



“*Grave Matters*”

Historic Oakwood Cemetery

Preservation Association

Syracuse, New York

Spring, 2020 Volume 28, Number 1

President’s Message ... Connie Palumb

Welcome to spring at Oakwood and the latest edition of *Grave Matters*. Special thanks to Sue Greenhagen, our editor in chief, who is responsible for this fine publication.

Diane Medvitz has been working closely with our website designers from Arboxy, LLC. Together they have created a wonderful website for Oakwood Cemetery. It contains a wealth of information about our history, current initiatives, beautiful photographs, videos, stories about our residents and tour information.

Take a look at: <http://hocpa.org>

HOCPA depends entirely on your donation to accomplish our mission. Your continued generosity is greatly appreciated. THANK YOU!

Editor’s Notes ... Sue Greenhagen

I sat down the other day to write this column, thinking about all the great things happening in Oakwood Cemetery. There’s our new website. Diane Medvitz and the fellows over at Arboxy are working really hard to get it up and running, and to make it as informative and interesting as possible. Kudos to them. The Crypt Keepers have been working diligently to improve the appearance of Oakwood. They have been uncovering headstones that have been hidden for decades under a growth of weeds and saplings. Brush is being removed and the difference it makes is remarkable. More kudos. There are two tree projects underway. One is to introduce to Oakwood the American chestnut trees. They were fairly wiped out back in the 1960s by blight. We hope to also reintroduce some species of rare trees. Kudos to the tree people.



Public events were center stage last year. In addition to our regular tours, we had students from West Genesee High School, the Newhouse School at S.U., and even a couple of tours for folks who just wanted to see the cemetery. We celebrated the Haggerty Lion, and observed the dedication anniversary of Oakwood. We gathered at Christmas to sing and share glad tidings. Folks toured, walked, trekked, and even snowshoed.

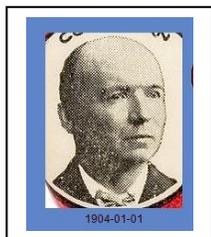
As Simon & Garfunkel once wrote, however, “for the times they are a-changin’.” We had big plans for Oakwood Cemetery this coming year - tours, trees, special events. Well, all that may be “a-changin’” due to an unknown virus that is sweeping the country, indeed, the world. At this point, the middle of March as I write this, we need to acknowledge that, thanks to coronavirus-19, there may be some drastic changes in store. For Oakwood Cemetery that means we may have to cancel some or all of our scheduled tours. We were looking forward to our Spring clean-up, re-erecting the gravestone of Frederick Franklin Moon (Dean of the College of Forestry from 1920 to 1929), tree planting, sign posting and a dozen other things. These things will probably not happen, or at least they’ll be put on hold.

So, how will you know what’s going on? Use our website - we’ll be sending out a notice as soon as its officially up and running. Follow us on Facebook. You can contact us right now, directly on email at: HocpaOakwood@gmail.com. Meanwhile, don’t forget that Oakwood endures. You can always take a walk on a nice day. We recommend that you not walk alone (you never know who’s lurking). Enjoy the spring flowers and flowering trees. My favorite is the flowering dogwoods, pink and white. Oakwood will still be there when this pandemic ebbs and finally leaves us to live our lives more or less normally. Oakwood will welcome us back.

We here at HOCPA ask you to be mindful of the precautions to take. We value all our board members, members, sponsors, volunteers and just plain friends. Meanwhile, let’s be careful out there...

“...the next President of the United States, Charles H. Corregan!”

Not the name you were expecting to see in that sentence? Charles Corregan never expected to be elected president either. The year was 1904, and on July 6, the Socialist Labor Party met in convention



at the Grand Central Palace in New York City to nominate candidates for national office. In the sweltering heat of that afternoon, the delegates (including one woman from Illinois) chose Charles Hunter Corregan from Syracuse for President and William W. Cox from Illinois for Vice President. They ran on a platform of justice for the laboring class – shorter work hours, better pay. They also idealistically advocated socialism, that is the government would

own everything, and everything would be free (*Syracuse Journal*, 6 July 1904). The Corregan and Cox ticket was soundly defeated, but not before they made some noise in the campaign. On the 20th of October, at a rally in Chicago, the riot police were called in when a rival Socialist speaker challenged Corregan. On October 27, in Butte, Montana, Corregan, before a crowd of 350 Eugene Debs followers, disparaged Debs’ Socialist party. One particular heckler confronted Corregan and refused to sit down. Corregan responded passionately, “I do not propose to let any Montana tough browbeat or bulldoze me!” The heckler sat down and Corregan continued his speech.

As expected, Corregan and Cox lost badly. The ticket garnered 31,240 votes (9,127 from New York State). Considering winner Theodore Roosevelt had over 7 million votes and loser Alton Parker had over 5 million, Corregan lost very badly.

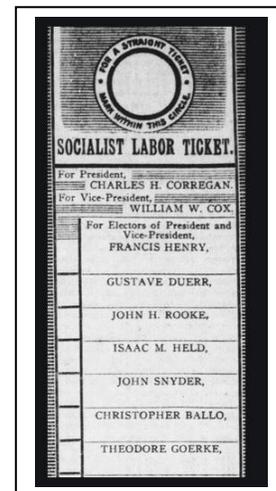
Charles Corregan wasn’t always a radical politician. Born in Oswego in 1860, he graduated first in his class at Oswego High School, and delivered a valedictory address that demonstrated early his oratorical skills. He studied law for three years and then decided to go into journalism. At first a reporter, he then took an interest in the operations of a newspaper. In 1888 he moved to Syracuse and began working with the actual printing of a newspaper. This gave him some insight into the working conditions of blue collar labor. By 1893 he was president of the Central Trade Labor assembly, and in 1894 was vice president of the State Federation of Labor. Owing to his intelligence and speaking skills, he soon found himself running for public office on the Socialist Labor ticket. In 1897 he ran for Syracuse School Commissioner, in 1898 he ran for New York State Attorney General, in 1900 he ran for Governor, in 1901 he ran for Mayor of Syracuse, in 1902 he ran for Lieutenant Governor, and in 1904 he ran for President. The man had a perfect record – he lost every election. He had become notable enough, however, to be included in the 1914 *Who’s Who in America*.

As if running for office isn’t difficult enough, Corregan was also involved in a lawsuit with Typographical Union No. 55. In a speech at Clinton Square on 6 July 1901, Corregan called union officials “labor fakirs,” which can be taken to mean “swindlers who live off the workers.” He was fined \$50 which he refused to pay. They tossed him out of the union. He sued to be reinstated and for damages. For four years the litigation went on. At first the union prevailed but that ruling was reversed and a second trial ordered. Finally, in July of 1905 Corregan was awarded \$500 in damages and was reinstated in the union.



Charles H. Corregan was still good for one last hurrah. In 1928, he ran for governor. Both winner Franklin D. Roosevelt and challenger Albert Ottinger polled over two million votes. Corregan received 4,213 votes. His election record was intact.

Described by reporters as “short, stocky, and very bald,” Charles Corregan stood tall for what he believed in. He took on all dissenters. Although we may not concur ideologically with his views, one must admire his grit, tenaciousness, and devotion to his cause. He is buried, with his wife, Margaret, in Section 58, Lot 70. Charles Hunter Corregan, candidate for President of the United States, does not have a headstone.



Stories in Stone

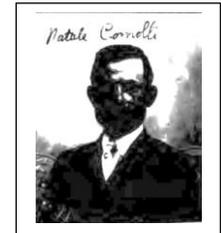
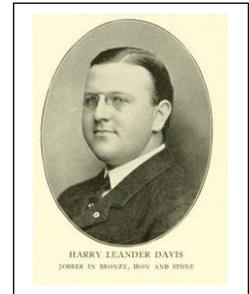


The gentleman pictured at left is William Henry Harrison Smith. The monument at right is the Smith monument. Mr. Smith, his wife Margaret Tredwell Redfield Smith, other Smith family members, and the monument are located in Section 14, at the entrance to Dedication Valley. W.H.H. Smith was born in Herkimer County in 1814, ran a wholesale grocery store in Utica for two years, then moved to Syracuse in 1830. In 1839 he took a position as a conductor on the



New York Central Railroad, a job he held for 13 years. His contacts in the railroad business led him to become a very successful investor in local roads. He was known for his generosity to the Hospital of the Good Shepard, Grace Church, and the Onondaga County Orphan Asylum, among others. In 1846 he married Margaret Redfield, the daughter of newspaper publisher, Lewis Redfield. She was a very intelligent woman, collected historical items related to her family and the early days of Syracuse, and, in 1905, saw to the placement of a monument in Forman Park honoring her father.

Now for the rest of the story. In late February, 1919, the family (we're not sure who) ordered a monument from the Harry L. Davis Memorial Company in Syracuse. It was to be made of blue Westerly granite at a cost of \$2,447 (\$36,7000 in today's money). In 1923, Davis (shown at right) opened a store on Montgomery Street, right next door to the present Onondaga Historical Association. Perhaps "store" isn't the right term. It was more of a showroom, a studio. Established in 1919, the establishment did a fine business through the early 1920s. The Smith monument was one of the first contracts secured by Harry Davis. Others were the Admiral Peary monument in Arlington, the Rock of the Marne in Billings Park, and mausoleums for two well-known businessmen from Rochester - Edward Bausch and Carl E. Lomb. Business eventually fell off, however, and Davis filed for bankruptcy in 1927. He and his wife, Clara, moved to Chicago where he got a job as a monument salesman. Harry died in Chicago at the age of 56 in 1935. He and Clara are buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Section 35, Lot 104. Ironically, neither have a grave marker. Back to the Smith monument. The stone cutting was done by the Smith Granite Company of Westerly, Rhode Island. More specifically, the actual carving and lettering was done by Natale Comolli and Victorio Tolfa, both highly skilled Italian immigrants. Not much is known about Mr. Tolfa. Mr. Comolli, however, has left us a record. His 1920 passport picture (shown at right) is of poor quality, but it is him. Born in 1878 in Lombardia, Italy, he came to America in 1893. He became a naturalized citizen in 1899. In 1911 he married Maude Broggini, and they had two children. He died in 1936, and is buried in Westerly, Rhode Island. The work that these two artisans did is worth a closer look. The next time you're heading into Dedication Valley, follow the curve of Section 14 to the Smith monument. Take a moment to admire the work of Natale Comolli and Victorio Tolfa. And now you know the rest of the story...



Report from HOCPA Board Member, Paul Harvey

An Exciting and Remarkable Sight! Why???

Because you are looking at three men who are DREAMERS but who are also DOERS. There are many dreamers among us and many doers but not so commonly do we find folks that combine both. Here are Rick Naylor, Karl Orlick of HOCPA and Cosmo Fanizzi, all local residents with a history of being dreamers that do. This was an exciting time for me because we were discussing new ideas for Oakwood Cemetery and beginning to put them into action. As a result, a new, improved Ghost Trail was developed, an effort to restore the mausoleums was begun with SUNY-ESF, the cemetery was decorated for Christmas with HOCPA's David Haas' help and Syracuse University's singers. There have been four winter hikes - something new this year. The original 19th century tour was uncovered and will be the July Tour. Best of all? These folks are fun and friendly and welcome new participants with new ideas. Wait until you see what's coming!



The Crypt Keepers

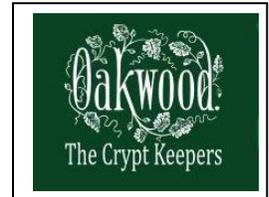
This year the group of approximately forty SUNY-ESF students who comprise the SUNY-ESF Crypt Keepers (aka "friends of Oakwood"), joined HOCPA in its efforts to clear and restore many areas and monuments. The photos below show the before and after of a late February work session. They joined the Girl Scout Crypt Keepers to help the Haggerty family landscape the famous Haggerty Lion memorial, they have virtually



restored the old Lilac Circle that lies on the border of Oakwood and ESF, and they cleared a quarter acre plot of reeds revealing about twenty headstones covered for several years. During the winter they have helped restore drainage to remove ice build-up and have helped us begin efforts to restore the interior of the old Chapel, discovering, loving and protecting a number of bats as they worked. Most recently they have begun efforts to re-erect the old Moon Tomb, cleared the Comstock bench and removed vines from nearby trees and assorted graves. The Moon Tomb is the gravesite of F. Franklin Moon who was a professor (1912-1920), acting Dean (1917-1918) and Dean of the New York State College of Forestry from 1920 to 1929. The grave (located in Section 54) is listed in *Wikipedia* as "overlooking" the campus. Unfortunately, for a number of years it has been flat on the ground and covered with debris.

Due to the current Coronavirus problem, this may be the last project of the Spring season. Nevertheless, the group has had an incredible string of successful adventures in their efforts to partner with Morningside Cultural Trails (MCT), Historic Oakwood Cemetery Preservation Association (HOCPA) and the Cemetery to clear and restore a large section of the Cemetery. We hope to restore The Moon Tomb in time for the ESF Homecoming in October.

For more information, contact Paul Harvey at 315.247.4420 or at luludoodah@aol.com.





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THE HISTORIC OAKWOOD CEMETERY
PRESERVATION ASSOCIATION

The five levels of sponsorship are:



\$10 Lillian Oakwood Gardner Level. Lillian was the infant daughter of George Gardner, the first superintendent of Oakwood. She was born in 1863 in the Superintendent's cottage, but lived only 10 months. She is buried in Section 4, Lot 107 with her parents and two siblings.



\$25 Elias W. Leavenworth Level. Elias Leavenworth, known as the "Father of Oakwood Cemetery," was one of its founders, and its first President. He was also twice Mayor of Syracuse, and served two terms in the U.S. House of Representatives.



\$50 Herbert H. Franklin Level. H. H. Franklin was the founder of the Franklin Automobile Company, producing the first automobile air cooled engine in 1902.



\$75 James J. Belden Level. James J. Belden, a former congressman and mayor, was for 36 years a trustee of Oakwood. He donated the funds to build the entrance arch and the cemetery's greenhouses.



\$100 Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage. Mrs. Sage was the widow of Wall Street tycoon, Russell Sage. When he died, she became one of the wealthiest women in America. She then devoted her life to philanthropy.

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HOCPA, PO BOX 15065, Syracuse NY 13215

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“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant:
if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”
Anne Bradstreet (1612-1692, not in Oakwood)

This interesting item from *Chase's Annual*, 2002:

AMERICA'S FIRST FORMAL CREMATION: ANNI-VERSARY. Dec 9, 1792. The first formal cremation of a human body in America took place near Charleston, SC. Henry Laurens, colonial statesman and signer of the Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War, in his will provided: "I do solemnly enjoin it on my son, as an indispensable duty, that as soon as he conveniently can, after my decease, he cause my body to be wrapped in twelve yards of tow cloth and burned until it be entirely consumed, and then, collecting my bones, deposit them wherever he may think proper." Laurens died Dec 8, 1792, at his plantation, and was cremated there.



Question from last issue:

Whose headstone is this?

Answer: Thomas (1784-1866)
& Eliza Rose (1784-1862)
Section 13, Lot 14

Holding hands for eternity.



address correction requested

H.O.C.P.A.
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