



CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY

Buried Treasures!

About Buried Treasures

A NYS Governor who defeated Al Smith in the 1920 race for that post... A suffragette who, following her medical studies after the Civil War, practiced homeopathic medicine and advocated for women's rights... A Civil War Veteran and commander of the NY76th Regiment, who was killed at Gettysburg...

These and countless other noteworthy citizens of the Cortland community are among those interred in the 44-acre, 160-year old Cortland Rural Cemetery (CRC). In the months and years ahead, "Buried Treasures" -- an occasional column published in the Cortland Standard -- will seek to tell their stories.

Why would anyone want to write, let alone read, about the departed of a small town like Cortland. Is it not better to 'let the dead lie?' To a point, yes; the recently deceased deserve their rest, and the living who survive them have every right to grieve their loved ones in private or as they see fit. Still, there comes a time -- years, decades, even centuries later -- when our ancestors' stories should be told. For not only do we owe it to them to keep their memories alive (is this not the implicit point of the granite and marble headstones we leave behind?), we owe ourselves, our children, and future generations the ever-improving understanding of humanity that can only be derived from studying individual, community, and societal history. Simply put, it is our solemn responsibility to listen to the dead.

Beyond individual stories, "Buried Treasures" will explore larger themes and subjects that arise from a closer and varied view of the CRC. While some have referred to cemeteries as sprawling, outdoor museums -- it's perhaps more useful to see them as massive mirrors in which we can see different facets of our history. Looked at one way, a walk through the CRC yields insights on immigration trends. Looked at another way, you can see economic patterns. Change perspective again and again, you'll gain insights on public health, religion, art, landscaping, architecture, warfare, societal attitudes toward death, and much, much more. And they're all topics we'll explore here.

Finally, and no pun intended, this column will have three ground rules. First, we'll be respectful. Second, we will strive to be accurate, while noting that "truth" emerges gradually when exploring local subjects not widely or studied by historians (meaning: if you see an error or have an insight, let us know!) Finally, we'll give credit where it's due in terms of contributing writers, researchers, and sources.

Hope you'll join us!

~ John Hoeschele, President -- Cortland Rural Cemetery Board of Trustees

Buried Treasures: Installment 1

Governor Nathan Miller

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

Nearly 100 years after besting incumbent Al Smith to be elected New York State's Governor in 1920, Nathan L. Miller remains the last "Upstate" candidate to be elected governor – and he now rests in the Cortland Rural Cemetery.

That's Nathan Lewis Miller, a Cortland County native, son of a tenant farmer, born in the Town of Solon in 1868. When Nate was five years old, the family moved to Groton where he started school in a little country schoolhouse. He moved rapidly through the grades, while at the same time performing farm chores at home – pitching hay, picking apples, husking corn, and milking the cows. Miller entered Cortland Normal School at age 15 and excelled at Mathematics and Latin. Graduating as a teacher with the class of 1887, he then taught in Burdett, Brooklyn, Blodgett Mills, and McLean for a total of three years.

But Miller was determined to become a lawyer and studied law during those years of teaching. At age 21, he joined the law firm of Judge A.P. Smith of Cortland as a clerk and was admitted to the bar in 1893. He began private practice of the law where his fine speaking and thinking abilities advanced his position. He was elected School Commissioner and worked to advance the interests of the Republican party. He married a Marathon girl, Elizabeth Davern, in 1896 and at the turn of the century became Cortland's corporation counsel. After several short-term housing situations, he and his family settled into their home at 44 Tompkins Street, Cortland.

His work in the Republican party brought his appointment to the vacant post of New York State Comptroller in 1902, and to the New York State Supreme Court in 1903. After 12 years, he resigned from the bench to practice law in Syracuse, saying that Mrs. Miller and their seven daughters were eight reasons why he needed more income than his judicial salary.

He became a prominent Syracuse attorney representing Solvay Process company, among others, and lived with his family in a James Street mansion. He attended the 1920 Republican convention as one of the founders of the Liberty League and was drafted as the Republican candidate for governor. His Cortland County supporters expressed their pride by forming the "Miller League" to support his candidacy, establishing a Cortland headquarters and greeting Mr. Miller with an enthusiastic parade when he visited Cortland just prior to the election. The event was described in the Cortland Standard: *"From the D.A.R. boulder led by Marshal H.S. Hakes on horseback and Stanton's band, Judge Miller's car with its escort and four other cars followed by a long line of citizens made the march through Church Street, to Port Watson, to Main, to the Cortland theater. Main Street was one mass of cheering people and the whole length of it was brilliant with red fire and fireworks. The theater by this time was packed to the doors, all standing room was occupied. Those in the line of march had seats reserved for them on the platform which they reached through a rear door and the meeting then proceeded."*

After opening comments by other politicians, Candidate Miller stepped to the podium to the cheers of the Cortland folks. His platform included reducing expenses to deal with the State's problem of living beyond its resources; providing assistance to farmers; and working as a team with the Legislature.

Voting on November 2 was heavy; Miller dominated the Upstate vote and rode the crest of the Republican election wave, which included presidential and congressional successes. Miller gave incumbent Alfred Smith the first defeat of his political career.

During his two-year term as governor, Miller was noted for his businesslike approach to State government and was credited with straightening out New York City's transit system; providing child healthcare clinics; promoting the use of water power for electricity; and bringing industry to the State prisons. He ran again in 1922 Alfred Smith, only to be defeated this time. Even though prohibition was a Federal law, Smith had used it as an election issue against Miller. Miller had also offended the New York League of Women Voters during their an-



nual dinner speech when he declared "There is no proper place for a League of Women Voters, precisely as I should say there was no proper place for a League of Men Voters..." He felt that political activity should be confined to organized political parties.

After leaving office, Miller joined a Wall Street firm in 1923 and continued as senior partner until 1939, with such clients as U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel. Despite stepping away from politics, the State called him for assistance from time to time. Miller died in New York City at age 84 on June 26, 1953. He was survived by his wife; seven daughters; and grandchildren and great grandchildren. Funeral services were held in New York. On June 30, he was buried on the hilltop at Cortland Rural Cemetery, a stately event again described by the Cortland Standard: *"Back to the scenes of his boyhood and early teaching and lawyer days came the body of Nathan L. Miller, former governor of New York State, today. Arriving by train from New York, where a funeral service was held yesterday, the body was taken to the Cortland Rural Cemetery for interment. The brief committal service was conducted by Rev. John F. Lynch, pastor of St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, Manlius. Gathered around the family plot, marked by a large granite block simply engraved 'Miller,' were Mr. Miller's widow, the former Elizabeth Davern of Marathon, his seven daughters, their husbands and 11 grandchildren, in addition to a number of other relatives. Members of the Cortland Bar Association turned out in a body to honor the former Cortland attorney. Local police and State troopers provided a guard of honor. On hand at the Lackawanna station as the train rolled in from Syracuse at 9:01 a.m. – exactly on time – was a large gathering of local lawyers, county and civic officials, and members of some of Cortland's most prominent families. Members of the Miller family arrived in a special Pullman car from New York. After the family descended, the train was moved forward and the highly burnished casket was removed to the waiting hearse of the Beard Memorial Home. Paced by two State trooper cars, the entourage of automobiles wound slowly along Central Avenue to Church Street, through Port Watson Street, and along Tompkins Street to the cemetery. Under the canopy of an almost cloudless sky, the body of the man who rose from a farm background to governor of the nation's most populous state and then legal counsel to one of the world's largest corporations, was laid to rest."*

In addition to his burial marker, Miller is remembered locally by the name of SUNY Cortland's Miller Administration Building and by a portrait recently donated to the Cortland County Historical Society by his former Wall Street legal firm, still in business, with more than 1000 employees.

Buried Treasures: Installment 2

Alice Catley Ettling

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

Alice Catley Ettling's story is one of remarkable achievement for a woman of her time. Now she lies in an unmarked grave in Section G of the Cortland Rural Cemetery, just a few feet from Civil War hero Major Andrew Grover.

Born to pioneer carriage and wagon maker, Shepard W. Catley in 1850, Alice's family moved to Cortland from Tully when she was a young girl. Alice attended the Cortland Normal school and graduated with its second class in 1871. She taught for a few years, then trained at the New York Hospital to become a nurse. In 1881 she married Henry Ettling of Cortland, had a son named Henry Catley Ettling, and was widowed in four short years at the age of 35.

After leaving a sales position with wagon *manufacturers Fitzgerald & Kinney*, poor health and advancing years caused her father's retirement. Always an ingenious inventor, he continued inventing carriage improvements; in partnership with Alice as Catley & Ettling, the two began manufacturing carriage specialties in 1888. Alice must have learned well from her father, for she continued the business after his death in 1898. She excelled as a businesswoman, receiving medals, diplomas, and special recognition from her peers for marketing her father's inventions and seeing that they were adopted by the largest carriage manufacturers.

The 1899 *Grip's Historical Souvenir of Cortland* recounts her business successes as "proprietor of patents known as Catley Carriage Attachments" and also describes her as an "active, shrewd, and enterprising business woman."

Mrs. Ettling was given credit for having furnished the capital to develop and manufacture her father's inventions and for marketing them nationwide. Most noteworthy were the buggy prop spring and lever which raised and lowered the buggy top. Mrs. Ettling was touted as having been the only lady exhibitor at the National Carriage Builder's Association events and expositions over a period of years. In a man's world of manufacturing, she recounted that she had always been treated with courtesy and had been given a cordial welcome by all.

She continued the business until 1916, in the last few years with the assistance of her son. The advent and popularity of the horseless carriage no doubt brought a halt to her business, along with numerous other Cortland and buggy concerns.

Her activities in Cortland were many. She was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, the Eastern Star, the Tioughnioga Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Twentieth Century Club. Along with three other ladies, she raised funds to start Cortland's first hospital and served on its board of lady managers. She was also an organizer of the Red Cross in Cortland and was a life member of the Gideons (providers of Bibles to hotel rooms).

From 1920 on, Mrs. Ettling divided her time between Cortland and Massachusetts. Her death from pneumonia came in 1924 while visiting California to visit her sister. Her obituary remembered her as "alive, alert, systematic, and business-like. Personally she was kindly, cordial, and friendly, which accounted for the host of friends which she had all over the country."

In addition to her sister, Mrs. Ettling was survived by her son, Henry Catley Ettling of Springfield, Massachusetts. Her remains were brought to Cortland, where she was buried next to her husband in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. From teacher to nurse; wife to single mother; manufacturer to marketer; community fundraiser to benefactor, Alice Catley Ettling was a genuine, 19th-century success.



FOLLOW-UP: The appearance of this column in the Cortland Standard inspired John Fielding Ettling (great-great grandson of Mrs. Ettling) to contact the cemetery. His doing so yielded these additional artifacts below. Thanks, John, for reaching out to us and making the connection between the past and the present!

170 "GRIP'S" HISTORICAL SOUVENIR OF CORTLAND.

Hyatt. Photo. S. W. CATELY. [See sk., P. 169.]

early life developed remarkable fondness for fine horses and excellent judgment as to their qualities. In 1848 the works were moved to Tully, it being the conviction of Mr. Cately that better railroad facilities were needed. There they expanded and kept abreast with improvement, until finally they had a reputation second to none in the country. When the war of '61-'65 broke out Mr. Cately went to Washington and secured the contract for the construction of sixty wagons for the government for army train service, which were to be made and delivered in New York in sixty days. It was a big undertaking, but all of the mechanics that could be found were kept at work early and late, and the contract was fulfilled to the letter. Mr. Cately also furnished the government with large numbers of horses which he purchased in this state and Canada. In 1876 he stopped manufacturing and came to Cortland as a salesman for Fitzgerald & Kinney, wagon manufacturers. This position he held for years, later acting as salesman in another branch of the business for Mitchell & Lewis of Racine, Wis. Advancing years and poor health finally compelled him to retire from active physical labor, but he continued to exercise his inventive ingenuity, with the result that he perfected and patented after his retirement from the position of salesman eleven different inventions on vehicle attachments. In company with his daughter, Mrs. Alice M. Ettling, he turned his attention to getting his inventions into general use, father and daughter forming a co-partnership and together carrying on the manufacture of carriage specialties, notably the buggy prop spring and lever, until his death, which occurred at his home in Cortland, Dec. 18, 1898, in his 84th year. "Of Mr. Cately's long and busy sojourn in Brookfield," writes an old acquaintance, "it is highly proper to say that, notwithstanding the varied and exacting duties of his business, he still found time to bestow proper attention on social and society matters, and by his ease of manner and constancy became a favorite, if not a leader therein. He was also a born reformer, and when anti-slavery truths began to find utterance with thinking and progressive men, he was among the first in his com-

munity to espouse the then unpopular cause, thus ranking as a pioneer in moral reform as well as in his chosen business. His zeal and firmness as an Abolitionist in local work and in liberal contributions to the cause were well known and highly appreciated by leaders in the great moral revolution whose ultimate success he survived to witness." It may be added that his home was always open to the colored champions of their own race, who in those stirring times came north to plead the cause of their brethren.

Mrs. Alice M. Ettling, the proprietor of the patents known as the Cately Carriage Attachments, which she became interested in manufacturing and promoting in 1888, has been the only lady exhibitor for the past ten years at the annual conventions of The Carriage Builders' National association as well as at those of the Dealers' association as long as the latter have been meeting in annual gatherings. Mrs. Ettling is very widely and favorably known in the carriage trade of this country as an active, shrewd and enterprising business woman who took up her father's inventions, furnished the capital for perfecting and manufacturing them and personally placed them on the market. By reason of the energy and business tact which she displayed in exhibiting these inventions she succeeded in getting the two principal ones, the buggy prop spring and the lever by which buggy tops are raised and lowered into the hands of the builders so that they are in use all over the world. Her first success was at the Toronto exposition in 1889 where she leased the Canada patent on the buggy prop spring and in 1893 she was rewarded at the World's fair with a medal and diploma on both of those patents, also receiving a special diploma as a reward of merit by the lady board of managers to S. W. Cately as inventor and Alice M. Ettling for making a success of the exhibit. Many of the largest manufacturers in the country are adopting these attachments which have become standard articles in the manufacture of carriage tops.

Hyatt. Photo. MRS. ALICE M. ETTLING.

HENRY CATELY ETTLING

A. M. ETTLING

CATELY'S
BUGGY TOP PROP SPRINGS AND LEVERS
ROLLER CHAFE IRONS

MANUFACTURED BY

CATELY & ETTLING

ESTABLISHED 1888

MEMBERS CARRIAGE BUILDERS NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION

CORTLAND, N. Y.,

Buried Treasures: Installment 3

The founding of the Cortland Rural Cemetery

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

In the earliest days of our community's settlement in the beginning of the 1800s, Cortland Village was a part of the Town of Homer and was referred to as "Lower Village." The community's growth and progress can be seen in the evolution of its burial grounds.

The first burials in our community of just a few families took place on the hillside behind today's 50 and 60 Tompkins Street, very likely begun as a family burying, the ground on what was then the Hubbard Farm. Within a short time, an additional graveyard was established near the intersection of what is now Homer Avenue and West Main Street in conjunction with the First Baptist Society of Homer's meeting house, the first religious organization formed within the boundary of the present Cortland County.

As the community grew to several hundred people and other churches were established, Jonathan Hubbard, Jr. offered land for the municipal graveyard at the edge of the village, now Courthouse Park. This transition occurred in 1824.

Each of these three graveyards was owned commonly for use by the community it served, would have been rectangular in shape, simple with no landscaping plans, would have contained mainly small rectangular gravestones with an occasional obelisk or box tomb, and would have been maintained sporadically if at all. (Examples of such original graveyards can still be found far and wide throughout the county.)

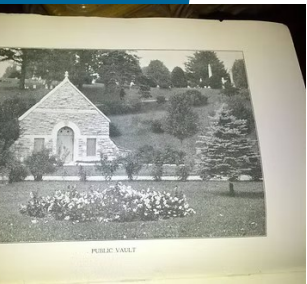
Beginning in the United States in the 1830s, and gaining momentum in the '40s and '50s, was the architectural phenomenon of the "rural" or "garden cemetery." The concept was to provide for a calm, beautiful city of the dead. Winding paths, a hillside location, landscaped greenery, well-kept lawns, and imposing funereal monuments all added to the atmosphere. The word "cemetery," which derives from the Greek word for sleeping chamber, replaced the previous "burying ground" and "graveyard" terms.

Not only did the atmosphere of the cemetery change, but so too did the attitude toward death of the living, which was reflected in their choice of monuments. These calm dwellings of the dead removed from urban centers were thought of as perpetual homes for community members and provided for societal differentiation – by the size of monuments, locations of each grave, sizes of family plots, and additional trappings such as railings and fences to mark family plots. For the first time lots were actually owned and deeded, and lot owners took their responsibility seriously, travelling to the cemetery with picnic lunches on Sundays to enjoy their rural property and provide for maintenance and decoration.

Along with many other communities of size, Cortland was eager to have its own rural cemetery. On November 7, 1853, just two days after Cortland Village was incorporated, a meeting was held at the Presbyterian Church in Cortland for the purpose of forming an association to purchase land for the establishment of a cemetery. Thirteen of those present contributed \$50 each for the cemetery, to be known as the Cortland Rural Cemetery, and the Board of Trustees was elected: Joseph Reynolds, Morgan Webb, Abram Mudge, William Barnard, Timothy Rose, Henry Stephens, Horace Goodrich, David Fisk, and Anson Fairchild.

12.26 acres of land were purchased on the Dryden Road (now Tompkins Street) from David Hubbard for \$1478.50. This hilly site was perfect for the rural cemetery concept – it was truly a rural location where farmland was available to purchase; it was not considered a desirable area for housing; it was on a good transportation route; and good drainage was also available, necessary for cemeteries.

The Cortland Rural Cemetery grounds were surveyed and mapped by F.E. Knight prior to December 6, 1853. The deed committed the Trustees to building and maintaining a fence between the cemetery and the remaining Hubbard property. The land was graded and removed of excess timber, and dedication services were held August 11, 1854. With a population of approximately 1500 people, Cortland Village now had a



cemetery to rival that of any other urban area, with winding drives, lovely landscaping, and imposing monuments.

By 1867, the three earlier graveyards had been abandoned, with many of the remains exhumed and removed to Cortland Rural Cemetery. When Cortland first observed Memorial Day in 1869, the procession marched from downtown to the Cortland Rural Cemetery for ceremonies honoring soldiers who died in service to their country.

Cortland's population continued to expand well past its village boundary through the valley floor, and by 1900, when the city's population was more than 9,000, the cemetery's holding had been increased to over 30 acres through purchases of contiguous property.

As the cemetery matured, impressive structures were constructed: a public vault, a chapel in 1922 designed by Cortland native George W. Conable, an office and maintenance building, and in 1928 a brick Superintendent's home -- designed by Carl W. Clark, architect of many other Cortland structures -- to replace an earlier residence on the grounds.

The Cortland Rural Cemetery continues to serve the community 160 years after its founding. In addition to providing for modern-day burial needs, it is truly a treasure from the past. Original gravestones commemorating Cortland's earliest settlers can be viewed along with monuments, sculptures, and remembrances ranging from Victorian, to art deco, to current styles. The vault, chapel, office and residence still stand as originally constructed. And the winding roads and grassy hills continue to provide a respite in an urban setting. Through good times and bad, our cemetery has been an important community resource and deserves recognition as such.

Buried Treasures: Installment 4

Burton B. Morehouse: A renaissance man

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

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 suspicious moment of birth that cause him to become a man of diverse interests and one who had a lasting impact on 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 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 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 appointment the following year and moved his family to the original superintendent's residence on the cemetery grounds. His annual salary 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 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 a 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, at 110 Tompkins Street. Mr. Morehouse's four grandsons act 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 on 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," 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 to 1971: Quite an achievement!

Mr. Morehouse's great-granddaughter, an Auburn resident, celebrated her 100th birthday in 2004. The Syracuse Post-Standard interview (November 29, 2004), 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 the family members, with the cemetery always the unifying backdrop.

Buried Treasures: Installment 5

Joseph B. Reynolds: From humble beginnings to “Honorable” public servant

By: Mary Ann Kane, Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation Board Member

The hills of Virgil, NY drew 24-year old Joseph Reynolds at the time when Cortland was being designated a county. He is at rest in the Cortland Rural Cemetery, where those same hills can be seen from the vantage point of his lofty mausoleum.

Few pioneer in a community where their abilities are so readily recognized that they are regularly sought for leadership roles, responsibility after responsibility. Yet so it was with Reynolds, born in Easton, Washington County, NY and later immigrating to Virgil from Galway, Sullivan County, NY in 1808. Penniless, except for the two cows he drove with him, he swapped milk for their shelter while he cleared the land for farmers at 75 cents a day. In a short time, he built and operated one of Virgil's early stores, and then a small hotel – the Washington House.

The income from these three occupations was invested in farm land, and in helping organize the Virgil Baptist Church, he donated land for it and for the town's main cemetery.

He was further initiated into public service during the war of 1812 when he organized a company of riflemen and subsequently became its Captain. Put on reserve status by the State, they were readied for defense of Salt Point (Syracuse). Reynolds' rank eventually reached Brigadier General in the militia.

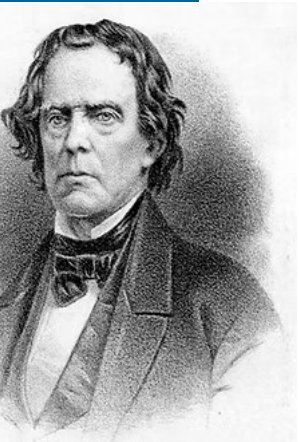
Continuing his willingness to be accessible to the people, Reynolds was elected Constable in 1814 and appointed Justice of the Peace the next year, serving in that post for 23 years.

Broadening his sphere of public service, Reynolds next ran unopposed for the State Legislature in 1818, was appointed County Judge in 1821 where he served for 18 years, and, beginning in 1825, became the Town of Virgil's Supervisor. A lifelong member of the Democratic Party, he was a Presidential elector for Andrew Jackson in 1832 and, starting in 1834, served two terms in the U.S. Congress representing Tioga, Tompkins, and Cortland Counties.

Although much of his political career operated from the village of Cortland, it was not until 1839 that Reynolds moved from Virgil. That year, he married for the third time and built a prestigious home on Tompkins Street. His property extended south to today's Union Street (Reynolds Avenue being defined much later). About 1890, his acreage was purchased by Theodore Wickwire, and in an early urban renewal project, Joseph's home was taken down and replaced. The 1855 map of the village reveals a turreted house with elaborate landscaping, although not as extensive as the Randall brothers, and with a dearth of neighbors. The New York State census of that year notes that Joseph's household included four servants, two men, and two women – with three Ireland-born. Five years earlier, the Federal census reveals that he was owner of 10,000 acres of land (but does not describe where), with Reynolds still identifying himself as a farmer.

Widowed three times, his son from his first marriage, Robert O., became a lawyer. Reynolds' second wife gave him three children – Lyman, who lived in and developed large plantations in Costa Rica; Catherine, married to Augustus Ballard, died at only 24 years of age; and Josephine, who became responsible for administering the countless accounts, properties, mortgages, and stocks of her father...who, surprisingly, left no will. Josephine married to Arthur Holmes in the year following her father's passing, and resided at 55 Tompkins Street until her own death in 1888.

Reynolds continued involvement in local affairs as a resident of the village of Cortland, where his presence and purse were contributed to many civic and legal societies. The establishment of the Cortlandville Academy, later located where the Presbyterian manse now stands, received his endorsement and leadership as its first president. When the village officially incorporated in 1853, the Hon. Joseph Reynolds was



also its first president. And he also helped to organize and was thus a charter member of the Cortlandville Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons No. 470.

Perhaps Joseph Reynolds' most significant donation was funding for 14 acres of land which formed the basis for the Cortland Rural Cemetery, organized in 1853, where he presided as president of its first Board of Directors. Six feet two inches tall, in his mid-seventies, a retired judge, State Assemblyman, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Reynolds nevertheless personally joined another gentleman (David Fisk) *"to cut the surplus timber on the cemetery grounds, for which they paid the association at the rate of three shillings (for 37½ cents) per cord of three-foot body wood."**

Judge Reynolds died in September, 1864. He and his family share a place in Section M of the cemetery he helped establish, on a hill in the center of his adopted city, within in view of the distant hills of Virgil, home to his first successes.

Source: "Rules, Regulations and By-Laws Together with a Brief Historical Sketch of Cortland Rural Cemetery Association" – published 1911, by the Cemetery Corporation

Buried Treasures: Installment 6

The Dual Duells and Then Some

By: Andrew Palm, previously CRC Superintendent, and Sandra Baden, Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation Board Member

Among the most prominent monument in the Cortland Rural Cemetery rises the slender spire on the lot of Charles Holland Duell. To any observer, it resembles the Washington Monument...and why not? For Charles Holland Duell was apolitical powerhouse having spent much time in Washington, DC.

Before Charles came his father, Rodolphus Holland Duell, born in Warren, Herkimer County, NY in 1824. Rodolphus studied law with the Hon. Charles B. Sedgwick of Syracuse and commenced his own law practice in 1845. Among the highlights of his long career in law and politics, he served as elected Cortland County District Attorney from 1850 to 1855 and as Cortland County Judge from 1855 to 1859. Originally a Whig, R. Holland Duell was an early convert to the Republican Party, serving as a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1856, 1864, and 1868. He was elected to the United States Congress for four terms, serving from 1859 to 1863 and again from 1871 to 1875. And he was appointed commissioner of the US Patent Office, where he served from 1875 to 1877. Following his long political service, he returned to practice law in Cortland, where he died in February 11, 1891 and was buried in Section U of the Cortland Rural Cemetery.

R. Holland's monument-inspiring son, Charles Holland Duell, was born in Cortland, graduated from Hamilton College in 1871, and graduated from Hamilton College of Law in 1872 – before establishing two Hamilton College scholarships which still exist to this day (one for a student studying German and another for a worthy first-year student). Entering the practice of law in New York City in 1873, he stayed there until 1880 when he moved his practice to Syracuse for another 18 years. Following in his father's footsteps, he was next elected to office serving in the NY State Assembly from 1878 to 1880 and then was named Commissioner of Patents from 1898 to 1901. He returned to a New York City patent law practice from 1891 to 1894 when he was nominated by President Theodore Roosevelt, and confirmed by the US Senate, to a seat on the US Court of Appeals for the Washington DC Circuit in 1905. Resigning a year and a half later, he again practiced law in New York City until 1915. He died in Yonkers, NY, on January 29, 1920 and is buried alongside his wife Harriet in the lot with impressive Duell monument in section C2 in Cortland Rural Cemetery.

Charles Holland Duell achieved a bit of notoriety for allegedly saying "Everything that can be invented has been invented," while Patent Office Commissioner. This has turned out to be an urban myth that was debunked by Samuel Sass in an article in the "Skeptical Inquirer" magazine in 1989.

Charles Holland Duell had three sons, all Yale graduates, and a number of daughters, all born in Syracuse. Son William Duell is buried in his father's lot in the Cortland Rural Cemetery alongside his wife, Louise. Son Holland Sacket Duell married into the Charles E. Halliwell family, prominent in the tobacco industry, and his descendants continue to enjoy socially prominent lives in the New York City area.

But it was Charles Holland Duell, Jr. who provides the most fascinating piece of their family history. He moved from the mundane life of a Syracuse patent attorney into a career as an early silent movie producer and agent. His one and only successful client was the legendary star of stage and silent films, Lillian Gish. However, besides being her agent, lawyer, and financial advisor, Charles Jr. allegedly became involved in what would be a scandalous affair with her that ended not only with his wife divorcing him, but also with a series of disastrous lawsuits that Duell directed against Ms. Gish. While the lawsuits alleged breach of contract, he also took the ill-advised step of threatening to publicize details of their alleged personal relationship. The outcome of all of these legal actions – which stretched from 1924 to 1932 – was failure on his part, leaving him disgraced, disbarred, and insolvent. By contrast, Lillian Gish, who never married, continued a prominent acting career spanning 75 years. This long-live spectacle was the 1920s' version of today's tabloid scandals.





In 1933, Charles Holland Duell Jr. married again and supervised the manufacturing of his new wife, Edith's, dispensing container invention, eventually returning to practicing patent law. He died in Virginia in 1954 and, unlike many of his relatives, is not buried in the Cortland Rural Cemetery.

“All the world's a stage, and all the men are merely players,” William Shakespeare once wrote. In the end, perhaps this saga of the rising and falling Duells is simply proof of that.

Buried Treasures: Installment 7

White Bronze: A Monument for the Ages -- Technology vs. Tradition

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

Imagine that you are walking the winding paths of the Cortland Rural Cemetery, enjoying the park-like setting, beautiful views, and interesting grave markers. You spot a lovely blue-gray obelisk monument, approach it, and notice the crisp, clear raised lettering. Curious, you reach out to touch it. This isn't granite or marble, you realize. It's metal!

Many don't realize that along with grave markers of sandstone, marble, limestone, and granite, most Victorian-era cemeteries display a modest number of metal – actually nearly-pure zinc -- monuments. But once familiar with their blue-gray coloring, a trained eye can readily spot these “common oddities.”

Noting the crumbling of older stone monuments and buildings in Europe and this country, many mid-19th century American foundries produced metal products such as statues, civic monuments, garden decorations, fences, fountains, architectural details, urns, and eagles. But only one firm manufactured zinc cemetery markers: The Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut and its subsidiaries.

Established in 1874, the company selected the euphemistic trade name of “white bronze” for these monuments, which were touted as being more enduring than stone and able to withstand climatic effects. Available in many different sizes, styles, and designs – from small footstone markers, to obelisks with portrait busts, to imposing life-size statues – the monuments could be selected from a catalog or custom-designed, for a higher price. Each design began in the company's artistic studio, modeled in clay, and reproduced in Plaster of Paris, from which a wax casting was produced. The final mold was made by placing refractory material around the wax pattern. And then the wax was melted away, leaving a finely detailed mold in which molten zinc was cast.

Emerging from the mold, the different parts of the monument were “fused” along the joints using the same zinc material, at high temperature. Next, came hand-finishing and sand-blasting, which gave the surface a pleasing appearance. Then a brushed-on, ‘trade-secret’ finish was added. And, finally, a natural corrosion layer was added, to impart the unique blue color and provide lasting protection for the metal.

There were other purported benefits of the white bronze material. The raised lettering (most stone markers, of course, feature lettering carved into the stone) was assured to last for ages, as opposed to other cemetery markers whose faces became illegible; the white bronze was said to eliminate the problems associated with moss, mildew, and tree-influenced discoloration; the metal would not be affected by “atmospheric influences” (aka: the weather); and the monuments were made with removable tablets or panels so that future inscriptions could be added. Purchasers also selected individual decorative features representing interests, occupations, fraternal organizations, or symbols of faith. These last two features made the memorials personal, yet adaptable. Lastly, pricing was reasonable.

Rather than being sold by monument dealers, these white memorials were sold by local agents using a company catalog and, hopefully, at least one example in the local cemetery. The salesperson's challenge was to overcome the public's skepticism and perception that marble and granite markers were more desirable because of tradition and custom. One way of doing this was to first sell the newfangled markers to prominent community citizens. These marketing techniques proved successful, and as the business grew in the 1880s, subsidiary companies were established in Detroit, Des Moines, Chicago, and St. Thomas, Ontario. By 1885, a “rapidly increasing demand” for the product had occurred. Even the popular *Scientific American* magazine recommended a change from stone to metal monuments to keep up with other technology such as the telegraph, telephone, and electricity.

The Cortland Rural Cemetery is home to four distinctive white markers:



- 1) The Corwin stacked tower on lot G-32 is dated 1878 and topped with an urn, flame, and decorative roping. The family chose decorative symbols such as an anchor (life eternal), handshake (farewell to earthly existence), crown on the cross (sovereignty of Christ), fraternal star, sheaf of wheat (the divine harvest), and angels.
- 2) Nearby is the Dickinson draped obelisk on lot W-53, which features the symbols of a broken link, finger pointing toward the heavens, and Jesus with three children (two infants and a child are buried on the lot).
- 3) The Goodyear monument on Lot M-100 features an urn, drapes, tassels, and roses – and memorializes eight people, including a 100-year-old veteran of the War of 1812 and two Civil War deaths.
- 4) The Lester and Mary Hane marker (on lot W-92) mirrors the blocky shape of granite monuments from the 1890s. It has rustic 'twig-style' lettering, reflecting the natural movement of the era, and also two biblical quotations: "In my father's house are many mansions" and "I go to prepare a place for you."

According to research by Barbara Rotundo ("Monumental Bronze: A representative American Company." From *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers, Voices of American Culture*; UMI Research Press, 1989), white bronze markers attracted a cross-section of purchasers. This is substantiated in Cortland by examination of the four lot-owners' occupations of builder, merchant, physician, and trimmer. It is possible that one or more of these lot owners was also Monumental Bronze Company agent, since an agent's own monument sometimes served as a salesman's sample.

The era of white bronze cemetery monuments was short-lived. Beginning in 1874, reaching its peak in popularity in the late 1880s, and gone by World War I, a combination of causes contributed to the decline.

Perhaps sensing serious competition from metal monuments, a New England granite association launched a comprehensive marketing campaign for their more expensive 'natural' product. The public began to believe that inexpensive equated to "cheap," and some cemeteries actually banned the erection of white bronze markers. Second, after the turn of the century, sales of these 'modern' monuments most likely suffered when society's unbridled enthusiasm for technology and progress declined. And, finally, enthusiasm may have waned among company sales agents, as is suggested by frequent changes in their names and addresses in the early 1900s.

Ironically, over a century later, these monuments delivered on their manufacturer's original promises: They have resisted disintegration from freezing and thawing cycles; retained their crisp lettering; and have remained free of moss, mildew, and discoloration. While some of the very largest zinc markers have begun to distort or 'creep' somewhat over time (due to the effects of weight and gravity), the technology appears greatly superior to stones of marble, sandstone, and limestone from that same period.

Is there a place in today's monument market for a new version of white bronze markers? Certainly features of that long-gone trend can be seen today. For example, monuments displaying hobbies, interests, and personalities of those memorialized has never been more popular; individuality is "in,"

with motorcycles, fishing, sportsman, farming images, and even photographic likenesses all seen in today's active cemeteries. And, mirroring the use of zinc marker catalogs, internet sales of markers and urns are also commonplace these days.

Still, the number of active foundries in the U.S. has shrunk dramatically, in large part due to environmental regulation of metal wastes. And while zinc is still mined in America, raw material costs, labor, shipping, and other overhead costs would be formidable factors to overcome in any attempt at a white bronze revival.

For now, when you visit the Cortland Rural Cemetery or other Victorian-era cemeteries, keep watch for a monument that is blue-gray in color and markedly different hue than nearby markers. Examine the crisp details of its markings. Look at the individually selected decorations. And rap on it lightly with your knuckles to hear the hollow ring. All of these should confirm its status as a white bronze memorial, a treasure from the past that – though novel for a time -- could not overcome the overwhelming tradition of monuments made of stone.

Buried Treasures: Installment 8

Frost the Florist

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

At the cemetery's main entrance, immediately right of the Shaw and Sander mausoleums, embedded in the grass, are 20" long marble letters spelling out the name "FROST." Cover by sod for decades, the cemetery staff unearthed them in the 1990s. On that lot in section T are buried Adolf Frost Sr., his wife Fannie, and Adolf Frost, Jr. and his wife Margaret. The Frosts had an early connection with the Cortland Rural Cemetery and were long-time Tompkins Street residents and business proprietors.

Adolf Frost, Sr.

Adolf Frost was born in Prussia in 1831 to a father who was superintendent of the king's woods and a mother who was the daughter of a German baron. He worked in the timber business, moving logs through the Prussian rivers and then entered the German army, where he became a corporal of heavy artillery. He was with the army that conquered Austria and Bavaria in 1853 during the Crimean War. After becoming disabled, he was discharged from the army and came to America.

Following a 7-week, 3-day sailing ship voyage, he landed in New York in December of 1857. He started out on foot for a German settlement in New Jersey, and after many hardships, reached his destination. Hired as a farmhand, Mr. Frost eventually became superintendent of Thomas Stillman's farm and country home in Plainfield, New Jersey. Along with farming, he learned the floral business.

While in New Jersey he became acquainted with his employer's cousin, Miss Fannie Maxon of Scott, Cortland County. Their wedding took place in December, 1864. The following spring, he began gardening for the Schemerhorns at "The Hedges," a Homer showplace (today's 90 South Main Street). The Frost's only son was born in 1866.



In 1868, Mr. Frost made a steamship trip to Germany because of his father's death and on his return became superintendent of the Cortland Rural Cemetery. At this time, the primary responsibilities were maintaining and improving the grounds and performing burials. He drew a month salary of \$50 from May

through October each year and supervised two hourly laborers. The hourly workers earned nearly as much as Mr. Frost each month, so it is presumed that part of his compensation including housing in the superintendent's residence at the cemetery.

Since the cemetery was in its early years, much of it was still wooded, and the Frosts' family cow was pastured on the grassy spots. Mr. Frost kept a small greenhouse on the cemetery grounds where today's chapel is located. There was no sidewalk at all on Tompkins Street at the time; there were but a few scattered houses; and split rail fences marked off both sides of the street and keep cattle off the street.

About that time, the old Cortland State Normal School was being built on the grounds above Cortland's municipal graveyard (today's Courthouse Park). Workers exhumed the bodies buried there from the late 1700s and early 1800s, and moved them to the then new Cortland Rural Cemetery for burial. Adolf Frost Jr. remember as a boy "seeing several hundred boxes each with a headstone attached, piled up in the yard awaiting burial in the cemetery."

After five years of cemetery employment, Mr. Frost wished to be in business for himself, with year-round employment and income. He resigned the superintendency and built a home and greenhouses across the street from the cemetery entrance. Here, he operated a florist and nursery business at 109 Tompkins Street for many years. Mr. Frost named it the "Brain Bridge Conservatories," the reason being that "his brains carried him over the bridge from poverty to prosperity." Other properties associated with the Frost family at various times included 97, 101, 105, 107, and 113 Tompkins Street.

In the early days of the business, floral pieces for funerals consisted of loose flowers; Mr. Frost is credited with making the first floral designs in Cortland. The business also benefitted from the fact that, Victorian graves and homes were lavishly decorated with seasonal flower beds, potted plants, and large urns decorated homes and cemetery lots. In fact, according to a 1908 advertisement, the firm offered greenhouse and bedding plants, pansies and cut flowers. It also manufactured rustic work and could be reached by its telephone number of "242."

After a battle with asthma, typhoid fever, Bright's Disease, and heart trouble, Mr. Frost enjoyed his breakfast, lunch, and a ride with his son on April 29, 1909; he died suddenly later that afternoon, leaving his son Adolf as his only close survivor. The funeral was held at his home and was "very largely attended." John Evans sang Mr. Frost's favorite hymn, "Saved by Grace." The floral pieces were especially beautiful, with designs from all the local florists. Interment was in the Cortland Rural Cemetery "on a hillside within a few feet of the spot where he first commenced business in Cortland and where he will be near his loved ones."

Adolf Frost, Jr.

Adolf Frost, Jr. worked in the floral business for some 70 years, beginning alongside his father and serving as his business partner. He married Margaret Liddell of Taylor in 1885.

The 1910 Cortland Standard Business and Industrial Edition touted the business as "a recognized center for the best, freshest, and most appropriate cut flowers and floral design for weddings, funerals, banquets, and social receptions all seasons of the year."

Along with the two Mr. Frosts' photograph was a flattering description of the business. It was described as the oldest florist business in Cortland. Their hanging basket specialty was mentioned. Mr. Frost, Sr., was credited with having invented the 'rustic work' used in this part of the country and, and "there is no other part of the State that has so much of this work as the City of Cortland." In fact, close examination of a 1911 photograph taken in the Cortland Rural Cemetery reveal a rustic work piece, perhaps a bench, present on the Frost Cemetery lot.

By the 1920s, Adolf's son Dann began working with him in the business. Its name was soon changed to "Frost, the Florist." A Syracuse Post-Standard clipping dated December 1, 1935 showed Adolf Frost Jr. in his greenhouse holding a cyclamen plant. He was a tall man wearing bib overalls and a shy smile. The article then alluded to Mr. Frost's deep abiding faith in his country, his church, his friends, and in nature. His robust health and "plentiful stock of humor" were also noted.

When Mr. Frost died in 1939, he had been a widower for many years. He had kept busy with his work and, presumably, the many memberships mentioned in his obituary – including the First Presbyterian Church and several Odd Fellows lodges (he had been "past noble grand of Vest Lodge" and "past chief patriarch of Elon Encampment"); the Orientals and the Rebekahs; Cortlandville Lodge 470; the Loyal Order of the Moose; and the Maccabees.

Mr. Frost was remembered for having "a master's knowledge of plants and flowers." The garden and growing beautiful plants were both his hobby and life's work. The family held Mr. Frost's funeral at the Cortland Rural Cemetery chapel, with burial on Lot T-18. The Odd Fellows were in charge of the commitment service at the grave. While there are three granite tree-stump gravestones for others buried on the Frosts' gravesite...except for the those unique marble letters spelling "FROST" on the hillside overlooking his home and business.

AFTERWARDS

Mr. Frost's survivors included his son Daniel, two daughters, and 18 grandchildren and great grandchildren. Daniel inherited the business, greenhouses, storehouses, and two dwellings – continuing the business until 1944, when it was sold to Palmer, the Florist. The address listed on the deed for Daniel at the time was Oklahoma. From that point, 109 Tompkins Street continued as a retail location through the years as Reynolds Flower Shop, Sanders Ski Shop, and finally Chip's Kandahar Ski Shop until it became a residential property in 1989.

Buried Treasures: Installment 9

The Jewish Cemetery

By: Len Cohen & Jean Seligmann

As far back at the Middle Ages, every Jewish community believed that having its own burial ground was important as building a place of worship. Along with its own cemetery, each Jewish community organized a Burial Society whose duty was to supervise the religiously dictated care of the deceased from the moment of death through burial. On the 11th of July, 1954, an agreement between the Cortland Rural Cemetery and Temple Brith Sholom was entered into “to set aside, in perpetuity, a plot of land within the confines of the Cortland Rural Cemetery, for the burial of members of the Jewish faith only.”

Thus the Jewish community of Cortland was able to consecrate its own burial ground with the Cortland Rural Cemetery. Through the cooperative effort of the Cortland Rural Cemetery Board and members of Temple Brith Sholom, an important tradition of Judaism was continued. Prior to this achievement, the local Jewish community buried their loved ones in Jewish cemeteries in Syracuse and Binghamton.

Today, the Temple Brith Sholom Cemetery Committee, a semi-autonomous entity within the Temple, functions as administrator and burial society guided by a set of procedures based on traditional Jewish religious guidelines, approved by the Temple members and Trustees, in cooperation with the staff and Board of the Cortland Rural Cemetery. The late Emmett Louis was the founding Chair of this governing body and continued in the position until his death in 1999. Serving on the committee is considered a lifelong commitment and religious duty.

To reconcile the various circumstances of those wishing to be buried in Temple Brith Sholom Cemetery with the formal religious requirements, two areas of this cemetery “within a cemetery” were established. Section A is maintained to adhere to strict religious traditions and is reserved for the burial of those who, at the time of death, are of the Jewish faith. Section B burials do not require strict adherence to religious demands, and are for those who, at the time of death, are practicing Jews, for their non-Jewish spouses and children, and for cremated remains.

The poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow used an interesting and appealing term for a cemetery. He wrote: “I like that ancient Saxon phrase that called the burial ground God’s Acre.” The Cortland Jewish Cemetery area of the Cortland Rural Cemetery is our community’s “God’s Acre,” where our community is able to maintain the traditions of our ancestors while providing burial grounds for generations to come.



Some notable Jewish burial traditions and practices:

- Based on Jewish laws, traditions, and customs, a Jewish funeral usually takes place within one day following the date of death, although modern practices often make additional allowances for family and friends to make arrangements or travel. The funeral is a solemn and reflective service most-often conducted by a rabbi, with a eulogy and psalms, prayers, and stories provided by friends and family members. Afterwards, there is a gathering at the mourner’s home, which marks the beginning of shiva (which lasts seven days), during which the mourners generally stay at home and receive guests to help them pray and reflect upon their loss. When they are done ‘sitting shiva,’ bereaved, immediate family members continue certain mourning traditions for between 30 days and up to a full year after the death of a Jewish family member.
- Traditional Jewish burial practices provide that a body be interred in a plain wooden casket, after having been washed but not embalmed.
- While the determination to visit a grave in a Jewish section is an individual decision, it is not uncommon for visitations to occur on specific, well-chosen days – such as Sheloshim (30 days following the death of the loved one), Yahrzeit (the one year anniversary of the death), or certain solemn days on the Jewish calendar

such as the last day of a month, before the New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and on TishaB'Av, which is already a day of mourning. Conversely, Jewish holidays such as Chanukah or the first day of a month are days to avoid visiting loved ones in a Jewish cemetery.

- Within the first year after the passing of a loved one, mourners and their family gather at the gravesite for a ceremony called the unveiling, the placing of the tombstone. At this event, a grave marker is put into place and the monument is formally dedicated. The ceremony can take place anytime between the end of shiva and the Yahrzeit. However, it should be held sometime during the first year after someone has died. Some wait until near the Sheloshim.
- Within the Jewish faith, it is customary to leave a small stone on the grave. The visitor positions the stone on the grave using his or her left hand. Placing a stone on the grave serves as a sign to others that someone has visited the grave. It also enables visitors to partake in the mitzvah tradition of commemorating the burial and the deceased. Stones are fitting symbols of the lasting presence of the deceased's life and memory.

-- source of traditions: *Shiva.com*

Otto Hermann: An early aviator landed, and now rests, right here in Cortland.

By: Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation member and City of Cortland Historian, Mary Ann Kane

Otto Hermann, an aviation pioneer and a contemporary of the Wright Brothers and Glenn Curtis, was inducted into the Rhode Island Aviation Hall of Fame in 2010. His unique gravestone lies in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. A few years ago his grandson visited the Cortland County Historical Society and learned that his grandfather was well remembered in the Society's archives.

It was an exciting time in March 1930 for the Cortland Flying Club's stockholders in their efforts to have a Class-A airport in the County. The farmer's fields had been closed to air traffic during the winter of 1929-30 and the 80 x 100 foot hanger awaited a concrete floor and the arrival of Lt. Harold Mull as the first director. The Club saw to the grading of its first real runway and the removal of the trees which lined the shoulder of the road to Groton.

Seeing in Cortland's new airfield just a bit more potential for the success of his budding aviation business, Otto Hermann was lured away from his efforts at Canastota's more modest, also developing air field at that time. After all, Hermann had chased opportunities before.

Moving from Atlantic City to Providence, RI, where he built his own biplane (which he is believed to have flown as early as March of 1910!), Hermann determined that the first engine suggested for his plane wasn't powerful enough for the craft's overall weight; as such, he began to make weight-reducing improvements and enhancements, first by removing a flywheel and then other heavy but expendable parts. By June 1911, he recorded that he had flown his resulting 12hp biplane. And having become an expert on small engines, he had secured a patent on a rotary engine of a 'semi-diesel' type by 1925. It was in Canastota that he continued to develop models for the fuel injection engines, some of which he exhibited at trade shows in Syracuse in 1929.

(Incidentally, in August of 1928, his daughter Helen was married aloft in an airplane piloted by Amelia Earhart, who was in town to dedicate the Canastota Airport!)

As the winter of 1930 came to an end, Hermann, a native of Pach, Hungary, moved with his wife Ida from Canastota to 29 Church Street, Cortland. The city directory of the time listed two of their eight children with them – Edward, a mechanical draftsman and Arthur, a student. As inventor and president of the Century Rotary Motor Co. Inc., Hermann established his manufacturing business near the then-new Cortland airport.

Just a month after the celebration of the official opening of the Cortland airport, Hermann suddenly fell ill and was taken to the VerNooy Sanitarium at 84 North Main Street where he died two days later on July 30, 1930 at age 54. The minister from the Homer Avenue Methodist Church presided over the service at the family's home. Otto was buried in the Cortland Rural Cemetery, where a marker includes a photograph of a biplane etched on an unfortunately damaged porcelain disk: Could that be Otto Hermann at the controls?



James C. Carmichael was born in 1829 at Mayfield, Fulton County of a father who immigrated from Scotland and a mother who was born in this country of Scottish immigrants. At age 18 he arrived in Cortland and attended the Cortlandville Academy located about where the Presbyterian manse is on today's Church Street. Not long after, he was part of McFarland and Carmichael in a furniture/undertaking business (a common combination at the time).

Buried Treasures: Installment 11

Civil War Hero & Civic Leader

By: Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation member and City of Cortland Historian, Mary Ann Kane

Photo: Karen Halstead, CRC Trustee

With the outbreak of the Civil War Carmichael became a volunteer and recruiter for the 76th New York Volunteers, "Cortland's Own," but moved on in the same capacity to help raise five companies for the 157th NYV, a regiment consisting of Madison and Cortland County men. His regiment reached Washington in 1862 with a compliment of 1050 men. Casualties were heavy as battles were favoring the South until Gettysburg, but the 157th went into action there with just 431 and lost more than 70 percent from death, wounds and captures. (Three monuments on that battlefield honor the 157th, one of which was placed there by Carmichael.) To increase his troop's numbers, Major Carmichael returned to New York and recruited in Elmira. Thereafter, Carmichael and troops went on to operate a prison for Confederate officers at Fort Pulaski on an island at the mouth of the Savanna River, and stationing at Hilton Head, S.C. Although these were short-term assignments, his legacy includes letters of thanks from former internees and letters of appeal from plantation owners whose workers were running off.

At a place called Deveaux Neck, the rebels' location was known, but the Union opposition was unaware of how near they were. As a ploy to reveal the enemy's position, cavalry were advanced. Not obtaining the response he desired, Carmichael ridiculed the horsemen and ordered them to follow him forward. A barrage of gunfire met them. A ball struck Carmichael's horse, which reared and tossed its rider into a large cotton field. Because the rows were grown high enough that the officer was able to roll from one to another to avoid being shot. However, after all the battles in which he had participated without being injured, landing on the hilt of his sword during this fall took him out of action. His horse survived by returning to the line, solo; the 1,000-pound bay had been acquired by Carmichael in the South and he saw to it that it came home with him. For some 15 years it served its owner in Cortland Memorial Day parades and 157th reunions.

Discharged in the summer of 1865 as a Colonel, he refused advancement as a brevetted brigadier general, and began a career as a leader in Cortland's community. He was instrumental in establishing its public school system; founder of the first organized fire company; one of the original incorporators of the Cortland-Homer trolley and the Utica, Chemung, and Cortland Railroad (much later, the Lehigh Valley Railroad); a trustee and president of the Cortland Village Trustees (similar to a common council); an officer in the Cortland Agricultural Association; and a trustee of the Cortland Savings Bank and of the Presbyterian Church. His name was even inscribed on the cornerstone plaque as a trustee of the NYS Normal School in 1869 and he was a charter member of the Grand Army of the Republic when it organized here that same year.

James Carmichael may have avoided a bullet but war wounds of broken ribs and an injury at the base of his brain from his fall were not left behind at Deveaux Neck. His wife, Henrietta Woodard, was often with him during the war and particularly as he recuperated. However, his health was a problem in civilian life. After a brief move to work in Phelps, NY, he returned to the county's Glen Haven Sanitarium at the foot of Skaneateles Lake seeking treatment in 1888.

At his death in 1889, Henrietta commissioned for his church, a delicately carved Scottish oak baptismal with a silver bowl. Renovations of the Presbyterian Church's interior revealed a mixture of disposable items, not so many years ago, stored beneath the sanctuary. One piece, at least, was identified as having lasting significance and was restored the Carmichael font. Buried in Cortland Rural Cemetery, the Carmichael memorial stone represents in size and shape, the character of the man.



Buried Treasures: Installment 12

Although He Is Dead He Speaketh

By: Cortland Rural Cemetery board member, Christine E. Buck

Photo: CRC board member Karen Halstead; special thanks to Board member Adrienne Traub for word processing

People who are fond of visiting old graveyards have at least one thing in common - the enjoyment of reading intriguing epitaphs. From the Greek for “upon a tomb,” Webster’s dictionary defines “epitaph” as “an inscription on a tomb or gravestone in memory of the person buried there.” In addition to being an entertaining pastime, the study of epitaphs is enriching and rewarding. It embraces history and biography; literature and religion; social behavior and folklore.

One sees epitaphs ranging from one word to covering an entire gravestone. There are inscriptions focused on occupations, age and military; on illness, cause of death, harshness of death and afterlife; on family relationships, children and tears; on literature, bible verse, friendship, angels and more.

Epitaphs have been used since ancient times as symbols of love and remembrance for the deceased. The Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans all had them. England’s epitaphs began during the Roman occupation years, and the pilgrims then carried the custom to the New World. Settlers coming from New England to our upstate New York wilderness in the late 1700’s brought the epitaph with them. Because of the hardships, most of our area’s early burials did not have gravestones. Those that did were marked with only a simple fieldstone or wooden symbol, perhaps with initials carved by the family.

As living conditions and travel improved stonemasons from New England migrated here and during the winter they carved designs on the native stone grave makers and inscribed “Here Lies” or “In Memory Of.” In the spring they traveled by wagon to outlying areas to sell their monuments and gravestone carving services. They would board at an inn, advertise their arrival, and take tombstone orders.

The earliest colonial gravestone art and epitaphs reflected the religious tenor of the times. Religion was bleak and stark. God was powerful and revengeful. Gravestones carried dire warning of mortality’s inevitability. An example of the early religious thinking is the most frequent epitaph of early years, found in England, New England and locally, with many variations:

Stranger, stop and cast an eye.

As you are now so once was I.

As I am now so you must be.

Prepare for death and follow me.

A religious revival in the early 1800’s brought great change to religion. Salvation by faith and eternal peace were new concepts. This produced a sense of genteelism in cemetery language. Epitaphs changed from warnings to soothing words for the bereaved such as, “Her gentle spirit soars away to dwell with God in endless day.”

The origin of individual epitaphs varies. Sources were the Bible, literature, devotional verse, poetry, or a creative mind. Clergymen wrote epitaphs. Distinguished literary figures wrote epitaphs. Domestic poets and family members wrote epitaphs, many of which were stronger in sentiment than skill

Originality was not essential, and plagiarism was common. To provide greater variety, epitaph books were produced as early as 1791. Just as we would select a greeting card today, these inscriptions were available for a family’s choice.

Epitaphs were written in one of three forms: a voice from the grave, a voice of the living, or neutral. The voice from the grave speaks to the living in the epitaph remembering Col. James Bennet, who died in 1819: (Cortland Rural Cemetery, Lot C-19).



*Death is a debt to nature due
Which I have paid and so must you.
Weep not my friends dry up your tears,
I must lie here till Christ appears.*

The voice of the living sometimes speaks about the deceased and sometimes to the deceased. This example is for Reverend H. R. Dunham, Presbyterian minister in Cortland, who died in 1858: (CRC, Lot L-10)

*An earnest humble devoted man of God.
Faithful unto death. He rests from his labors,
and his works do follow him."*

The neutral form relays a Bible verse, a poem or general advice such as:

Life how short. Eternity how long.

One charming aspect of reading epitaphs is viewing the contrast between the beautiful carving and the linguistic shortcomings of the early stonemasons. Stonemasons-turned-carvers were both laborers and artisans and as such displayed the skills of the common man.

There are many phonetic spellings, even of simple words (boddy=body; beond=beyond; loly=lowly). There are words divided incorrectly (wit-hstand; we-re). Occasionally a lack of planning or skill caused the available space on a line to run out before the word was done. It was then either left incomplete, or finished on the line above or the line below. There are strikeouts and wholesale chisel-outs. Forgotten letters are common, sometimes with a carat to the addition on the line above. There are words used incorrectly, rhyming troubles, grammatical errors and incorrect punctuation.

There are antiquated words such as "relict" for "widow" and "consort" for "spouse." There are elevated (superscript) letters serving as abbreviations (doct for doctor, daut for daughter). There are more contractions than we see today -- an apostrophe often replaces the letter "e" (pass'd, flow'r).

And there is gravestone humor. Just as grief and gaiety mingle in our lives, there is both sadness and laughter in the graveyard. Some humor results from stonecutter illiteracy or error. There is occasional intentional humor, but its frequency is exaggerated. Fictional epitaphs are sometimes published as factual, making for gravestone folklore.

As with many customs, epitaphs had a period of great popularity and then people thought them old fashioned and out of style. Their peak years in our area were from about 1820 to 1855. Then the Victorians embraced large, imposing monuments as the fashionable way to remember loved ones. Dignity became important. For example, an 1859 regulation at the Cortland Rural Cemetery stated that no offensive or improper inscriptions were allowed. Any such tombstone would be removed by the Trustees. Some chose to display epitaphs during the Victorian years but most were shorter and more dignified, such as "Saved by Grace."

Following the Victorian era, sameness was the appropriate way to honor loved ones. After the turn of the century, most monuments were of similar style, listing only names and dates. Epitaphs have great historical value for a community and commemorate those whom history does not remember. Women and everyday people, usually neglected in history books, are represented.

It's 1948 -- a pile of gravestones is discovered on a Groton Road farm just outside Cortland. Their inscriptions are recorded. For Mary Ann Lattimer, died 1835: "An honest Irish woman and a good Spinner."

Gravestones and epitaphs serve as important genealogical tools. Consider the clues to our heritage that come from inscriptions such as "Polly Wiswell, wife of Oliver Wiswell, Esq. Daughter of Capt. Asa Blair of Blandford, Massachusetts. Died October 13, 1819, age 3, leaving Oliver C. Wiswell her only child who was born March 10, 1816." (CRC, Lot C-10)

Epitaphs suggest social patterns. They reflect the temper and mood of a locality and period. They show personalities, occupations, anticipation of death, anxieties, achievements, religious beliefs and opinions of life of the average individual. From Rachel Wood's 1820 epitaph we learn that her young child is "Inter'd in the same grave."

While gravestones record names and dates for identification purposes, epitaphs were written to perpetuate people's reputations and to comfort the bereaved. Survivors chose most epitaphs and considered what they thought important about their loved one. Epitaphs are symbols of love and remembrance for the deceased.

We still have a need to show love and remembrance for those who have gone before us, but now do so in other ways. We print detailed obituaries, hand out memorial cards at funerals and publish anniversary memorials in the newspaper. A walk through an active cemetery such as Cortland Rural may yield a photograph of the deceased or current tombstone art reflecting interests or hobbies - from motorcycles to a family farm. Newell "Spiegle" Willcox's monument fittingly displays a trombone. (CRC, Lot C2-179) Some contemporary monuments carry an epitaph, such as for Timothy Allen Little, "Do not stand at my grave and weep; I am not there, I do not sleep." (CRC, Lot B-204)

Although the Cortland Rural Cemetery was established in 1853, near the end of the golden age of epitaphs, it hosts a wide array of inscriptions, ranging from the early 1800's to the present. When Cortland's three earlier graveyards were removed to Cortland Rural in the late 1860's, some families upgraded the monuments to the newer Victorian style. Many original monuments, along with their epitaphs, were discarded as old-fashioned; however, for those who had no family to oversee the removal and reburial, the early gravestones were simply moved with the remains. The largest concentration of these older stones is in Section C lying flat over the graves.

Many early burying grounds have vanished from the landscape, leaving few indications of their existence. Many historic grave-markers have deteriorated with age and are no longer legible. As our old gravestones continue to decline, intriguing epitaphs of the past disappear each year. Efforts to record what remains today will perpetuate the history and personality of an earlier time.

Buried Treasures: Installment 13

Cemetery “minutes” provide insights into “the years”

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

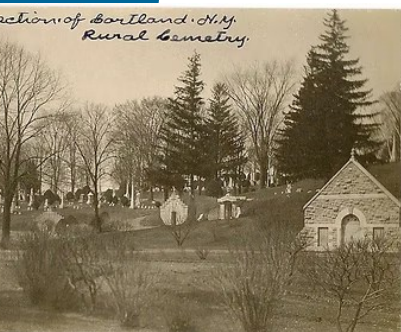
Photo: This photo of a circa-1900 postcard was shared with us by the postcard's current owner, Kate O'Connell. (Note the public mausoleum at the far right, now obscured by / hidden within the Gibson Memorial Chapel.)

The history of the Cortland Rural Cemetery is tied closely with that of Cortland. The cemetery was established only two days after the Village of Cortland's Incorporation in 1853 and shared the same first President, Joseph Reynolds. Likewise the list of cemetery Trustees through the early years included the names of those whose efforts allowed the village, and subsequent city, to prosper.

Given this linkage between cemetery and city, two 10 by 15 inch leather-bound tomes housed at the cemetery to this day offer some interesting insights into our community's early years. Containing handwritten records – aka: the official minutes -- of every formal Board of Trustees' meeting from November 7, 1853 through 1900, the spidery handwriting with ink faded to a gentle coffee color mainly record just the facts – date, time, and place of the meetings; elections of Trustees and their officers; and approval of the Treasurer's report. Occasionally, though, a tantalizing sentence or two appears, giving a glimpse into both the cemetery's and even our community's formative years.

The decade of the 1850s, for instance, was an organizational period for the cemetery – and shows the Trustees taking the concept of the cemetery from dream to reality: No funds, fourteen wooded acres, no rules or regulations...just a few interested persons with the hope of establishing a Victorian, garden-style cemetery like others seen in like-sized cities of the time.

Their volunteer tasks were to organize, elect Trustees, write by-laws, obtain a corporate seal, obtain funds for the land purchase, arrange for a survey, clear the land, grade the site, and lay out plots, alleys, and walks... To build a receiving vault for the deceased and a dwelling for the Sexton yet to be hired... To sell lots, record sales, handle funds, and call on delinquent subscribers to collect past-due funds.



The first by-laws, in committee for six years, were approved in 1859. They reflect the era, with rules such as a speed limit of 3 miles per hour; no hunting, fishing, shooting, rubbish, or loose dogs; no picking flowers or harming trees; no wooden fences or monuments; no children without a parent, guardian, or teacher; no carriages or horses while the roads were in a 'boggy condition'; no offensive or improper inscriptions (if so, the Trustees would remove the offending tombstone); no visitors on lot with locked fences; and no owner neglect of lots ("owners" being entirely responsible for maintenance in those days). Later that same year, the Trustees enacted a new rule: "If a lot is buried on and not paid for within 30 days, then the Sexton is ordered to remove the bodies off the lot."

During the 1860s, the cemetery expanded its holdings. The Trustees purchased adjacent land and established a Potter's Field site. They donate lots "of medium size not to exceed 400 feet" to each Village religious society for burial of clergymen and their families: Universalist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Grace.

In 1864, the Trustees employed "three laboring men in the cemetery – Robert Winters, Sweeney, and M. Finn." The Board began investing cemetery funds, which included holding a note for A.C. Garrison and S.D. Garrison and in 1867, they invested \$500 at 7% interest.

The 1870s brought some stability to the operation. The Trustees hired a year-round Sexton and two workers were hired for the working season. Settlement of "the Bixby dispute" (whatever that was!) occurred, with bodies buried on the south side of the lot removed to the west side. The first bequest is mentioned in 1872 -- \$300 from Enoch H. Dowd for the purpose of forever keeping in repair and preservation his lots and

monuments in the cemetery. In 1876, the Trustees authorized Moses Rowley to spend up to \$125 to make a well and foundation on the grounds.

By the 1892, the cemetery reached a level of maturity where personnel matters began to arise and appear in the minutes. Deceased, long-time Treasurer Morgan L. Webb was eulogized for his contributions – “entrusted with the principal management of Association business, asking no return for his services except the pleasure he derived from its prosperity and the increasing beauty of the grounds.” Several Sextons also came and went. For instance, in 1887, Trustee Norman Chamberlain took charge of the cemetery grounds, employing the workmen and consulting with the Executive committee on general management of the cemetery. Meanwhile, Dr. Charles Sanders of New York appeared before the Board, asking for some privileges connected to the Sanders vault. The Board Secretary was instructed to notify the executor of the Robert Tenant Shaw to repair and ‘put in order’ the Shaw lot and vault. A wrought iron fence was purchased for the length of the cemetery along Tompkins Street. And there was the first mention of the cemetery office in 1888. (Before then, the Trustee meetings were held around the Village, at offices, homes, stores, the engine house, fireman’s hall, and the Cortland Savings Bank.)

The last decade of the century also saw the death of Sexton Chamberlain and the hiring, in his place, of Burton Morehouse as “Superintendent of Grounds.” In 1891, Morehouse was paid \$600 (approx. \$13,000 in today’s dollars) and was given the use of the cemetery dwelling house. In later years, he was also granted hay and grain for his horse as perquisites.

Financial stability, beautification, and growth seemed to be the focus in the 1890s. Trustees set burial prices at \$3 for children and \$4 for adults (about \$65 and \$85 today). Wagers for laborers were \$1.50 per day. The Superintendent was instructed to collect all monies for burials, sales of lots, and all other bills due the cemetery “Association and to make monthly reports to the Treasurer.” No burials or tombstones were allowed until the lot had been purchased, paid for, or security given for the purchase.

Trustees also purchased a fire-proof safe. Superintendent Morehouse was instructed to notify lot owners, whose monuments or gravestones were leaning or down, to put them in proper condition without delay and to see that new monuments were set upon proper foundations. The house, office, and barn were to be painted. And the cemetery purchased the adjacent lot to the north, a portion of which would be donated (at the request of H.M. Kellogg) for the burial of indigent soldiers who had no relatives or friends to bear the expense; on that same point, it was agreed that the deed for this soldier lot would be given to the Grand Army of the Republic (a fraternal organization composed of veterans of the Union Army) after they had erected a suitable monument.

Finally, in April 1899, C.F. Wickwire appeared before the Board and requested that it sign a petition for the Village to pave Tompkins Street from Main Street to the west side of the cemetery: The request was approved, the paving was done, and as its last official business of the century, the Board authorized payment of the paving assessment before January 1, 1900.

Buried Treasure: Installment 14

George W. Conable, Architect behind the CRC Chapel and more

By: Christine Buck, previously a CRC Trustee

Photo: Via a Google digital scan of "The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography" Vol 16 -- James T. White & Company, 1918

It's no surprise the George Willard Conable was chosen to design the chapel (1922) at the Cortland Rural Cemetery: His roots ran deep in Cortland County.

Two Conable couples, Fabius natives, came to Cortlandville in 1854. They settled on the McGraw Road about a quarter mile east of the Port Watson Street bridge. The men were brothers, Frederick and George Conable.

The Conables were farm partners for twenty years. When the adjoining farm to the west came up for sale, George purchase it and expanded the family holdings. While each brother then had a farm, all their lives they worked with brotherly love and mutual helpfulness. Both Conable families were active in the Methodist Church, the women with missionary work and church suppers, and the men holding office. Each man served the Cortland Rural Cemetery as Trustee. Frederick had a stint as Cortlandville Highway Commissioner. And their farm homes still stand; most of the fields now developed for commercial use.

George W. Conable, architect, was from the next generation. He was born in 1866, just after the Civil War, to Frederick and his wife Fidelia. Young George W. grew up on the farm with his brothers, sister, and two cousins. After graduating from Cortland Normal School (now SUNY Cortland), he continued his education at Cornell University, where he studied architecture and graduated in 1890.

When it came time for a wife, George chose a local girl, Grace Ford. Their 1895 marriage later produced two children, son Walter and daughter Mildred. By 1900, the family lived in Manhattan, where his George W.'s profession flourished.

Working in several prominent New York architectural firms enhanced the young man's skills. He worked with the architect Ernest Flagg on New York's Singer Building in 1908, the tallest building in the world at that time, though later demolished in 1968. He collaborated on twenty buildings for the New York State Department of Health. And forging professional business partnerships with other architects, he went on to design several churches and hospitals in Manhattan, Philadelphia, Schenectady, and on both Staten Island and Long Island. Among there were the Trinity Lutheran Church and parsonage at 165 West 100th Street in Manhattan; the Kingston Avenue Hospital in Brooklyn, and the Chamber of Commerce Building in Jamaica, New York, now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places.

By 1922, when the Cortland Rural Chapel – now dubbed the Gibson Memorial Chapel – was built, Conable was a well-known New York City architect. He hadn't forgotten Cortland, though, having designed some of our community's buildings. The Cortland Democrat building on Central Avenue (in the Richardson Romanesque style featuring "round-headed "Romanesque" arches, recessed entrances, bands of windows, and cylindrical towers with conical caps*) – and the Cortland Central School, recently converted to the County Office Building, are credited to Conable. His name is mentioned with other local projects as well: The Presbyterian North chapel, First Methodist Church parsonage, the Beard Block remodeling project, First Baptist Church heating plant, and an apartment house at the southwest corner of Church and Port Watson Streets.

In a 1928, Cornell University exhibit, Conable's work was included among photographs of notable buildings designed by alumni.

Following heart trouble, Conable died in St. Petersburg, Florida at the age of 66 after a very successful architectural career. His body was brought back to Cortland for burial, where the funeral was held on a January day in the beautiful chapel he, himself, had designed. He was laid to rest in the family's hilltop plot at the Cortland Rural Cemetery.



While Conable's business life took him far away from his childhood home, he remained a loyal supporter of Cortland County and maintained connections and warm friendships from the earlier days. His beautiful design, the cemetery chapel, still stands as testament.

Additional sources:

> *Marianne S. Percival, Research Department, Landmarks Preservation Commission (October 26, 2010 Report: Designation of the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce Building as a Landmark)*

> *Wikipedia*

Buried Treasures: Installment 15

Renowned fighter pilot, Levi R. Chase, at peace in the CRC

By: Patrick M. Snyder, Cortland lawyer, former army pilot, and Vietnam veteran

High in the northwest section of the Cortland Rural Cemetery, and facing the airport that bears his name, lies the simple grave marker of Levi R. Chase. Long gone from the airport are the crowds that would eagerly await his arrival in a P 47 or P 51 fighter, hoping to be dazzled by their friend with a barrel roll or loop. Long gone are the crowds that would flock to the State Theater, hoping to catch a glimpse or hear an interview with America's leading fighter pilot in North Africa. Those were dark days for the free world. But Levi Chase and his fellow airmen, fighting the battle-hardened Nazi air force, gave hope to the nation. Levi's fame grew with each aerial victory, and the nation was thrilled to learn that General Jimmy Doolittle had pinned a silver star on his uniform somewhere in a squalid bunker in North Africa. That was to be the first of three silver stars and over 60 other medals and commendations that Levi Chase would receive.

Levi Chase was born in Cortland in 1917. The family lived on Chestnut Street. He graduated from Cortland High School in 1936, went to Syracuse University from 1937 through 1940, and joined the Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet in February 1941. (He had no prior flying experience before joining the air corps, although he did report once that he had met and been influenced by the inventor of flight simulators, Edwin Link.) Demonstrating an aptitude for flying, graduated in 1941 from advanced flying training at Maxwell Field, Alabama with a commission as second lieutenant and pilot wings. Chase was next assigned to the 8th Pursuit Group (Interceptor) in Mitchel Field, N.Y., joined the 58th Pursuit Squadron/33d Pursuit Group, at Philadelphia in December 1941, participating in the North African invasion by flying a P-40 from an aircraft carrier. As commander of the 60th Fighter Squadron, Chase completed his first combat tour as the leading American ace in Tunisia with 10 victories.

After Levi's tour in North Africa, and a respite back in the U. S., he was sent to Burma where he and his "air commando" comrades fought the Japanese air force, which was threatening to push into India. While there, he became famous for planning and leading the longest fighter attack mission of the war. It required that he lead his 40 P 51 fighters on a trip of 1,800 miles. That mission was spectacularly successful and destroyed many enemy aircraft. A few days later, on another mission behind enemy lines, his fighter was shot down by ground fire and he was forced to crash land. His fellow pilots flew to the nearest American base and commandeered two L 5 small liaison aircraft. A few hours later they returned and set the planes down near the crash site. After much difficulty, and with the help of friendly villagers, the three pilots struggled into the air in those two small airplanes and narrowly escaped the rapidly approaching enemy. They were well aware that if captured they might be executed on the spot.

After World War II, Levi attended law school and expected to follow the career of his distinguished lawyer father. The Korean War interrupted that plan. Flying F 80 and F 86 jets now, he led several difficult missions against very dangerous anti-aircraft positions. One of the missions he led was credited with bringing North Korea to the negotiations which eventually resulted in the "cessation of hostilities."

Levi went on to fly in the Vietnam War also. While there he flew his last mission – mission number 512. He retired in 1974 as a major general and returned to Cortland. He died at the age of 76 in 1994.

Levi Chase never sought out fame or glory. He was famous for sharing any accolades with fellow pilots and crews. His Cortland friends said he was just a regular guy, and that never changed. That may be. But as was true of all veterans, he and his family gave up a lot for their country. For those who knew him, Levi Chase was a true hero, and he was perhaps America's greatest fighter pilot.



Buried Treasure: Installment 16

Fraternal Society Symbolism Alive and Well at Cemeteries

By: John Hoeschele, President -- CRC Board of Trustees

Most people are familiar with, and fully expect to see, the more common symbols of faith in cemeteries – be they Christian crosses, Jewish Stars of David, angels, hands in prayer, mortality-oriented flora like lilies and weeping willows, and obelisks pointing to heaven, suggesting ‘ascendancy’ of the soul after death. Far less obvious,

but plentiful to observant cemetery visitors, are the symbols of Fraternal organizations previously so popular in American culture. Once well-known to all, many of these symbols or acronyms have become obscure to modern observers, except for those who make a study of their history or who are themselves members of those organizations still operating today. For those new to such organizations and their symbols – and hopefully without offending any organizations who may have been excluded -- here are just a few, among many others, one can find in Cortland County’s older cemeteries, including the historic Cortland Rural Cemetery.

- **Freemasons** -- Perhaps the best-known and storied fraternal society, thanks to famous members (George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, etc.) and dramatized depictions in popular culture like the recent blockbuster, *National Treasure*, Freemasonry is, according to its official Facebook page, “a fraternal organization that arose from obscure origins in the late 16th to early 17th century” which “now exists in various forms all over the world, with a membership estimated at around five million, including just under two million in the United States...” While Freemasonry is renowned for its use of symbolism, the most common Masonic symbol one is likely to see on regional gravestones is the combination of a square, compass, and capital letter “G.” Here the tools used by early stone masons are meant to convey universal moral concepts embraced by Freemasonry: The square stresses the idea of “squaring” one’s actions (aka: living by the Golden Rule of *Doing unto others as you would have others do unto you*); the compass teaches humanity to limit our desires and passions (per Aristotle’s teaching of *moderation in all things*); while the letter “G” concurrently suggests ‘geometry’ and God, both of which help Masons unravel the mysteries and wonders of nature.
- **Improved Order of Red Men** – Taking its name and inspiration from the members of the original Sons of Liberty who dressed as Native Americans during the Boston Tea Party, the Order of Redman is one of several, secret fraternal organizations that emerged from, and focused on defending the principles of, the American Revolution. The group was officially founded in 1813 near Philadelphia, grew its membership across the US through the late 1800s and early 1900s, and still exists today. According to its website, the group fosters “love of and respect for the American Flag,” “preserving our Nation by defending and upholding the principle of free Government,” and “helping our fellow men through organized charitable programs” such as Alzheimer’s research, among other goals. In terms of symbolism, the organization’s iconography has varied and evolved over the years to include tomahawks, eagles, and most often the image of a Native American chief donning an elaborate feather headdress.
- **Knights of Columbus** -- This fraternal service organization was founded in 1882 based on both Catholic and patriotic principles – and named in honor of Christopher Columbus. Focused then, as now, on “charity,” “unity,” “fraternity,” and “patriotism” -- the society today boasts over 15,000 regional councils and 1.9 million members worldwide, contributing many millions in capital and volunteerism to such initiatives as the Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, and KoC projects like Coats for Kids. Those interested in seeing the organization’s symbol on both older and modern day headstones should look for an emblem composed of a shield mounted on a cross with a fasces (symbolic of authority), an anchor (representing Columbus), and a dagger (the weapon used by medieval knights).



- **Independent Order of Odd Fellows** – Founded in the US in Baltimore in 1813, with roots reaching back to 18th century England, this fraternal organization began with a particularly fervent focus on charity and altruism (considered by some to be “odd” – hence the name). The first national fraternal organization accepted woman in 1851 (aka: “Rebekahs”), the IOOF of today has 10,000 lodges across 26 countries and continues its efforts to improve the conditions of humankind through its continuing devotion to Friendship, Love, and Truth through a wide range of initiatives ranging from assistance to youth programs to memorials for Veterans. In cemeteries, the IOOF organization’s symbols includes a chain of three links (typically accompanied by the letters “F,” “L,” and “L” to represent their guiding precepts), the acronym “IOOF,” and the “all knowing eye,” which it shares with Freemasonry symbolism.
- **Woodmen of the World** – Another fraternal society formed in the 1800s -- and emerging from an earlier group called the “Modern Woodmen of America” -- the WOW organization (founded by the aptly named Joseph Cullen Root) likewise concentrated on the uplifting concepts of charity, love, honor, remembrance, and patriotism. The society accepted woman in the 1950s, established its headquarters in a high-rise in Omaha, Nebraska, and even operated its own radio and TV stations for a time – with a young Johnny Carson as one of its featured hosts! Like other societies mentioned here, the Woodmen are still active in society and are perhaps most notable for benefits they afford their members, such as insurance, bonds, loans, and other services. Want to see evidence of the WOW organization in an older cemetery? Their members are very often buried beneath headstones shaped entirely like logs or tree-stumps -- complete with limbs, bark, and tree-rings -- many of them paid for by the WOW fraternity, until the costs became prohibitive. Note: Genuine WOW headstones usually include additional wood-working symbols (axes, mauls, saws, etc.) or the phrase “Dum Tacet Clamet” (“Though silent, he speaks”) suggesting that our good works on earth last after we have perished. (Learn more on WOW history, at Joy Neighbors’ excellent “A Grave Interest” blog on Blogspot.com!)

Happy hunting and symbol deciphering on your next visit to the Cortland Rural Cemetery and other area graveyards!

Buried Treasures: Installment 17

Iva & Humberto Garcinetti

By: Charles Miller, Morristown, NJ – reprinted with permission/assistance from John Hoeschele, President Cortland Rural Cemetery Board of Trustees

In 2001, the Cortland Rural Cemetery solicited stories from its newsletter readers relating to notable burials in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. The following response from Charles Miller was printed in the cemetery's 2002, Memorial Day newsletter, relating to a marker in section W2.

"A while ago you requested interesting and unusual stories about some of those persons quietly in repose at the Cortland Rural Cemetery. Go up the hill, towards the right, near the top, and there is a wide marker identifying my folks – Iva and Humberto Garcinetti, my mother and stepfather.

My mother was born in 1892. As a teenager she was an accomplished pianist and experienced the great classics under the late Professor Bentley. But after Conservatory graduation, she discovered rag-time and jazz. She was only 19, and then she gave up her tomboy life to manage an all girl's orchestra, 'The Seven Brown Girls' so named for their brunette hair color.

Iva's maiden name was Erway, changed first to Lane, changed a second time to Miller, changed a third time to Clark, and changed a fourth time to Garcinetti. Humberto Garcinetti was a brazilian acrobat famous on stage and screen.

Shortly after their marriage, Humberto's brother retired and Iva was convinced to join the act. She learned acrobatics – after music. The new show, 'Garcinetti & Miller' covering 20 minutes, opened at the Cortland Opera House 75 years ago.

Mother never would try anything unless she could see a successful accomplishment. This new life lasted until the demise of Vaudeville with the advent of the 'talkies' several years ago.

So Humberto wanted to open a restaurant in Cortland; my mother wanted a beauty parlor. Feeling that food and hair didn't mix too well, they chose a beauty salon named 'Kalos' which they operated for many, many years. My dad hated it, and after a morning of 'doing shampoos' he spent his time at the counter of the Victory Restaurant.



Dad, who was a great guy and to whom I am indebted in many ways, passed on early in life. Mother continued to manage the salon and flew many times to Europe for beauty conferences, etc. until she was 90. She was always an actual beauty and used no cane, now walker, no crutches. She hated cooking and loved house-cleaning. And she sped to the hundred candled cake to blow them all out – and set off the smoke alarm – at 100!

One year later, in 1992, she slipped on the ice when she got out of the car she was driving and said to Dad "Move over." And he asked "What took you so long?"

Additionally, here is published [biography/summary on Iva Erway Lane Miller Clark Garcinetti](#) (born February 9, 1892 – deceased November 3, 1993) from the Cortland Historical Society's website. (It is worth noting that Ms. Garcinetti's harmonium is now in the Society's permanent collection!)

Born Iva Margaret Erway on February 9, 1892 in Hector, she and her family moved to a home on Maple Ave. in Cortland where she resided for nearly 100 years. The Daughter of a house-painter and a house-wife, she studied piano at the Cortland Conservatory of Music. After gaining much skill as a classical musician, she caught the Jazz bug and devoted much time to learning ragtime; the new and popular music of the time. Iva put her musical skills to use in concert halls and accompanied silent films. After learning to play the drums and xylophone Iva formed an all-female orchestra "The Seven Brown Girls" (named for the color of their



hair) and traveled the Vaudeville circuit. After marrying former Ringling Brother acrobat Humberto Garcinetti, the two formed their own act which they premiered at the Cortland Opera House. On tour the couple performed along-side notables such as George Burns, Milton Berle, Gracie Allen and Buster Keaton. The Garcinetti's were known for their acrobatics, dog tricks and European Hat Throwing Act.

Buried Treasures: Installment 18

Civil War hero & civic leader

By: Local historian & one-time CRC Foundation member Mary Ann Kane

James C. Carmichael was born in 1829 at Mayfield, Fulton County, NY of a father who immigrated Scotland and a mother who was born in this country of Scottish immigrants. At age 18, he arrived in Cortland and attended the Cortlandville Academy located about where the Presbyterian mans is on today's Church Street. Not long after, he was part of McFarland and Carmichael – a furniture/undertaking business (a common combination at that time, given the skills and materials involved in for both).

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Carmichael become a volunteer and recruiter for the 7th New York Volunteers ("Cortland's Own") but moved on in the same capacity, to help raise five companies for the 157th NYV, a regiment consisting of Madison and Cortland county men. It reached Washington in 1862 with a compliment of 1050 men. Casualties were heavy as battles were favoring the South until Gettysburg, but the 157th went into action there with just 431 and lost more than 70% from death, wounds and captures. To increase the numbers of his troops, he returned to New York and recruited in Elmira. (Three monuments on that battlefield honor the 157th, one of which was placed there by Carmichael.)

Major Carmichael and troops went on to operating a prison for Confederate officers at Fort Pulaski on an island at the mouth of the Savanna River, and then stationing at Hilton Head, S.C. Although these were short-term assignments, his legacy includes letters of thanks from former internees and letters of appeal from plantation owners whose workers were running off.

At a place called Deveaux Neck, the rebels' location was known, but the opposition was unaware of how closely dug in they were. Cavalry were advanced as a ploy to reveal the enemy's position. Not obtaining the response he desired, Carmichael ridiculed the horsemen and ordered them to follow him forward. A barrage of gunfire met them. A ball struck Carmichael's steed, which reared and tossed its rider into a large cotton field. The rows were built-up enough that the officer was able to roll from one to another and avoided being shot. After all the battles in which he had participated without being injured, landing on the hilt of his sword took him out of action. His horse survived by returning to the line, solo. The 1,000-pound bay had been acquired by Carmichael in the South and he saw to it that it came home with him. For some 15 years it served its owner in Cortland Memorial Day parades and 157th reunions.

Discharged in the summer of 1865 as a colonel, he refused advancement as a brevetted Brigadier General, and began a career as a leader in Cortland's community. He was instrumental in establishing its public school system; was founder of the first organized fire company; was one of the original incorporators of the Cortland-Homer trolley and the Utica, Chemung, and Cortland Railroad (much later, the Lehigh Valley Railroad); served as a trustee and president of the Cortland Village Trustees (similar to a common council); was an officer in the Cortland Agricultural Association; and was a trustee of the Cortland Savings Bank and of the Presbyterian Church. His name was also inscribed, as a trustee, on the cornerstone plaque of the NYS Normal School in 1869 and he was a charter member of the Grand Army of the Republic, when it organized here that same year.

James Carmichael may have avoided a bullet in the Civil War, but wounds resulting from broken ribs and an injury at the base of his brain from a fall were not left behind at Deveaux Neck. His wife, Henrietta Woodard, was often with him during the war and particularly as he recuperated. However, his health was a problem in civilian life. After a brief move to work in Phelps, NY, he returned to the county's Glen Haven Sanitarium at the foot of Skaneateles Lake seeking treatment in 1888. At his death in 1889, Henrietta commissioned for his church a delicately carved Scottish oak baptismal with a silver bowl. Renovations of the Presbyterian Church's interior revealed a mixture of discarded items, not so many years ago, stored beneath the sanctuary. UPC church member Tom Corey realized one piece, at least, had lasting significance, and restored the Carmichael font.

Standing tall in Cortland Rural Cemetery, the Carmichael memorial stone represents in size and shape the character of the man.



Buried Treasures: Installment 19

A primer on the “king of primers” -- C.W. Sanders

By: Cortland Standard (excerpt of Sanders' obituary, published July 1889)

Preface to installment

As we were contemplating stories for our Spring 2017 newsletter, we were fortunate to receive an out-of-the-blue package from our good friend K. Ann Dexter relating to the notable gentleman buried in one of our most prominent family mausoleums – that of Charles W. Sanders. Included in Ann's generous gift were two lovely primers authored by Mr. Sanders (she has an extensive collection of them herself, housed at the remarkable, historic Glen Haven School House) and a photocopy a July 11, 1889 obituary for Mr. Sanders written and published by The Cortland Standard. We thought our supporters might appreciate excerpts from that obituary of this accomplished local author!

Charles W. Sanders, whose name is familiar to educators in all parts of this country, in Europe, and Japan, died in his home at 53 East Fifty Third Street, New York City, on Friday July 5, in his eighty fifth year. He had been ill for nearly three weeks...he expired with his Bible beside him...and not a dozen feet from him were sheets of manuscript to be sent to his publishers for a new series of textbooks... Mr. Sanders was, perhaps, as widely known as an educator as any man now living... He was born March 24, 1805, in the town of Newport, Herkimer County, this State. His father was a farmer, not well off, but with an ambition to give his children good educations.

At that time the country schools were the crudest sort of mental refineries. Sheds and log houses were their edifices, and the instructors were regarded competent if they could read the Bible, do a sum in addition, and spell from Webster's spelling book. When he was four years old, he was sent to one of these places and in the following four years he succeeded in acquiring quite as much exact knowledge as his teacher and 'was graduated.'

When he was nine years old his father removed to Homer, Cortland County, and settled on wild lands. At fourteen years he had practically finished his education and two year later he became a licensed teacher, met with all the adventures that a teacher at that time encountered when he strove to instruct persons bigger than himself...

When he was twenty-four years old, he was made, by election, [an] inspector of common schools, holding that office for several years. After teaching in the schools of Homer and Cortland, he began the compilation of a spelling book and writing a reading book for all classes. Previous to that time, readers had been made up from selections from the works of the masters of English literature and in most cases were beyond the simple comprehension of children. So, most of the lessons in the First, Second, and Third Readers were from the pen of Mr. Sanders.

Many men and women now in middle life and not a few approaching pretty closely to old age remember the books of which Mr. Sanders was the author. [The] Allibone [dictionary of literature] says that 13,000,000 copies of Sander's Readers had been sold between 1838 and 1860. Mr. Sanders made a very large fortune with his works, and as long ago as 1859 the statement was made in Trubner's "Bibliographical Guide to American Literature" that his publishers, Ivison & Phinney, paid him about \$30,000 a year. [Note: This would be roughly equivalent to \$841,000 today!]

Mr. Sanders' first series of school books, the quaint pictures in which are now held in lively remembrance [by those who read them], comprised the Spelling Book, the Primary School Primer (with its highly attractive pea-green covers), and the five graded Readers. The new series, begun in 1860 -- with many of the delightful illustrations portraying prim girls in long pantalettes rolling hoops in a prim, well-bred way, or weeping over deceased canary birds, displaced pictures more modern in style but scarcely more artistic -- was more comprehensive.

But the readers and spellers were not his only books for students. He [also] prepared two elocutionary charts, a test speller of English words, a phonetic chart, metrical stories in chemistry and natural philosophy, and...five singing books, indeed was the first to introduce singing into the public schools of the country... Mr. Sanders's publications numbered forty-two books in all, and when he died he was preparing fifth series of his works. His Readers of the Union have been translated into the German and Spanish languages, the latter being widely used in the West India Island and throughout South America. When the Japanese Embassy [visited] this country [to] investigate the public educational system, they selected a great number of the Sanders text books, took them to Japan...and set up schools of English, believing that it was to be the commercial language of the world.

Mr. Sanders was married August 2, 1842, to Miss Elizabeth Barker of New York, who together with two sons (Dr. Charles W. Sanders and the Rev Henry M Sanders), now in Europe, survive him. Mr. Sanders was [also] one of the founders of the New York State Teachers Association...

[His] funeral was held at the family residence in New York... The remains were deposited in the family vault in the Cortland Rural Cemetery. The cell was bricked up and hermetically sealed. Upon the enclosing slab were inscribed the words "Charles W. Sanders, author of Sanders' series school books. Born March 24, 1805. Died July 5, 1889."

