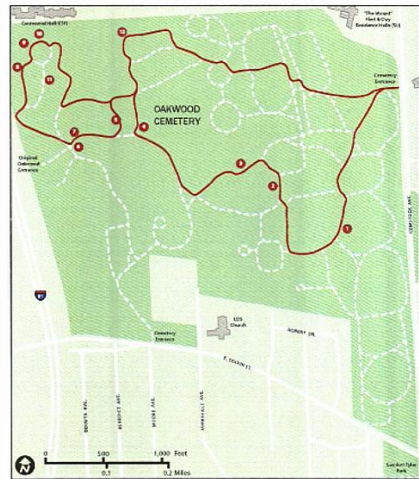
Our Summer Walking Tours...

We are pleased to let everyone know that a total of 200 folks attended our Sunday walking tours this past summer. Since we've been keeping records from 2012, that's the best total except for 2017 when we had 201. The weather cooperated, although at times a bit warm. Luckily, Oakwood provides plenty of trees which gave us shade to duck in to. From our May tour with Don Leopold to our September "Ramble" with Karl Orlick, a good time was had by all. And we can't forget Diane Medvitz introducing us to some of the folks in Section 17 (picture at left). We thank all who turned out for our monthly events.



Ghost Walk Trail ...

It's that time of year. The ghosts and goblins are on the prowl, maybe right in Oakwood Cemetery. Go on the Ghost Walk and who knows what you will see. Perhaps you'll see the Hermit that haunts the Haggerty Lion. Maybe you'll hear a drum roll in the Civil War veterans' plot. Will Civil War soldiers come out to call General Sumner back from the dead? Look, can that be him? Take a stroll in Oakwood and be prepared to be scared.



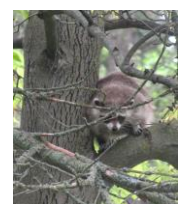
Created by Syracuse Community Geography
Last Updated: December 2016

The trail was developed in the Fall of 2016 with the help of past and present ESF, LeMoyne and SU students and staff. Community member Paul Harvey compiled the stories, legends and historical records to make a truly spooky collection of supernatural happenings. Working with Syracuse Community Geography and ESF students, the Oakwood Ghost Trail took form and was mapped as a two-mile walking route. Enjoy the remarkable beauty of Oakwood Cemetery as you walk the trail; and watch out for ghosts! If you know of something spooky or have experienced a paranormal event along the trail, contact Paul Harvey at luludoodah@aol.com. For more info on the Trail, contact Paul.



Goin' Wild in Oakwood ...

While you're watching out for ghosts and goblins, notice the wildlife that calls Oakwood home. Here are three of our living residents - a deer, a hawk, and a raccoon. What have you seen lately?



HOCPA Donors as of Fall, 2018

We are most grateful to all our donors for their continued interest and support.

Charles Amos, John & Katherine Auwaerter, Elisabeth Barker, Constance Barrett, J. Thomas & Silvia Bassett, Sherene Baugher, Augusta Baum, David & Elisabeth Beebe, Carol Biesmeyer, William & Katherine Billingham, Peter & Lida Black, Robert & Susan Boland, June Bomberger, Richard Bowman, Maxwell Brace III, Barbara Brown, Robert & Kathleen Brown, Mary Buckley, Michael Burns, Joseph & Marcia Caldwell, Laurie Chase, Stephen & Ann Chase, Jeffrey Comanici, Dennis & Amy Connors, Sharon Coulter, Joan Cregg, George Curry, Linda DeStefano, Eloise Diamond, Florence Douque, Rita Ann Downing, Mary Dunn, Elaine Easton, Rebecca Eiholzer, John & Anne Endries, Peter Erichsen, Susan Estabrook, Malcolm & Karen Fekete, Patricia Ferguson, Donna Fifield, P.B. Price Gardner, Kathryn Gemmill, Margaret-Rose Gioia, Elizabeth Glass, William Goodwin, Judith Grabau, Sue Greenhagen, Jeanne Greenhalgh, Gary Greenough, Amy Hamilton, Wendy Happek, Mary Louise Hartenstein, Paul Harvey, Margaret Hastings, Ruth Hotaling, Christian Huddleston, Kristen Hulbert, Mary Iversen, Marla Jabbour, Barbara Johnson, Allyn & Sue Jones, Clyde & Susan Jones, Paul Kalska, Anne Kemper, Anne King, Russell & Joan King, Joan Kitromilis, Carolyn Lawless, Gelene Lewis, Greg Lewis, William Little, Laura Lindhome, Alan & Joyce Lock, Thomas Long, Eugene & Christine Lozner, Coy Ludwig, Alison Mactavish, Gerald Mager, Cynthia Mahoney, June Mann, John & Rebecca Mannion, John & Candace Marsellus, Wallace McDonald, Terence & Laura McSweeney, Diane Medvitz, Merle Melvin, John & Penny Mercer, Eileen Miller, Thayer Miller, John & Shirley Mills, Francis & Alice Morigi, Elisabeth Murray, Jean Murray, Letty Murray, Patricia Musengo, Rick Naylor, Jon & Jane Nelson, Linda Nolle, Judith Oplinger, Timothy & JoDean Orcutt, Karl Orlick, Andrea Oshea, Connie Palumb, David Palumb, Frederick & Virginia Parker, Haden Patten, Dorothy Pease, Michael & Marny Peterson, Susan Pope-Millet, Carol Porter, Mr. & Mrs. William Porter, Trina Powers, William Racey, Lisle Rath, Dale Rees, David & Linda Rezak, William Rezak, Karen Richards, Barbara Rivette, Nicholas Rizzo, David Robinson, George & Doris Rodormer, Robert & Nanette Rodormer, Patrick Rummel, Gary Russell, William Saar, Robert & Tonia Salisbury, Arlene Simms, Gary Smith, Daniel & Nancy Smothergill, William & Lillian Smyser, James & Barbara Snell, Robert & Helen Stanton, James Stathes, Gregory Stauf, Jamieson Steele, Nancy Stewart, Paul & Olga Suholet, Peter & Martha Thompson, Neil & Suzanne Thornton, Doreen Todorov, Cynthia Tracy, Greg Tripoli, Susan Vanmaarseveen, Paul & Clara Votra, Maritia Walper, Peter & Cheryl Ward, James & Marcia Wooster, Joanne Zinsmeister-Yarwood. Other donations: Samuel Gruber in memory of Judith Meighan, Dewitt Community Church Women’s Association, Onondaga Historical Association, NYS Library Assistants’ Association, Syracuse Home Foundation.

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Donations are deductible to the fullest extent of the law.
Please make checks payable to **HOCPA**, and mail to:

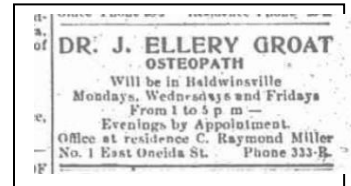
HOCPA, PO BOX 15065, Syracuse NY 13215

Oakwood All-Star ...

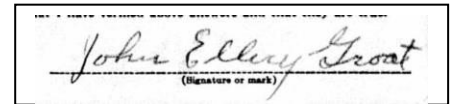
... John Ellery Groat, M.D. (1890 - 1918)



John Ellery Groat was born on 29 May 1890 in Amsterdam, NY. His family moved to Syracuse and John graduated from Central High School and then entered Syracuse University for one year. He made quite a reputation for himself due to his athletic ability. His goal, however, was medicine, so he enrolled in the Philadelphia School of Osteopathy where he graduated in 1914. He began to practice in Syracuse although he had patients in Baldwinsville as well. In early 1918 he became engaged to Helen Purtell. Duty called and Dr. Groat enlisted in March, 1918. He was a Seaman Second Class in the U.S. Naval Reserve. His first stop was the Naval Training Camp at Pelham Bay Park where he was for three months. By the beginning of July he was assigned to the Naval Base Hospital in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. This hospital had a capacity for 3,000 patients, and by September, 1918, many were down with the Spanish Influenza. On the 29th of September, Dr. Groat died of pneumonia caused by the influenza. He was 28 years old. We don't know what he might have done with his life, his work, his accomplishments, his discoveries. It all ended with the influenza. He had plans to marry his fiancée after the war. Helen never married and died in December of 1975.



We are fortunate to have a second portrait of him. On his draft registration card he is described as short, medium build, dark blue eyes, and black hair. He had pretty good handwriting for a doctor, as his signature shows. He never got into the fighting "over there," but battled as deadly an enemy at home - the influenza. He was at his post, caring for the sick, but influenza knew no bounds, and he was struck down. We thank you, John Ellery Groat, M.D.,



for your service and for your ultimate sacrifice.



address correction requested

H.O.C.P.A.
PO Box 15065
Syracuse, NY 13215