



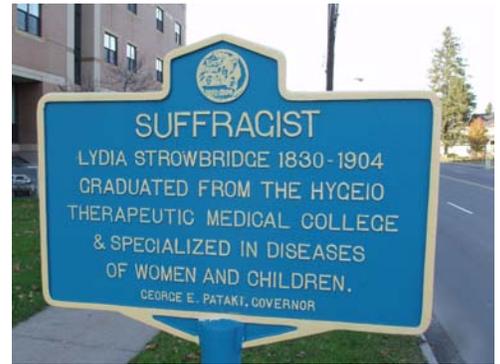
Cortland Rural Cemetery

A DYNAMIC DUO REST IN OUR CEMETERY

Lydia Hammond, born in Freetown in 1830, and John W. Strowbridge, born in Solon in 1827, were married in 1851. They moved to Cortland's Monroe Heights where they lived for nearly half a century.

She was considered an invalid in her youth and also in her later years. John was known to suffer heart problems early as an adult. Health does not appear to have restricted their dedication to causes, however.

Lydia determined to make medicine a career and studied with local doctors. John, educated at Cortland's Academy, taught school at the brick school at the end of Groton Avenue, at the Port Watson Street school, and also the cobblestone school on Church Street. He left these winter occupations for building and contracting.



During the Civil War, John raised funds and encouraged enlistments for the 185th New York Volunteers, and soon found himself designated captain of its Company F. As John went off to war, Lydia enrolled in the Hygeio Therapeutic Medical College of New York City. As one of Cortland County's earliest women physicians, her practice concentrated on women's and children's diseases. She supported the women's dress reform movement, abolition, women's voting rights, and temperance. She and her husband were members of the Universalist Church.

On one occasion while at her son's home at the corner of Monroe Heights and Cortland Street (Groton Avenue), two men broke in, dragged her by the hair outdoors, and continued to bang her head on the ground.



Her cries for help brought out a male neighbor. That sent the violators on the run to two nearby saloons, where Lydia identified them to police.

In 1869 she and seven male speakers took part in the 21st anniversary of the Friends of Human Progress, at Waterloo, New York. Its theme was the failure of our social system as well as our moral and physical lives.

A female reporter from New York City described Lydia's appearance as "dark complected, about 37 years old, with sharp brown eyes, a pleasant demeanor,

Photo by Harris. OFFICERS OF THE POLITICAL EQUALITY CLUB.
Dr. Lydia Strowbridge, Vice-P. Mrs. Anna Bentley, Vice-P.
Miss Myra Norton, Sec. Mrs. Lucy L. Linderman, Pres. Mrs. Frances P. Mudge, Cor. Sec.

VISIBLE IMPROVEMENTS REFLECT YOUR SUPPORT



Gifts to the Foundation have funded in whole or in part these projects: copper flashing on the office roof; two water stations; solar lamp post; awning to protect refurbished door to mausoleum; and two multi-use tractors seen below with Ron Hayes at the controls.



"A DYNAMIC DUO" *Cont'd from page 1*

clad in a bloomer costume of gray trousers being loose and hanging well, and her skirt descending an inch or two below the knee. The body of her coat fitted lightly..."



In January 1898, John Strowbridge drove his cutter to the DL&W railroad station to pick up his wife returning from Marathon. On Pendleton Street near Port Watson Street he was seen to collapse to the bottom of his vehicle. Two passing physicians corralled the horse and were stunned to find John dead.

Lydia died October 4, 1904 of cancer. Since her husband's death, her own health had once again made her an invalid. She is commemorated by New York State sign in front of Cortland's hospital on Homer Avenue near the corner of West Main Street. Her husband's memory lives on for a California gentleman who owns the 185th New York Volunteer sword inscribed as John's.

This newsletter is prepared by a Foundation committee: S. Baden, J. Clark, C. Fenton, M. A. Kane, J. Seligmann, and E. Spaulding. Check out Facebook and www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com

-- Mary Ann Kane



FIRST-EVER CEMETERY ART SHOW IN HISTORIC SITE!

Thanks to grants from CNY Arts and the noon-hour Cortland Rotary Club, and technical assistance from the Cultural Council of Cortland County (CCCC), the Cortland Rural Cemetery hosted its first-ever art show featuring art inspired by the Cemetery. The show was held at the new home of the CCCC, the historic superintendent's house located at 110 Tompkins Street on cemetery grounds.

Over 40 pieces of art were submitted by 26 "citizen artists" of all ages and backgrounds. All art forms were accepted and encouraged, including paintings, illustrations, photography, mixed media, fabric art and more. The art show opened on September 5th with 71 people attending the gala event and continued through October 3rd. The evening enjoyed a huge success.



This first event marks the beginning of the innovative, mutually beneficial alliance between the CRC and the now co-located CCCC. We think it is a great beginning to one of many efforts the Trustees are making to expand the community's perception of, and engagement with, the Cemetery. Watch for more, similar events to come!

-- Elizabeth Spaulding

LIVE THEATER AT THE CEMETERY!

If the September 5th Cemetery Art Show marked the beginning of the Cemetery as an 'artistic' resource, September 27 established the CRC as a viable venue for live "theater" - with the production of Bill Whiting's play *The Toughnioga River Anthology*.

Held inside a 'big tent' adjacent to the Gibson Chapel, attended by 148, and followed by a reception inside the chapel - the dramatic production featured notable, deceased citizens from Cortland County's past "speaking from the grave." Among them were trombonist Spiegel Wilcox, baseball great John J McGraw, Amelia Jenks Bloomer, and several members of the renowned Randall family (still apparently engaged in sibling rivalries, even in the afterlife!)

Produced and hosted by the cemetery, the production was co-directed by Ben Wells and Scott Gay, who brought together a diverse cast of local thespians from the Trope Troupe (based at the United Presbyterian Church) and student actors from the Cortland High Theatre program. The play itself -- written by beloved Homer teacher and local theater advocate Bill Whiting (deceased, 2010) - was inspired by Edgar Lee Masters' renowned book of poetry, the *Spoon River Anthology* (1915); unlike Master's original fictional work, Whiting's work dramatizes the lives of actual people who lived, and died, in Cortland County... Many of which are buried in the CRC itself.

In addition to the directors and actors who donated many hours to make it happen, the CRC gave special thanks to volunteer videographer Sharon Stevans and TimeWarner Cable for taping the show (it can be seen on YouTube, accessed through the CRC website); the Cortland County Historical Society & Cortland JR/SR High School for use of props and costumes; SUNY Cortland for donation of the stage; Dr. Cheryl Reygers Dental Office for use of its parking lot; and

ANGEL SOCIETY GETS ITS WINGS



Last year the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation established the Angel Society to recognize those who have made a major financial contribution or established a legacy gift to benefit the Cemetery.

Next Spring the Society will recognize those organizations and individuals who have accepted membership at a reception in the Gibson Chapel scheduled for May 17, 2015. A planned bequest or cumulative lifetime gift of \$5,000 or more qualifies a donor for membership.

the noon-hour Cortland Rotary Club for both financial and parking assistance.

"I gained a real appreciation for the work, creativity, and logistics that go into producing a theater production," said CRC Board President, John Hoeschele. "Hopefully, in turn, attendees and the community gained a new appreciation for our cemetery as a historical and cultural asset."

— Hoeschele



Trope Troupe member Tom Corey brings General Roswell Randall "back to life" -- while CHS student-actor Bailey Windhausen (as Bertha Blodgett) looks on.

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Spaces in the Gibson Chapel are available in its mausoleum for caskets and in its columbaria for cremation urns. The Chapel may also be used for memorial and other services. Please call the Cemetery office at (607) 756-6022 for costs and other information.

Tax-deductible gifts to preserve and enhance the Cemetery may be made to the Foundation. Checks should be made out to the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation.



Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation

Post Office Box 288
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www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com



Jeff Briggs, Homer native and former caretaker of the cemeteries in Virgil, joined the staff this summer as Office Manager with increasing responsibilities. He brings a rich experiential background much appreciated by the Trustees.