



“Grave Matters”

Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association
Fall, 2015 Volume 23, Number 2

President's Message ...

As we approach the holiday season, I want to update you on HOCPA's busy fall schedule. For a small organization, we certainly have been very active.

In September we honored our own Letty Murray in a special way. Sue Greenhagen led another large group on the last cemetery tour of the summer season. All of the 2015 tours have been great fun and well attended, as usual. Sue will continue to be giving private tours by request as well as her "virtual" tour presentations which have become very popular. Tom Viau and Co. completed their repairs of the *porte cochere* support structure at Silsbee Chapel.

October brought a cadre of SUNY-ESF students to volunteer for a day of community service. It's always a joy to host these young, optimistic and diligent volunteers.

I'd like to thank each of you personally for your continued support which enables HOCPA to accomplish the important work of restoration to various historic structures throughout Oakwood Cemetery.

... Connie Palumb

Letty Murray's Garden Party

On September 16th we celebrated our long time HOCPA Board member, Letty Murray. She was a founding member of our group who truly was a guiding light in our organization. Under her leadership, Oakwood Cemetery became a Smithsonian Registered Landmark. Letty was always actively seeking new fund raising ideas so we could continue to forge ahead with our mission.

Fortuitously, the day was bright and sunny as we gathered with Letty and her family at Silsbee Chapel. Thirty of her friends and family were there to dedicate the chapel garden in her honor. In the garden, which was still colorful with summer flowers, there is a lovely bronze plaque which states: "Letty's Garden honoring Letty Meachem Murray; inspiration and guiding light for the Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association." Several past and present board members along with George Curry, Distinguished Professor Emeritus SUNY-ESF, spoke of Letty's accomplishments and dedication. It was a perfect afternoon and I know Letty enjoyed seeing all of her good friends.



Letty's Bronze Plaque



Letty with her son, David, her daughter-in-law, Pat, her granddaughter, Jen, and her great granddaughter, Tessa

Viau Family Honored Through Anonymous Gift

Recently the repair work was completed on the *porte cochere* at Silsbee Chapel by the Viau family company which is the premier provider of brick and stone restoration in Central New York. Dick and Tom Viau along with the third generation (grandsons Tim and Bob), carry on the tradition of family artisans which was started by Dick's great grandfather, French Canadian immigrant, William Viau. They have always made themselves available to us for jobs large and small.

HOCPA has recently received a very generous anonymous gift directed to the Silsbee Chapel restoration fund. Specifically, our benefactor wishes to celebrate the Viau family for their dedication to being skilled artisans as they work diligently to restore many community treasures often under the most challenging conditions. We at HOCPA join our donor in appreciation for their integrity and fine workmanship.



Tim, Dick, Bob and Tom Viau
photo by David Lassman, *Syracuse Post-Standard*

SUNY-ESF Volunteers



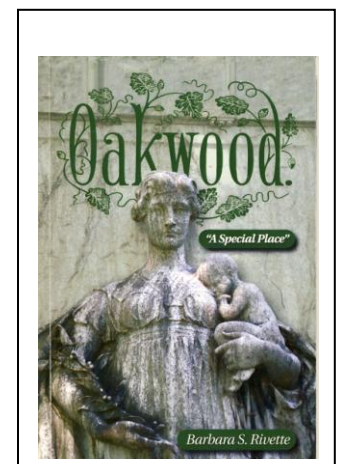
Karl Orlick (2d from right) and our volunteers from ESF.

October 17th dawned a windy, chilly day at Oakwood. However, the six students who appeared at 9 AM were undaunted and eager to begin working inside Silsbee Chapel. As many of you are aware, the interior of the structure has been a formidable disaster. By days end, it was transformed by these hard working volunteers into a manageable mess! They stacked hundreds of antique bricks by hand (as they must be preserved for use in proper restoration) and completely filled an entire pick up truck with debris. Karl Orlick rigged lights from a car battery along with a couple of Dietz lanterns so we could see as there is limited natural interior light. Even when the battery light began to fade, they were still working enthusiastically. Some were ready to come back another day to fulfill their volunteer commitment. We are exceedingly grateful to these hard working, optimistic young students for their diligence and dedication.

What's New...

Just when you think we can't come up with anything new, we do! HOCPA now has "ocean blue" mugs available for the bargain price of \$7. They are one more item that we are offering to our fellow cemetery afficianatos. We still have copies of *Oakwood: a Special Place* written by Manlius Town Historian, Barbara Rivette. In fact, *A Special Place* is now in its second printing. Both of these items are available from Connie Palumb. Contact her at (315) 446-3570. The book is only \$20, and both items would make great holiday gifts.

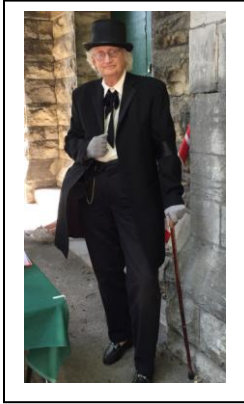
Fundraising is such an important part of preservation, and it's an important facet of getting work done on Silsbee Chapel. The Chapel was built in 1879, twenty years after the Cemetery was established. Designed by Joseph Lyman Silsbee, it was constructed of Onondaga limestone. However, the past one hundred and thirty six years have taken their toll on the building. We've raised funds to have work done on the *port cochere*, the corners of which were starting to crumble. Now we look to the interior. Our ESF volunteers helped but there is so much more to do if we ever hope to be able to allow tour groups to actually enter the main area of the Chapel. Please think about helping us out by purchasing a mug (or two), a book, making a donation or becoming a member of HOCPA. We need you.



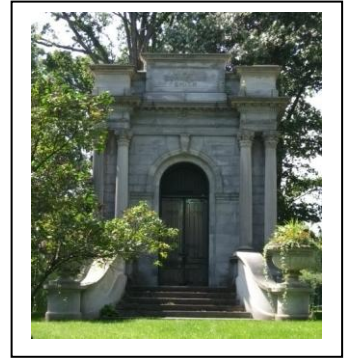
Tours, Tours and More Tours!

Tours of historic cemeteries are becoming increasingly popular around central New York, and Oakwood Cemetery is leading the way. Not only do we have a summer schedule of Sunday tours, but we offer “tours by appointment” as well. And then there’s the “virtual tours.” Here’s a rundown:

Our summer schedule was very successful. We started off in May with George Curry leading the “In the Beginning...” tour. We learned that Oakwood was part of the early “rural cemetery” movement. It was designed and landscaped to showcase the beauty of the rolling hills and the greenery. Our June tour was a re-do of our tour last year called “Here Come ‘da Judge...” That tour had been cut short due to lightning. In July we toured



Section 13. We found out who was lucky and who was unlucky. In fact, a couple of those Oakwood 13ers were just plain bizarre. August rolled around and tour guide Sue Greenhagen (left) decided to do something different (and unannounced). For the “Odd Jobs” theme, she did a “living history” tour as Austin K. Hoyt, one of Syracuse’s best known morticians. The tour took on a new perspective hearing Mr. Hoyt talk about his contemporaries in the first person. Our season finale was “Musty, Mossy & Marvelous Mausoleums.” The highlight of that tour had to be our opportunity to go into the L.C. Smith mausoleum (right) by the Comstock gate. Thanks go to Karl Orlick for securing permission (and the key) to go into that magnificent structure.

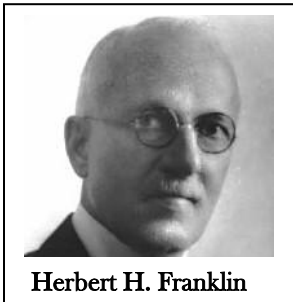


Our tour schedule for 2016 isn’t finalized yet, but here’s a sneak preview of what we have so far. Every year we pick one section to explore. Next year we’re going to do Section 59, and we’re calling it, “All’s Fine in 59.” Another tour will be, “Did You Know...?” This will be over in the newer area of the cemetery in Sections B and C. We’ll try to come up with little-known facts about the residents in that area. We’ve also decided to repeat one of our most popular tours, “The Iconography of Death: Signs & Symbols in the Cemetery.” We last did that tour in 2010. May is always our first tour of the season and goes by many different names. We haven’t picked one out yet, but rest assured Don Leopold of ESF will be there to regale us with his vast knowledge of the Oakwood flora.



Tours and More Tours...

On Thursday afternoon, August 6, 2015, Karl Orlick led a very special tour of Oakwood Cemetery. Our guests were the Franklin Automobile Club and they were on their 61st annual Franklin Trek. They asked to come to Oakwood because the founder of the company, Herbert H. Franklin, is buried there. Thirty-five vintage autos arrived (34 Franklins and one Packard) for a tour of the gravesites of such industrial luminaries as Franklin, John Wilkinson, and Alexander Brown, among others.



The Franklin Automobile Company, which was located right here in Syracuse, built America's most successful air-cooled automobile. In 1902, in a small shop with 13 employees, 12 Franklins were turned out. In 1929, their peak year, 14,000 cars rolled off the production line. The factory consisted of 18 buildings at the corner of Marcellus and S. Geddes Streets, and at one point employed 3,200 workers. With its first innovative air-cooled motorcar in 1902 and the company continued production until 1934. Of the 150,000 Franklins built between 1902 and 1934, it's estimated that about 3,700 have survived. The first Franklin sold for \$1,200 (that's the equivalent of over \$32,000 in today's money). For more information about the Franklin automobile, visit

the H.H. Franklin Club, Inc., at www.franklincar.org.

Herbert H. Franklin was born in Lisle, Broome County, in 1866. As a young man, he moved to Cossackie where he went into the newspaper business with a cousin. In 1894 he moved to Syracuse and went into the “die-casting” business, a term he himself coined. After meeting John Wilkinson, the inventor of the air-cooled engine, and riding in his prototype auto, he and Wilkinson formed a partnership to go into the automobile industry. When H.H. Franklin died in 1956, his legacy was secure. The Franklin autos are now collectors items, and Mr. Franklin is one of the most illustrious residents of historic Oakwood Cemetery.

And More Tours...

Every year we look forward to having students take our standard walking tour of the cemetery called “Live Oaks & Dead Folks.” They get to hear the stories of such famous (and infamous) people as Amos Granger (a 19th century voice of abolition), Henry Denison (a doctor who took up a career in the “Canal Ring”), Dr. Hervey Kendall (a Resurrectionist), Mary Prang (a talented artist and teacher), Cornelius Longstreet (his pyramid is the largest tomb in the cemetery), Margaret Slocum Sage (widow of Russell Sage), L. Harris Hiscock (a sordid story that ended in his death), General Edwin Sumner (a career Army man who died during the Civil War), Lonnie Yates (the Playboy of Syracuse), Elias Leavenworth and Joshua Forman (the former the Father of Oakwood and the latter the Father of Syracuse), and Amos Wescott (and the family’s Westcott Curse). If we have time the groups get to go across from the chapel to see the Haggerty Lion.



On October 8, Seth Joslyn brought 45 students (shown at left) from West Genesee High School for their annual field trip to Oakwood. Prior to their visit, they had read Edgar Lee Masters’ *Spoon River Anthology*, a collection of short free-form poems that narrate the epitaphs of the residents of the fictional town of Spoon River. After the tour they go back to write their own free-form poems based on the lives of people buried in Oakwood. The picture at the left is of the class taken at the Haggerty Lion. These students are putting into practice our favorite saying, “Not everyone is famous, but everyone has a story.”

Another class we look forward to seeing every year is Melissa Chessher’s Writing class from the Newhouse School. She brought her group of 14 S.U. students on October 7, which turned out to be a beautiful autumn day in the cemetery.

Just a reminder while we’re talking about cemetery tours, don’t forget our other two options. One is “Tours by Appointment.” Schedule your own tour for one person or many. Individuals, families, clubs, groups, organizations - it doesn’t matter. Call Sue Greenhagen at (315) 684-3418. Our other option is a PowerPoint program that we bring to you. Sue has created two programs: “Live Oaks & Dead Folks,” and “Live Oaks & More Dead Folks.” Contact her at the number above or at greenhsh@morrisville.edu .

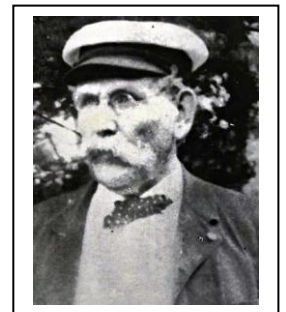
Civil War Veterans’ Inventory



OCCWRT member Geoff Ganttner collects dates for the Civil War Inventory

The Onondaga County Civil War Round Table is continuing its project to collect the names of all the Civil War veterans buried in Oakwood Cemetery. The count as of this writing is now 721 verified names. Volunteers are going through online newspapers searching for obituaries. We’re looking in the New York State Muster Rolls, the Pension File Index, and the Town Clerks’ Records (all online). Members have also been surveying headstones, section by section, to find birth and death dates that indicate the possibility of Civil War service. It’s surprising how many headstones of veterans give no indication of any military service. It is also surprising that 34 of Oakwood’s veterans have no headstone at all.

The stories that these veterans have to tell are often exciting, amusing, but sometimes they are incredibly tragic. Such is the story of Samuel J. Abbott (pictured at right). Sam enlisted in the 12th N.Y. Volunteer Infantry in May of 1861 as a 2d Lieutenant. He was promoted in August and resigned his commission in September of that year. After the war he was elected Assistant Overseerer of the Poor



and served as postmaster in Salina. In 1897, he took a job as night watchman of the New York State Library in Albany. When a fire broke out on March 30, 1911, seventy-seven year old Samuel J. Abbott was trapped in the blazing building and was burned to death. His body was brought back to Syracuse, and he was buried with military honors along side his wife, Jennie, who had died earlier in January.

HOCPA Donors as of October, 2015

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

Lucia Albright, Charles Amos, John & Katherine Auwaeter, Carl Baker, Ronald & Roxanne Balduzzi, Elisabeth Barker, Constance Barrett, J. Thomas & Silvia DeLaGarza Bassett, Dwight & Augusta Baum, Donald & Christa Baxter, David & Elisabeth Beebe, Richard & Marcia Bellinger, Carolyn Bernstein, Carol Biedinger, Carol Biesmeyer, Peter & Lida Black, Robert & Susan Boland, June Bomberger, Richard Bowman, Maxwell Brace III, Robert & Kathleen Brown, Mary Buckley, Michael Burns, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Caldwell III, Michael & Diane Casale, Charles Chappell Jr., Lawrie Chase, Stephen & Ann Chase, Thad Collum, Dennis Connors, Goodwin & Barbara Cooke, Sharon Coulter, George Curry, Darothy DeAngelo, Linda DeStefano, Eloise Diamond, Florence Douque, Rita Ann Downing, Elaine Easton, Harold Edwards Jr., Rebecca Eiholzer, John & Anne Endries, Peter Erichsen, Patricia Ferguson, Donna Fifield, Paula Gemmill, Margaretrose Gioia, Ernest & Lynne Giraud, Betty Glass, Elizabeth Glass, William Goodwin, William & Judith Grabau, Andrea Graves, Sue Greenhagen, Jeanne Greenhalgh, Joan Gronau, Amy Hamilton, Jeanne Hammer, Stewart & Ruth Hancock, Jr., Mary Louise Hartenstein, Kenneth & Miranda Hine, Erica Holcomb, Sydney Howes, Kristen Hulbert, Mary Iversen, Allyn & Sue Jones, Clyde & Susan Jones, Paul Kalska, Anne Kemper, Walter Killius, Jay & Anne King, Russell & Joan King, Constance Lambert, Carolyn Lawless, Don Leopold, Gelene Lewis, Zalie & Bob Linn, William Little, Eugene & Christine Lozner, Coy Ludwig, Alison MacTavish, Thomas Mafri, Gerald Mager, June Mann, John & Candace Marsellus, Frederick & Virginia Marty, Terence & Laura McSweeney, Douglas & Doris Medley, Diane Medvitz, Merle Melvin, John & Penny Mercer, Eileen Miller, Thayer Miller, John & Shirley Mills, Francis & Alice Morigi, Elisabeth Murray, Jean Murray, Keith & Mary Murray, Letty Murray, Diane Nagel, Jon & Janet Nelson, Timothy & JoDean Orcutt, Karl Orlick, Constance Palumb, David Palumb, Frederick & Virginia Parker, Haden Patten, Christopher & Ileana Payne, Dorothy Pease, Michael Peterson, Onetia Pierson, William & Carol Porter, Trina Powers, P.B. Price Gardner, Lisle Rath, Karen Richards, Barbara Rivette, George & Doris Rodormer, Robert & Nanatte Rodormer, Bruce & Susan Ross, Robert & Tonia Salisbury, Jeffrey Salmon, Harold & Laurie Sanderson, William Sarr, William & Elizabeth Schaefer, Michael & Barbara Scheibel, Herbert & Hillery Schneiderman, Rick & Gracia Sears, Helen Seymour, Brenda Silverman, Barbara Sleight, Dominic Smith, Daniel & Nancy Smothergill, William & Lillian Smyser, James & Barbara Snell, Robert & Helen Stanton, Sally Starr, James Stathes, Janice Stearns, Jamieson Steele, Lawrence & Marilyn Steen, Paul & Olga Suholet, Syracuse Home Foundation, Peter & Martha Thompson, Louise Thornton Barnes, Cynthia Tracy, Susan Vanmaarseveen, Paul Votra, Maritia Walper, Michael & Marcia Walsh, James & Marsha Wooster, Joanne Zinsmeister-Yarwood.

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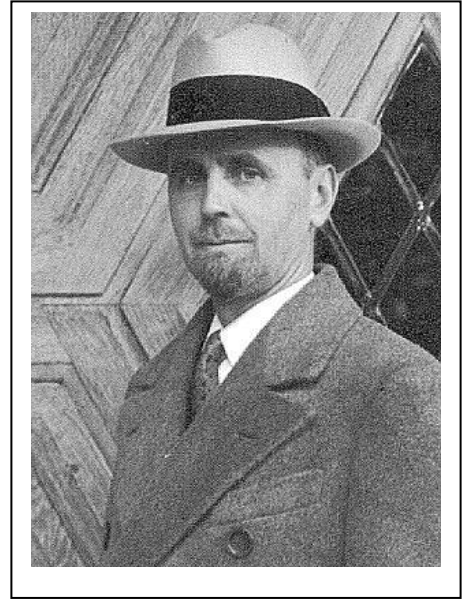
Please make checks payable to **HOCPA**, and mail to: **HOCPA, PO BOX 15065, Syracuse NY 1321**

Oakwood All-Star - Dwight James Baum

Dwight James Baum was a nationally recognized architect. A graduate of Syracuse University in 1909, he left the area for New York City the following year.

During his 30-year career, he designed homes for such prominent people as Charles Evans Hughes (Governor of New York State), and John Ringling of circus fame. In addition, he designed the pedestal at Columbus Circle here in the city, Hendrick's Memorial Chapel at Syracuse University as well as the Maxwell School of Citizenship and the College of Medicine (now known as Weiskotten Hall). Another notable contribution of his was the main building of the Drumlins Country Club.

In the 1920s he became one of the leading figures in building development in the state of Florida. Not only did he design many homes there (including Ringling's "Ca d'Zan"), but the Court House at Sarasota (shown



at left), known as "the most beautiful building for public purposes south of Washington, D.C.



In 1932 he was awarded the Gold Medal for the Best Small House in America by the American Institute of Architects. The presentation of

this prestigious award was made by President Herbert Hoover. Sadly, his brilliant career ended December 12, 1939 when he fell dead of a heart attack while walking on W. 45th Street in New York City. He was only 53 years old.

Editor's Note: Dwight James Baum, a distant relative of *The Wizard of Oz* author, L. Frank Baum, was married to Katherine Crouse, and is buried in the Crouse family lot in section 57. Thanks to H.O.C.P.A. board member Darothy DeAngelo for her research on this most illustrious resident of Oakwood Cemetery.



address correction requested

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