

“Grave Matters”

**Historic Oakwood Cemetery
Preservation Association**

Fall, 2016 Volume 24, Number 2

President’s Message...

While preparing the Chapel garden for winter, I am reminded of our beautiful warm summer just past. Sue Greenhagen led several tours which were very well attended. The most recent group in September was 73 strong! Sue is our treasured resident historian and tour leader extraordinaire. She books special journeys through Oakwood in addition to those scheduled on summer Sundays. Sue will also tailor a virtual tour presentation for your special group off site.

HOCPA board member, Karl Orlick, has completed preliminary work on the Chapel floor. In the last two decades vandals have rendered the floor very unstable and dangerous. Karl's goal is to make the floor safe for visitors. We thank him for his tireless efforts which he always does with good cheer!

We are scheduling a new crew of student volunteers from SUNY-ESF to clean more debris from the Chapel interior. They help us annually as part of their community service obligation. We are always happy to host them and are grateful for their efforts.

We have a fresh shipment of our signature book: "Oakwood; A Special Place" authored by Barbara S. Rivette. They are priced at \$20 and make a delightful holiday gift. If you wish to order a copy, contact Connie Palumb: (315) 446-3570 or (315) 415-2954 or cspalumb@hotmail.com.

Please consider supporting the Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association. Our goal is to help maintain and beautify the grounds and monuments, especially in the older areas of the cemetery. A membership application is contained in this newsletter. As always, we appreciate your interest and generosity as you assist us in our mission.

Editor’s Notes...

We had a great cemetery season, didn't we. Except for one weather issue (rain), the tours were great and well attended by some very enthusiastic folks. The cemetery itself was beautiful, no matter what time of year. Yet there's something nagging in the back of my mind. I guess it's the never ending battle we do with our two old nemeses – vandals and Mother Nature. HOCPA's job is in its name – historic and preservation. There's not a lot to do about Mother Nature except pick up after her. But this vandalism stuff is so discouraging. On one trip down to the Chapel this summer we found that someone had tried to pry the front door open. Luckily, they didn't get in, but they did damage the molding around the door. A second incident occurred when they did get in, and proceeded to damage one of our plywood/stained glass windows. For good measure they stole our white folding table from where we store it in the crypt. A big “thank you” to HOCPA board member Karl Orlick, our own “Mr. Fix-It,” who not only repaired the front door but secured it from the inside to make it impossible to pry open. He repaired the damaged window, and replaced the lock on the crypt door. Seems like we just go around “picking up” after the vandals, too. The Chapel area is very secluded. What's the answer to our problem? I don't know. Seems like we, as an organization, need to be prepared to be in “pick up” mode. We can use all the help we can get. Consider joining HOCPA. Think about it.

...Connie Palumb



... Sue Greenhagen

Voices from Oakwood...

Leverett A. Fox (1839 – 1918)

One day in the spring of 1918, 85 year-old Leverett Fox walked into the office of his long-time friend, Maurice A. Graves. He sat down and began to tell Graves of some of his adventures as a young man. As they talked, Graves realized that what he was hearing was an amazing story, so he stopped Fox and called for a stenographer. Thus the story Leverett Fox had to tell has been preserved for posterity. It was first published by *The Post-Standard* in the May 12, 1918 issue. It was later republished in the same newspaper on February 15 and 16, 2004. The original headline was "SYRACUSE MAN SAILOR ON A SLAVE SHIP." The later version ran as "Life on a Slave Ship." What follows is Leverett's own story.



At age 13, Leverett Fox began his career as a sailor, shipping out of his hometown of Buffalo and sailing the Great Lakes. By 1852, he found himself in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he saw a Spanish brig out in the bay.

"What brig is that?" I said to a middle-aged Spaniard standing near by. "That is the *Libertad*," he replied with a smile..."Young man, I am captain of that brig and I'm only waiting to secure a suitable crew to sail for the west coast of Africa." By that I knew of course, that the brig was a slaver.

I consented [to join the crew], for I had always wanted to learn just how the slave trade was managed.

After a 22-day voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, the *Libertad* anchored off the coast of Africa near the mouth of the Congo River. The captain went ashore to meet the slave traders. Leverett watched as a crew of six prepared to retrieve the agreed upon "cargo."

...the long boat was lowered and rigged. One hundred and fifty pairs of handcuffs and as many fathoms of small chain and rope were stowed away in the boat...The captain set sail with six picked men, all well armed. [They] went up the river about ten minutes to a slave trading station.

A day later the captain's boat returned from picking up the cargo.

Leaning over the ship's rail, I heard the thud, thud, of paddles and oars, as if a drum was beating time to the moaning chant of men, women and children.

The slaves were led aboard the brig and taken below deck.

...the men and boys were put into the fore part of the ship, the women and girls in the after 'tween decks. The cooks now served out to them a good meal of such fruits and food as they were accustomed to...After all hands had been refreshed with a good meal the anchor was weighed.

As the *Libertad* sailed west, Leverett had opportunities to speak to the captain, and he recounted one such conversation in which the captain rationalized his work.

"But just consider; we have brought more souls into the folds of Christianity in this one night than a whole mission would in a year."

As the journey progressed, the *Libertad* had an encounter with an English cruiser.

Closer and closer came the cruiser, her ensign flying. Now puff after puff of blue smoke belched from her bow...Finally a shot struck us on our port quarter, but fell into the water without doing any damage.

The captain then instructed his engineer:

"Rafael, don't you think you could put a shot through his foremast head? The handsomest slave on the ship is yours, if you do.

Rafael, after taking steady aim, fired our stern chaser, loaded with double charge...The shot struck its mark...We cheered...Then we tauntingly signaled the cruiser "good bye" and dropped her out of sight in a short time.

After thirty days at sea, the *Libertad* arrived back at Rio de Janeiro.

...the slaves were landed, dressed in fine muslin and calico...
and then tied to a long rope and in single file marched through
the streets to the auction market.

Leverett collected his pay and parted ways with the *Libertad* and its captain. We can only imagine the reaction of Maurice Graves as he listened to this tale unfold. Leverett's voice was silenced forever on 3 December 1918. He was buried in Plot 138 of Section 6 of Oakwood Cemetery.

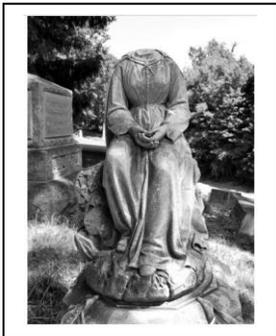
Tour Wrap-up...

Our 2016 tour schedule had its ups and one down. That down was when we were faced with an absolute downpour for Dennis Connors' tour on August 21. However, twelve hearty souls showed up and we retreated to the interior of the L.C. Smith mausoleum by the Comstock Avenue gate. Umbrellas were the order of the day.

One of our most successful tours *ever* was on September 25 when Sue Greenhagen took 73 folks on the "Well, I'll Be" tour. That's right, 73 people came out on a beautiful late summer afternoon to hear the stories of some interesting people buried in Section B, including John Marsellus (Marsellus Caskets), Gustav Stickley (furniture), Stephen K. Bresee (the Chevy dealer) and Charles F. Brannock. Who's Charles Brannock, you ask? Well he invented the Brannock device. That's the metal gadget that measures the size of your foot in a shoe store. All our visits were fascinating. Perhaps the most poignant visit was to the Split Rock Memorial. We were fortunate to have two very knowledgeable gentlemen, Rich Miller and John Hrynyk, speak to the group.

Next year's list of tours isn't finalized yet. So far we have our May nature walk, a tour of Section 48, and another try at Dennis Connors' Smith family tour. Stay tuned.

10 Signs You Are a Cemetery Geek (from www.buzzfeed.com, 23 September 2014)



The headless statue of
Ella Rosa Burt (1853 – 1872)
Section 25, Lot 1

1. You rubberneck as you drive past that little cemetery and find yourself making the quickest U-turn you can. Your passengers groan. *Here we go again!* People hate going on road trips with you.
2. Your idea of going out is to a graveyard! Free time is valuable! What better way to spend it than wandering a cemetery, taking photos?!
3. You feel at home in a cemetery. Others squirm or shiver at the idea of visiting cemeteries, but you feel the peace and see the history and beauty.
4. Finding something weird in a cemetery is like winning the lottery! You find headless statues interesting. The strange things left behind are an endless source of fascination to you. Creepy cemetery stuff is COOL to you. Others

think it is just creepy and you are too.

5. You have a Google Map of cemeteries. You search all the cemeteries trying to find one that you can drive to and back in one day. You will drive 5 hours for 2 hours of photo shooting, then back home.
(No one wants to go with you... see #1).
6. Snakes? What? You laugh at danger. Actually... you forget to pay attention to basic safety rules as you get so distracted by the amazing cemetery you MUST see in the worst area of the city or that knee-high weed-covered old cemetery filled with snakes and other critters! (But you lived through it - didn't you?!)
7. Jokes about liking the dead better than the living are funny. You know you've said it. C'mon.
8. Your social life consists of online cemetery groups. You have a Facebook page, a web page, a blog, a podcast, an Instagram feed, Flickr account, and of course Twitter.... all about cemeteries.
9. Rain or shine, snow or sleet, we deliver. Weather will not stop you from getting your shots of that cemetery you have finally made it to. You will walk a mile in the rain. You will freeze in winter winds just a little bit longer... a little bit longer... a little bit longer...
10. Halloween is your favorite time of the year!! Halloween is the time when people pay attention to cemeteries the most. You get excited because they are seeing more of YOUR FAVORITE places. Halloween brings them to the party. :)

HOCPA Donors as of October, 2016

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

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Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization.

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...

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews (1860 – 1936)

This issue's All-Star was a well-known writer, perhaps best known for a short story called "The Perfect Tribute," which she wrote in 1906. It was the story of Abraham Lincoln, the Gettysburg Address, and the President's encounter with a wounded Confederate soldier.

Mary Shipman was born in Mobile, Alabama on April 2, 1860, the daughter of an Episcopal minister. She loved her southern roots and once referred to herself as a "determined Southerner." "I got myself born there [Mobile], as far south as it could be arranged." Her family moved to Lexington, Kentucky, where Mary grew up in the "ultra-dignified old town of Lexington," as she described it. In 1884, Mary married William Shankland Andrews, a lawyer who later became a judge on the New York State Court of Appeals. The ceremony was performed by her father, Rev. Dr. Jacob S. Shipman. So Mary became "Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews," her mother's maiden name being Raymond. Her father-in-law was Charles Andrews, lawyer and former mayor of Syracuse. The couple had one son, Paul Shipman Andrews, also a lawyer who went on to become Dean of the College of Law at Syracuse University. Their first home in Syracuse was at 404 Oak Street, but they soon purchased 27 acres in nearby Taunton. They later added 30 additional acres. There they built their hide-away home, Wolf Hollow. The house was a long stone building built in the Arts and Crafts style with six fireplaces, beamed ceilings, and large gardens.

Mary was a prolific writer, her best known work being "The Perfect Tribute." In 1991, that story was made into a television movie starring Jason Robards as Lincoln. Another story, dealing with the Lincoln assassination, was called "The White Satin Dress." It was the story of Clara Harris and Henry Rathbone, the young couple in attendance with the Lincolns at Ford's Theater in April of 1865.

Along with being a noted writer, Mary was also an avid dog fancier, a horsewoman, an outdoorswoman, with interests in art, nature, and language. She was seldom photographed without being in the company of one of her dogs.

Mary died on August 2, 1936. Her funeral was a double funeral for just three days after her death, her husband, William, died from injuries sustained in a fall. Thousands attended the funeral ceremony in Section 48, including Governor Herbert Lehman. It was a perfect tribute ...

Thanks to HOCPA Board member Darothy DeAngelo for her original research on Mrs. Andrews.



address correction requested

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