



# Cortland Rural Cemetery

110 TOMPKINS STREET • CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045

AUTUMN 2005

## A Renaissance Man

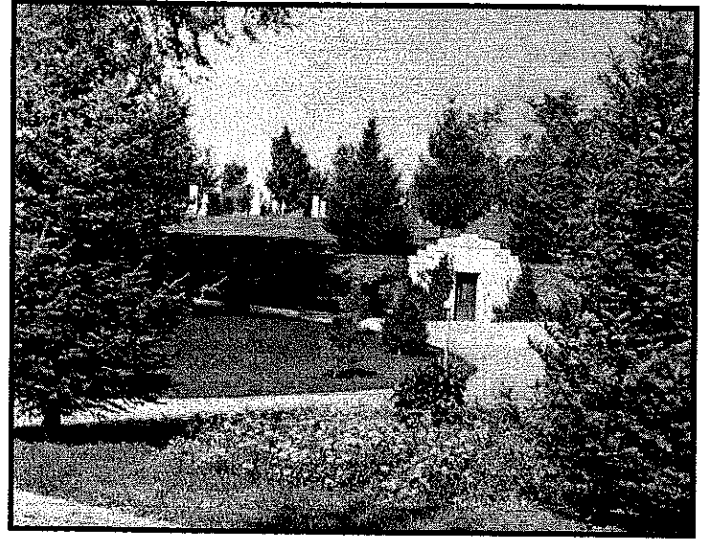
By CHRISTINE BUCK

On the first hour of the first day of the first month of the year 1830, Burton B. Morehouse saw the light of day. He was born in Connecticut, the only son of Lemon and Betsy Morehouse, and their youngest child. Perhaps it was this auspicious moment of birth that caused him to become a man of diverse interests and one who had a lasting impact on the Cortland Rural Cemetery.

For New Englanders in the early 1800s, the nation's western frontier of New York State seemed attractive with its vast available acreage. The Morehouse family left Connecticut in 1837 and migrated to McLean, Tompkins County. Lemon Morehouse, the father of the family, died the following year, leaving his widow and three young children to make their own way.

Burton, when a young man, apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner and successfully made a living. He married Mary Hill of Dryden, and they were blessed with three daughters—Emma, Ella, and Jennie. They moved to a farm in South Cortland in 1864, where he tilled the soil and sold sand from the property for building purposes. He was active in the community, finding time to serve as a member of the Board of Health for fifteen years and as Commissioner of Highways for the town of Cortlandville. He was a member of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, where he held leadership positions. After retiring from farming in 1889, Mr. Morehouse did not remain idle; he built bridges. It was said in 1898 that he had built all but two of Cortlandville's active iron bridges.

It was the year 1890 when the Wickwires built their fabulous stone residence on Tompkins Street. That same year Burton Morehouse was named to a one-year term as Superintendent of the Cortland Rural Cemetery. His service was so completely satisfactory that he was given a permanent



*Early Stereocard View  
Entrance — Cortland Rural Cemetery*

appointment the following year and moved his family to the superintendent's residence on the cemetery grounds. His annual salary in 1891 was \$600; his horse team also worked at the cemetery and was paid with hay and grain.

Growth and stability occurred during Mr. Morehouse's superintendency, but he is particularly remembered for his efforts to beautify the cemetery grounds. Stone steps and marble corner markers were installed; toppled gravestones were repaired; foundations were mandated for new monuments; the house, office, and barn were painted. Most of all, the lawns, shrubbery, and flower beds were improved and embellished to the point where they were perceived as being among the finest in the State.

He oversaw the building of the cemetery's handsome new receiving vault in 1892. Constructed of brick with a granite front, the vault could hold sixty caskets over the winter for spring burial. His name, and that of the cemetery trustees, was

*(continued on page 2)*

engraved on a tablet and placed on the vault's front.

It was during Mr. Morehouse's term that the cemetery donated a lot to the Grand Army of the Republic for the burial of indigent soldiers. That organization placed a granite monument to commemorate their fellow Civil War veterans buried on the lot.

Mr. Morehouse was the first superintendent to have telephone service in his residence. In 1901 it was seen as a business necessity, and a telephone was installed at the cost of \$1.00 per month.

After completing twelve years of service to the cemetery, Mr. Morehouse died April 1, 1902 of heart disease while still employed. The funeral was held at his residence on the cemetery grounds, 110 Tompkins Street. Mr. Morehouse's four grandsons acted as bearers, and the cemetery Trustees attended the services in a group. He was buried on lot G-27 with other family members, a fine granite monument marking the lot.

At their meeting of April 5, the Trustees eulogized Mr. Morehouse. He was remembered as having been polite, courteous, painstaking, and obliging to lot owners and visitors alike. He was suitably fitted and equipped for the performance of his duties. He was faithful and deeply interested in every detail of his work. He took particular pride in improvements and beautifying the cemetery. His loss was deeply deplored by the Trustees.

But this is not the end of the story. Mr. Morehouse's grandson and namesake Burton Gallagher was appointed that same day as cemetery Superintendent. He had gained some experience working at the cemetery on a seasonal basis. His superintendency lasted 40 years until ill health forced his retirement in 1942. Then Burton Gallagher's son Floyd, known as *Dutch* (great-grandson to Mr. Morehouse) was appointed Superintendent and served until July 1, 1971, again ill health causing his retirement. This family dynasty supervised the cemetery's operations for 81 years, from 1890 until 1971. Quite an achievement!

Mr. Morehouse's great-granddaughter, an Auburn resident, celebrated her 100th birthday in 2004. In a *Post-Standard* interview, Inez Gallagher Bancroft recounted having been born and married in the house on the cemetery grounds. The cemetery's archives hold charming photos and snapshots kindly donated by Mrs. Bancroft, informal views of family members, with the cemetery always the unifying backdrop. ♣

#### References:

- Cortland Rural Cemetery Minutes of Trustee Meetings*
- The Book of Biographies (1898)*
- The Cortland Standard (April 4, 1902)*
- The Syracuse Post-Standard (November 29, 2004)*

## New Tractor



The J. M. McDonald Foundation came through in a big way for the Cemetery Foundation and Cemetery this spring when we needed it most.

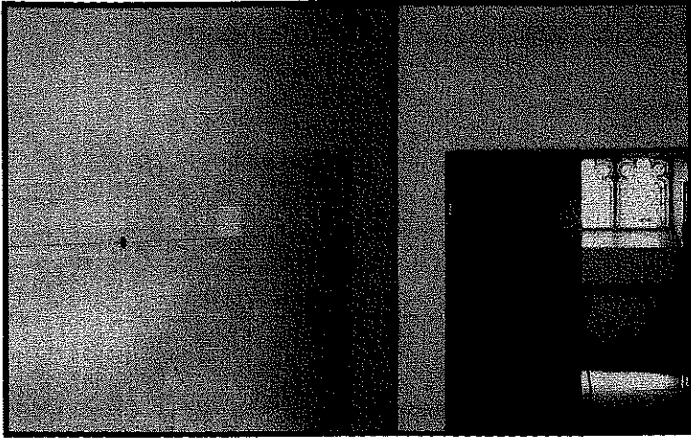
Our workhorse Ford Tractor, with 8,500 hours of use on it, finally quit working as a result of worn-out hydraulics.

Then, on Wednesday before Memorial Day, our other primary mowing tractor suffered significant mechanical failure, leaving just our trusty old John Deere to mow with. We tried our best to get all the mowing done, but 40 acres of lawn is too much for one machine.

Meanwhile, we had applied to the McDonald Foundation for a grant to purchase a new mower with and they came through with \$12,000 which paid for the majority of the cost of a new tractor and mower.

We are deeply grateful for the substantial support the J.M. McDonald Foundation has given us over the years. ♣

# New Public Mausoleum Open House!



An Open House and Tours will be held on Sunday, October 9, 2005 from 1 to 4 in the afternoon to show the public our Public Mausoleum and Chapel and provide walking tours of the Cemetery grounds.

A dedication service will be held at 2 p.m. during the Open House.

The first phase in a series of planned mausoleum construction projects, this mausoleum will allow the public an affordable option for permanent entombment above ground. This is a first for the Cortland area.

Designed by Schopfer Architects of Syracuse, a firm well experienced in the mausoleum construction field, the first phase contains 36 crypts which are now complete and able to be used. New exterior doors are being constructed to finish the project. Completed in rose and white Italian Marble, the Mausoleum is already striking in appearance.

The second and third phases of the Mausoleum will contain cremation niches along with more crypts for casket interment. And the Cemetery already offers cremation niche spaces for sale inside the beautiful historic Chapel. The Cemetery, while historic in origin, is providing a full range of contemporary choices for your loved one's final resting place.

Pricing of the Mausoleum crypts and cremation niches are comparable or less than the total costs of a mid-price range traditional ground burial and memorialization. If you are interested in the purchase of a Mausoleum crypt, or a niche, or would like more information, please call Cemetery Superintendent Andrew Palm at 607-756-6022 for an appointment.

# How a Cemetery is Funded

We often get asked how the Cemetery is funded. It's a not-for-profit corporation that raises most of its operating revenues by the sale of lots, fees for interments and the installations of markers and foundations for monuments. We are not part of any local government and are not funded by taxes. We have a limited trust fund (Perpetual Care and Permanent Maintenance) which provides only about 15% of the money we need to operate every year.

Our responsibilities for Buildings and Grounds Maintenance include periodic mowing of the grass. While we have historically maintained the shrubbery on individual lots, that maintenance is the responsibility of the persons planting shrubs on their own lots. As warmer weather prolongs our mowing season, shrub maintenance has gotten more difficult to do. Adding to the problem, increasing the minimum wage has pushed our labor costs up and reduced the man-hours we have to work with.

Costs for labor and energy have been rising substantially. We have been very effective in trying to contain our manageable costs, but our real need is to develop new sources of revenue and build our Trust Funds to the point that they provide support equal to the percentage of the Cemetery lands already sold. Since 80% of the Cemetery land is sold, then 80% of the maintenance operating cost should be coming from Trust Fund revenues.

The Cemetery Foundation has been the principal source of support for capital items (like tractors and trees) and building maintenance and improvement.

As a shift in public usage to cremation has been occurring, and above-ground interment has been more desirable, the Cemetery has shifted to offering both public mausoleum space and cremation niches. The Cemetery will continue to expand its offerings along those lines along with seeking other new sources of revenue. Meanwhile, your support is greatly needed and appreciated. 🌳

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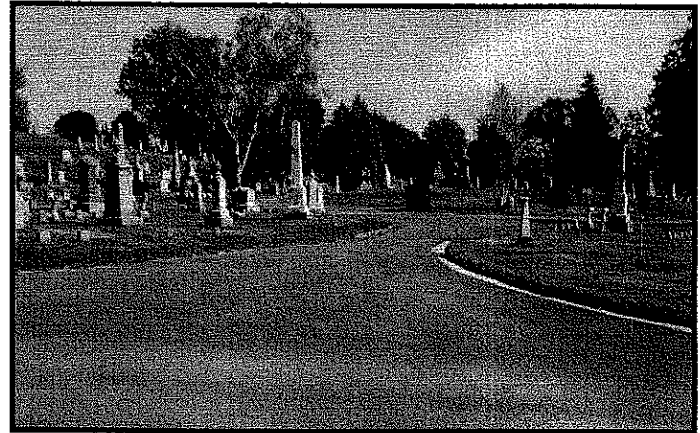
## Donations Needed *TREES & GENERAL SUPPORT*

The Cemetery Foundation needs you to continue your generous support of our efforts to maintain roads, plant trees, repair buildings and educate others about our beautiful, historic Cemetery.

Donations can be made in the name of a family member or friend you wish to honor. Large trees can be planted for a \$300 donation and ornamental trees for a \$250 donation.

Checks can be addressed to the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation at P.O. Box 288, Cortland, NY 13045 and are fully tax deductible.

# Economy Paving Company Road Repair for 2005



Thanks to your generous support the past several years, we finally accumulated enough money to again make a substantial road repair in 2005. Looping between Sections C, D and J, and connecting together several sections of previously rebuilt road, the newly rebuilt road base and paving have provided a clean new road to the more heavily visited western sections of the Cemetery.

The work was done by Economy Paving Company of Cortland at a favorable price of \$28,500. Rising oil prices have driven the price of all asphalt materials up considerably this year (30% just this spring) but Economy Paving has generously allowed us to defer payment of \$10,000 for a year. Now we need your donations to pay for this work and save more for future road repair. ♣



Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation  
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