



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY

SPRING 2026

A Living History of Cortland

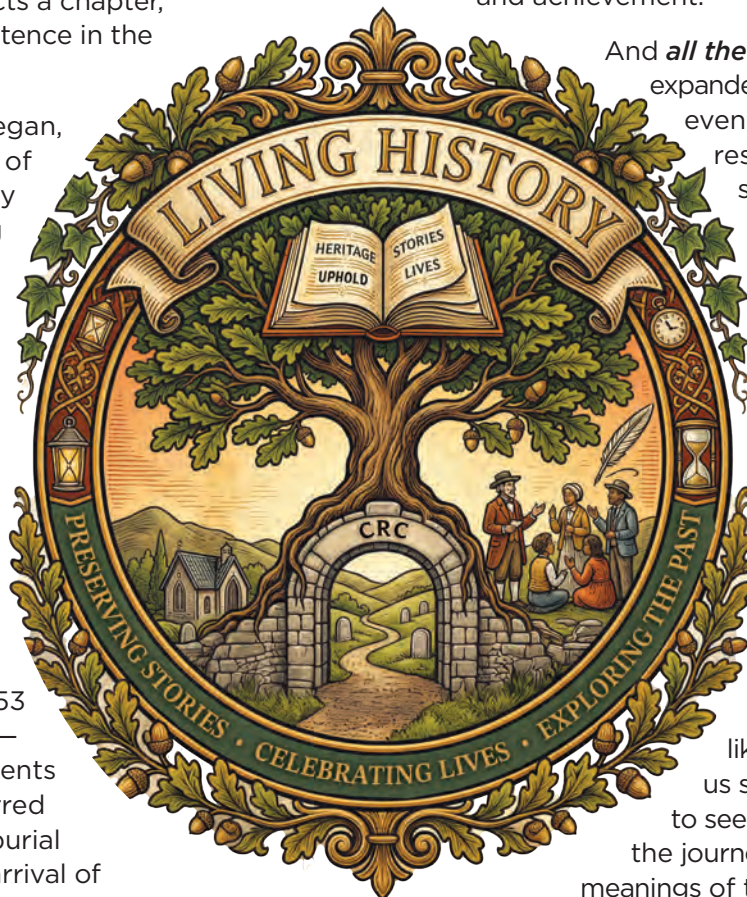
Walk through the Cortland Rural Cemetery, and you are doing more than paying respects or getting exercise amidst nature — you are stepping into the living history of a community shaped by generations of change. Every name, every date, every family plot, and every gravestone reflects a chapter, a page, or an individual sentence in the story of Cortland.

Our modern community began, of course, in the aftermath of the American Revolutionary War, when the surrounding lands became part of New York's Military Tract (territory granted to soldiers in return for their service) — bringing settlers primarily from New England, who carved farms out of the wilderness and established a rural enclave that would evolve over time.

By the time the cemetery itself was established in 1853 as a 12-acre burial ground — some of whose first interments were early citizens transferred from other smaller, earlier burial grounds in the area — the arrival of railroads and factories began transforming Cortland to an increasingly industrial and mercantile town.

With these turn-of-the-century developments came more people, including waves of immigrants — Irish, Italian, Ukrainian, Polish, Greek, and Lebanese — all

seeking opportunity and a better life. Once here, these new residents built neighborhoods, established churches, started businesses... All against a backdrop of societal developments and shifts: Wars, epidemics, times of civil and economic strife, periods of growth and achievement.



And *all the while* — as the CRC expanded to 40+ acres and would eventually be the permanent resting place of over 19,000 souls (amazingly close to our present-day City's population) — the markers, monuments, and mausoleums across our grounds have mirrored in stone the stories of our community.

Today, that truth continues, transforming a simple walk along our roads and lawns into a journey through time.

And, perhaps, that is the most important role cemeteries like ours play: Giving those of us still blessed with life a chance to see, experience, and remember the journeys, impacts, and deeper meanings of those who've crossed over before us.

Cemeteries may be places of rest. But they are also places of connection — linking us to our history, to one another, and to the enduring story of the community we share.





CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY

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Newsletter Layout

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CRC BOARD CHAIR, KATHY CINCOTTA, NAMED A Woman of Distinction by NYS Assemblyperson Anna Kelles

We are proud to note that our Board Chair, Kathy Cincotta, was recognized as a Woman of Distinction by New York State Assemblywoman (125th District), Anna Kelles, in a ceremony held at the Assemblywoman's headquarters in Ithaca on March 27th.

The honor was offered to Kathy, among other deserving women throughout the NYS 125th District, for "their contributions to our community, either through community leadership, civic participation, activism, service, volunteering, or other noteworthy accomplishments."

As many of our readers know, Kathy is a deeply dedicated volunteer and current Board President who works tirelessly to ensure the preservation, operation, and stewardship of our historic, non-profit cemetery. Previously a library aide for the Cortland City School District, Kathy continues to serve and benefit our local community...this time by playing a huge role in overseeing our City's oldest and largest cemetery, resting place to thousands, and an invaluable historic resource.

"...Kathy is a deeply dedicated volunteer and current Board President who works tirelessly to ensure the preservation, operation, and stewardship of our historic, non-profit cemetery"...



Thank you Kathy for all that you do!

Want to Continue Our Progress?

Please consider making a tax deductible gift to the Cortland Rural Cemetery and returning it using the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your support!



TOP: KATHY CINCOTTA WITH ASSEMBLYPERSON ANNA KELLES.

RIGHT: CERTIFICATE OF MERIT AWARDED



Thank you to... The City of Cortland DPW!

Many thanks to City of Cortland Mayor Steve and the Department of Public Works for picking up our massive pile of dirt, branches, stumps, etc. (several years' worth) from our Sands Street property. This will make a huge difference to our operation over the next couple years and is a big financial help!

THE CORTLAND DPW MAKING
THE HEAVY LIFTING AT THE SANDS STREET
PROPERTY LOOK EASY.



Cemetery Funds Engineering Survey of Gibson Memorial Chapel

From a distance, the CRC's historic Gibson Memorial Chapel looks as lovely as ever. Up close, however, the building is definitely showing signs of aging and deterioration. Not surprising, given that this gem (designed by renowned architect, George Conable, who is buried in our cemetery) is now over 100 years old.

Comprised of four distinct additions — commencing with the construction of an underground vault in 1922 — the structure has endured harsh winters, water infiltration from the slate roof, and considerable gravitational force from the hill above.

Despite significant repairs and renovations funded by several individuals over the years, time continues to put strain on the building — which has led the current Board of Directors to commission the Syracuse-based engineers and historic building experts at Klepper, Hahn & Hyatt to conduct a study to determine the extent of the current issues and arrive at an estimate for repairs.

TIME CONTINUES TO PUT A STRAIN
ON THE 100+ YEAR OLD GIBSON MEMORIAL CHAPEL



Stay tuned for updates in upcoming issues of this newsletter, on our Facebook page, and on our website.



Interested in “Buried Treasures” and Hidden Gems? Local History Lovers Needed!

If you’ve not followed the CRC on Facebook, now would be a **good time to do so** — as we launch a new series of posts requesting information from the community (especially local history buffs!) that will help us tell the stories of some of the notable graves on our grounds.

Entitled “*Here Lies...*” — this series of social media posts will feature either our oldest headstones or prominent markers erected to memorialize prominent families/citizens. Our hope is that local-history fans and genealogists will utilize Facebook’s “comments” tool to help us learn more about the folks we’ve identified (citations and sources will be encouraged)... Be it an anecdote, a photo, a news article, or other revelatory tidbit of information.

Once in hand, our plan is to confirm and vet what’s submitted and then add these stories to the “Buried Treasures” page of our website.

Interested in participating or just following along? Find us on Facebook today!



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Cortland Rural Cemetery
110 Tompkins Street
Cortland, NY 13045-0288
Web: www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Be an Angel

*Learn how your donation or legacy gift
can make a difference
at the Cortland Rural Cemetery.
Contact us to schedule a private
consultation and learn about becoming
a member of our Angel Society.*
www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com

