



Historic Oakwood

Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association
Spring, 2011 Volume 20, Number 2

President's Message...

We welcome 2011 with great enthusiasm! HOCPA is fortunate to include two new members to our Board of Directors. Sue Greenhagen whom many of you will recognize as a living historian/tour guide who has trooped around Oakwood, sometimes in the worst of weather to lead our summer tours. She has recently retired as a librarian at Morrisville State College. Sue has taken on the challenge of organizing and publishing our newsletter for which we are most grateful. Our other addition is Elisabeth Barker who is a practicing attorney in Syracuse. She and her family have lifelong ties to the Syracuse area.

As we welcome Sue and Betsy, we take this opportunity to thank John Coit for his many years of service to Oakwood. We thank, too, Trina Powers who for many years has been the editor of this publication and has worked tirelessly in her position as a long time Board member. Trina also contributed many photographs to our recent publication, Oakwood, a Special Place.

The Board would like to recognize Tom Viau and his crew for the repairs to the stone walls and support beams for the Silsbee Chapel. Their talent is showcased with the fine stone cutting work of both walls adjacent to the chapel. I know they toiled under very snowy and cold conditions. Many thanks to you all.

In 2012 we hope to publish another book called Oakwoods Speaks: Voices from the Grave. We are looking for those of you who have ancestors buried in Oakwood to contribute. Would you like to try your talents by writing (up to six typewritten pages) family history for inclusion? We know many of you have fascinating family lore to share along with two or three photographs (which will be returned). If you feel up to the task, please send your article to: Connie Palumb, 102 Bradford Lane, Syracuse, NY 13224.

Darothy DeAngelo has assembled a wonderful tour schedule for 2011 which is enclosed. Don't forget we gather on May 1 to "Scour the Past," our euphemism for cleaning up the debris left behind from winter. Bring a rake and we'll meet at the chapel at noon for a little rigorous exercise.

This past year has been a fruitful and productive one for the Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association, aka HOCPA. Many of you have purchased the wonderful book which was written by our favorite historian, Barbara S. Rivette. She authored Oakwood, a Special Place to commemorate Oakwood's 150th birthday.

We are pleased to announce that the Onondaga Historical Association's Ghost Walk will take place in Oakwood Cemetery this year. The dates are June 17, 18, 24 and 25. The walks will meet at the Silsbee Chapel at 6 pm each evening. Living historians will introduce attendees to some of our more interesting residents. We are hoping the Ghost Walk will introduce Oakwood Cemetery to a whole new audience. For more information, call O.H.A. at (315) 428-1864.

We are excited to be launching a website. Sue Greenhagen created a page at the following: localhistory.morrisville.edu/cemetery/oakwood.html If you have any input about the website, contact Sue at greenhsh@morrisville.edu Included will be tour schedules, historical notes of interest, photographs, membership forms, and general news about various HOCPA projects. It's still under construction but at least we've started to jump into the 21st century.

Lastly, we are extremely grateful to all of you who have joined HOCPA and made possible our continued mission to maintain and promote historic Oakwood Cemetery.

Connie

Connie Palumb

What's New...

The most obvious "what's new" is that HOCPA's newsletter has a new look. That's because a new editor has taken over. Thanks to Trina Powers for all her years of putting out a high quality (not to mention always interesting) newsletter. Sue Greenhagen has been asked to try to fill Trina's shoes in getting out all the news that's fit to print, and as Arthur Judson Brewster would say, and then some. Thank you, Trina, for all your hard work.

As Connie said in her President's Message, we're leaping into the 21st century by creating a website for HOCPA. I hear some moaning out there from you folks who don't have a computer at home and feel left out of the loop. Good news - you can access the Internet and hence HOCPA's website at your local library. Check the site out - it's not fancy but it is functional.

To distribute this newsletter, I'm going to attempt to send it out to some of you as a PDF (Portable Document Format) file on email. There are two quick advantages to this. First, it will save the organization the cost of postage. Secondly, it can be sent in a color format - all those great photos can be viewed in color, as opposed to the black and white of the printed copy. Change is on the way. I'm glad to have been asked to be a part of it.

"Follow HOCPA on Facebook"

Sue

Sue Greenhagen

A Look Back...

What a season we had this past year. Our Sunday tours totaled 169 participants. May's tour, "From the Ground Up," was conducted by ESF's Don Leopold. He regaled us with fascinating facts about the flora of Oakwood Cemetery. In June, Darothy DeAngelo led a tour called "Doctors, Dentists and Quacks." Darothy "dug up" some great stories about the medical profession in Syracuse. Our July tour was led by Steven Kern from the Everson Museum. The title was, appropriately enough, "Painters, Sculptors and Other Artsy Folk." We were introduced to some of the most talented people from Syracuse's past. In August we encountered some seriously rainy weather. Kudos to those 40 or so intrepid tourgoers who followed Arthur Judson Brewster (living historian Sue Greenhagen) around in the rain to hear tales of "Murder, Mystery and Mayhem." We closed the season with a slightly different topic, "The Iconography of Death." Armed with a handout

describing the signs and symbols on headstones, the group, led by Sue Greenhagen, searched out various artistic, spiritual, and eccentric features on Oakwood's headstones.

Darothy DeAngelo and Sue Greenhagen (the cemetery sisters) conducted a number of special tours, including tours for 5th graders from Edward Smith Elementary School, West Genesee High School English students, and a writing class from Syracuse University.

Our tours are such a wonderful historical experience, after all, cemeteries are our great outdoor museums. As Darothy is fond of saying, "not everyone is famous, but everyone has a story."

A Look Ahead...

Darothy DeAngelo has been hard at work, creating a not-to-be-missed tour schedule for 2011. If you have any suggestions for future tour topics, please contact her at (315) 682-6312. Also, we will be holding a clean-up day on May 1, and we need all the volunteers we can muster. We urge all of our members to reach out for new members - call a friend and say, "Hey, want to go to the cemetery?" They may even say yes. HOCPA depends on its members to sustain it. We need YOU to get involved.

"Scour the Past"

On Sunday, May 1, at noon, volunteers from HOCPA will meet at the Silsbee Chapel to scour the past, that is do clean-up. Mother Nature has a way of creating a mess every winter, and it's up to us to get in there and clean up after her. It's important that the cemetery look as good as possible for that first tour at the end of May. Bring a rake, gloves, and some old-fashioned elbow grease and pitch in to help care for Oakwood Cemetery.

Virtual Tours

HOCPA is now offering "virtual tours" of the cemetery. Sue Greenhagen created a PowerPoint presentation called "Live Oaks and Dead Folks" that highlights several residents of Oakwood. She and Darothy DeAngelo have taken the show on the road to clubs, historical societies, senior citizens, and anyone who may not be able to actually walk around on a real tour. If you know of a group that might be interested in a virtual tour, have them contact Darothy at (315) 682-6312.

HOCPA Donors / Members - December 31, 2010

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

Lucia Albright, Nevart Apikian, John/Kate Auwaerter, Carl Baker, Elisabeth Barker, Constance Barrett, J. Thomas Bassett, John Leach Baum, Donald/Christa Baxter, David/Elisabeth Beebe, Carol Biedinger, June Bomberger, Mrs. Maxwell Brace, Bob/Kathy Brown, Michael Burns, Charles Chappell, Steve/Ann Chase, Marion Chester, John/Carolyn Coit, Dennis Connors, Mr. & Mrs. Goodwin Cooke, George Curry, Darothy DeAngelo, Claire Deloria, Linda DeStefano, Eloise Diamond, Florence Douque, Rita Ann Downing, Elaine Easton, Harold Edwards, Sue Eiholzer, John/Anne Endries, Susan Estabrook, J.A. Evangelista/Peg Chestnut, Margaret Farley, Donna Hart Fifield, Kris/Theresa Fuller, Audrey Gibbs, Edgar/Betty Glass, Elizabeth Glass, Jeffrey/Jean Greene, Sue Greenhagen, Jeanne Greenhalgh, Frances Haberle, Amy Hamilton, Jeanne Hammer, Mr. & Mrs. Stewart Hancock, Jr., Claire Harootunian, Mary Louise Hartenstein, Kenneth/Miranda Hine, H. Follett Hodgkins, Dr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Hopkins, Sydney Howes, Mary Iversen, A.E. Jones, Steven Kern, Anne King, Russell/Joan King, Carolyn Lawless, Don Leopold, Gelene Lewis, Barbara Llewellyn, Joyce Lock, Christine Lozner, Alison MacTavish, John/Candace Marsellus, Terence/Laura McSweeney, Doris Medley, Diane Medvitz, Merle Melvin, John/Penny Mercer, Francis Morigi, Morton Family Fund, Elisabeth Murray, Jean Murray, Letty M. Murray, Margaret Nasemann, Jon/Jane Nelson, Linda Nolle, "Novel Affair" at the Fayetteville Public Library, Judy Oplinger, Timothy/Jodean Orcutt, Anne Pagenstecher, Connie Palumb, David Palumb/Peter Erichson, Frederick/Virginia Parker, Jr., Haden Patten, Michael/Marny Peterson, Paul/Linda Pflanz, Barbara S. Rivette, George/Doris Rodormer, Robert/Nanette Rodormer, Patrick Rummel, Caroline Ryder, Bob/Toni Salisbury, Jeffrey Salmon, William Sarr, William/Elizabeth Schaefer, Elizabeth Schenck, Herbert/Hillary Schneiderman, Robert Schultz, Helen Seymour, Arlene Simms, Dominic Smith, H. Daniel Smith, James/Barbara Snell, Jerry/Beverly Stanton, Robert Stanton, Jamieson Steele, Chiga Suholet, Syracuse Garden Club, Syracuse Home Foundation, Peter/Martha Thompson, Elizabeth Utzman, Susan VanMaarseveen, Maritia Walper, Mary Walsh, Marie Webb, William Wiecek, Elizabeth Ann Wiles, Richard/Dorothy Will, Joanne Zinsmeister-Yarwood.

HOCPA MEMBERSHIP FORM

_____ New Member _____ Renewal

_____ Senior/Student \$5 _____ Individual \$15 _____ Family \$25 _____ Patron \$100 _____ Corporate \$200

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Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

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 - Amos Westcott



Whenever there's a tour of Oakwood Cemetery, inevitably the guide will lead the group to Section 13 and the Westcott family plot. Amos Westcott (1815-1873) was by profession a dentist. He was involved with the founding of the New York State Dental Society and was its first president. His education, however, led him in many directions. In 1835 he received a Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. In 1835 and 1836 he was a teacher at the Pompey Academy. He then attended Geneva College and Albany Medical College and graduated as a dentist in 1840. At that time Dr. Westcott set up what was to be a life-long practice in Syracuse. In 1848 he put his engineering skills to work. He was granted a patent for an "improvement in surgical or dental operating chairs." This was the first of many patents for such items as butter churns, locks, bolts, fasteners, cranks and fans. His last patent was granted in 1869. Amos

Westcott was also a politician. In 1860 he was elected Mayor of the City of Syracuse on the Republican ticket. In February of 1861 he presided over the Syracuse visit of President-elect Abraham Lincoln who was making his way by train from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, D.C., for his inauguration. Mayor Westcott outdid himself in preparing for the visit. He had a large speaker's platform constructed at the train station, complete with flags and bunting, and invited Syracusans out to meet their next president. When Lincoln's train arrived, however, the President-elect stood on the back of the train, admired the fine trappings, and stated that he had neither the time nor energy to make a speech to the thousands of citizens that had turned out. The train then pulled out of the station.

The only blot on an otherwise outstanding life was Amos Westcott's involvement with the Cardiff Giant. When the giant was "discovered" locally in 1869, Westcott was one of the individuals who financially backed what became known as one of the greatest hoaxes in American history. When the deception was exposed, Westcott was totally humiliated by his involvement and he never recovered from the incident. He became very despondent and finally took his own life in 1873.

The next time you're traveling on Westcott Street, take a moment to remember a man who was truly a pillar of the Syracuse community, Dr. Amos Westcott.



Address correction requested

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