



# Cortland Rural Cemetery

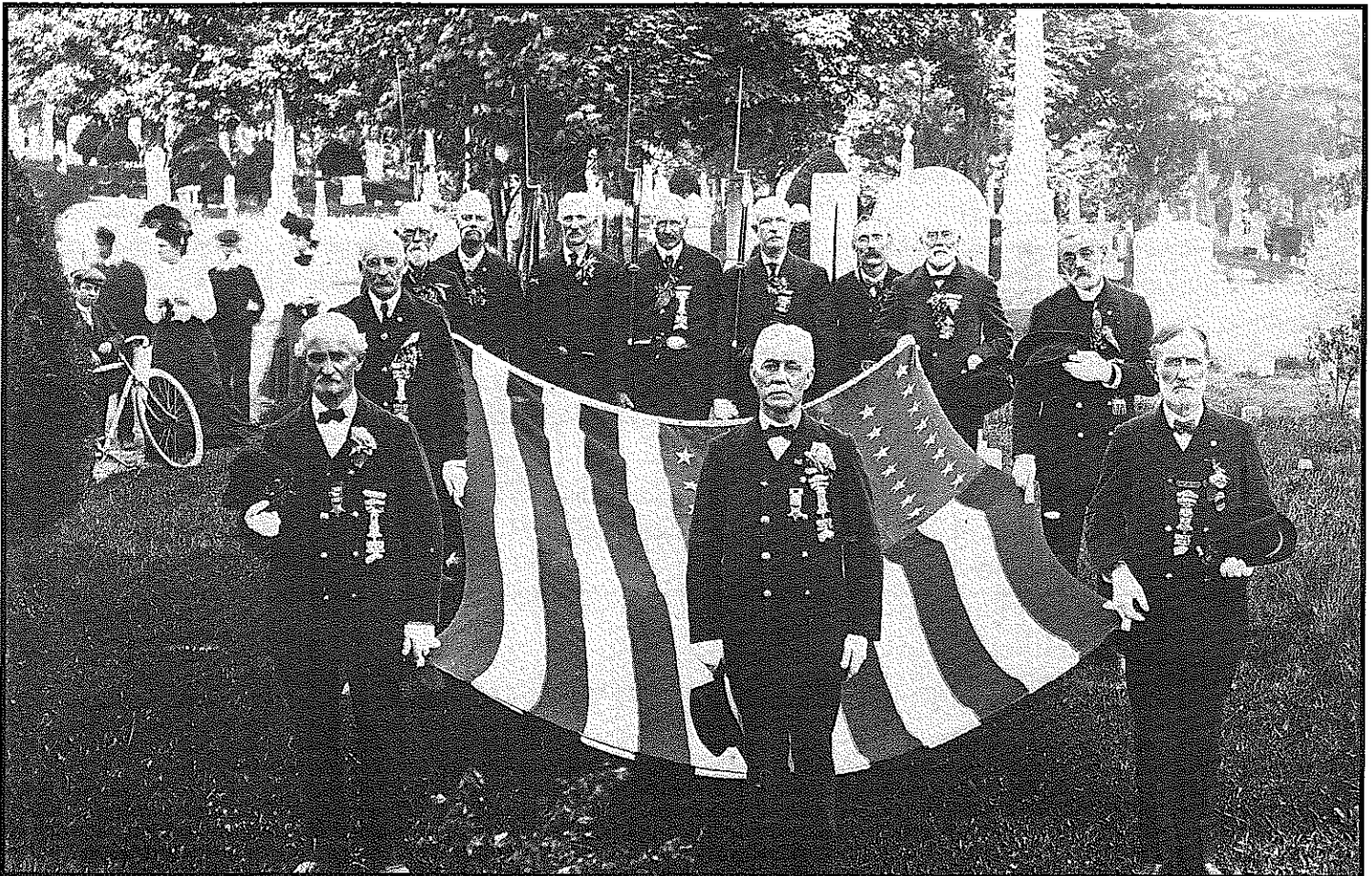
110 TOMPKINS STREET • CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045

MEMORIAL DAY 2003

## ★★★ Memorial Day, 1905 ★★★

By CHRISTINE BUCK

*The donation of this stirring photograph to the Cortland Rural Cemetery inspired the following article.*



*Veterans carrying the flag in the Cortland Rural Cemetery, May 30, 1905. View looking east from the Randall monument, Section D. Front center, Flag Commander George W. Edgecomb; front right, Chaplain H. M. Kellogg; others not identified. Photo courtesy of the Edgecomb family.*

The sky was blue and cloudless on May 30, 1905 for Cortland's Memorial Day observance. The Civil War veterans' group Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) had planned a full day of activities to remember their fallen comrades from all wars.

The GAR had organized in

1869 as the Grover Post, named for Cortland's Major Andrew Grover who was killed instantly at Gettysburg at the opening of the battle. The Women's Relief Corps, its auxiliary, formed eighteen years later.

In previous years floral decoration of the graves was done

in the midst of the afternoon exercises; however, because of the increased number in 1905, decoration was done for the first time by a small contingent in the morning before the formal services. In the Cortland Rural Cemetery 146 graves were decorated; St.

*(continued on next page)*

Mary's Cemetery, nine; South Cortland, three; Blodgett Mills, twenty, for a total of 178.

Descriptions reported in the *Cortland Standard* allow us to experience the GAR's afternoon observances that included participation by clergy and a host of community members. You are there for Memorial Day, 1905:

GAR and Relief Corps members gather at their hall in the Burgess Block, Main Street, at 1:15 o'clock. Led by the Cortland City Band, the group marches in formation to the Opera House on Groton Avenue where it joins an awaiting full-house audience. The officers of the day, clergy, speakers, and city officials sit on the dais decorated with arms of the firing squad, a large flag, and banners of the posts.

The band performs musical pieces, and a male quartet sings "We Gather With Reverence." Commander H. T. Bushnell reads Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and Rev. Eddy of the Methodist Episcopal Church offers a prayer.

More music, a featured recitation by Edith Latimer with flute accompaniment, and a report by Commander Bushnell follow. Then we stand for the playing of the "Star Spangled Banner." The afternoon's speaker is Rev. Gurney, pastor of the Congregational Church. Though his speech is rather lengthy, we all listen attentively. He pleads for veterans' pensions to be considered as payment of an honest debt, rather than alms for the poor; preservation of Memorial Day as a

sacred and inspirational day as opposed to a sporting one; respect for GAR veterans; tribute to the Women's Relief Corps; and gratitude to officers and soldiers.

After we all sing "America" and hear the benediction delivered by Memorial Baptist Church's Rev. Auringer, the column reforms and marches along Clinton Avenue, south on Church Street, and stops at the Soldiers' Monument. Those veterans unable to march are brought by carriage. Again, crowds of people are waiting. Music, singing, prayer, and a floral offering in memory of the absent dead are offered. Commander Bushnell addresses the group with a poignant recollection of the absent dead, those who left friends and family for war, never to return. Some fell in battle and were buried by comrades where they fell; some were left on the field to be buried by foe or stranger; others were reported missing or taken prisoner, never to be heard from again. They sleep in unknown graves, yet must not be forgotten.

The line forms again and marches along Tompkins Street to the Cortland Rural Cemetery. The veterans gather high on the hill at the GAR burial plot and again offer a program to the audience, their regular ritual: music by the band; words by Commander Bushnell, Officer Edgecomb, and Chaplain Kellogg; prayer; salute to the dead by the gun squad; "Taps," or "Lights Out," played by the bugler; and a benediction by Rev. Whiffin.

The group reforms and marches back to the GAR hall. It is 5 o'clock when it disbands after another successful Memorial Day observance. ♣

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## *In Remembrance of Major Andrew J. Grover*

Jeff Wheatley, President of the Civil War Roundtable (Cortland County) said they will once again observe the anniversary of Major Andrew J. Grover's death at his gravesite in Cortland Rural Cemetery. This is the 140th anniversary of the Major's death.

They will gather at 7:00 p.m. at the cemetery on Wednesday, July 2 (the actual anniversary is July 1). They have a program, and the public is welcome to attend!

From "Grip's" Historical Souvenir of Cortland:

"In 1861 he was pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Cortland. He resigned his pastorate, stepped down from the sacred desk, donned the uniform

of a Union soldier and taking with him a number of his brethren from his own church he recruited Co. A, 76th N.Y. Vol. Infantry and in command of that company as captain, went forth to fight for the 'old flag' he loved so well. On the bloody field of Gettysburg July 1, 1863, while in command of the regiment as major he was instantly killed by a rebel bullet at the very opening of the battle. His remains were brought to Cortland, buried in the Rural cemetery and annually on May 30 his comrades of the Post named after him, decorate his grave with spring's choicest flowers and fire a parting volley of musketry over his honored dust, after which the bugler blows the old army call 'lights out.' " ♣



# Public Mausoleum and Cremation Niches



Approval has been obtained and construction will be commencing this summer for our first Public Mausoleum and the only one in the Cortland area. Being built in several phases and eventually containing a total of 60 crypts, the Public Mausoleum will be contained within the Chapel Annex. In addition, it will contain 64 cremation niches.

We also offer cremation niches inside our

beautiful historic Chapel and a number of inurnments have already taken place in it. Our goals include offering a full range of modern burial choices.

If you prefer above-ground burial, in a place that can be visited year-round by friends and family, call the Cemetery at 756-6022 and schedule an appointment to discuss this new option today. 🌳

## MEMORIAL DAY

*"Dulce et decorum est"*

Joyce Kilmer

*Best known for his poem "Trees," Joyce Kilmer was born in 1886 in New Jersey and was killed in action in France in World War 1. "Memorial Day" was written by 1914, or when Kilmer was 28 years old or younger.*

The bugle echoes shrill and sweet,  
But not of war it sings to-day.  
The road is rhythmic with the feet  
Of men-at-arms who come to pray.

The roses blossom white and red  
On tombs where weary soldiers lie;  
Flags wave above the honored dead  
And martial music cleaves the sky.

Above their wreath-strewn graves we kneel,  
They kept the faith and fought the fight.  
Through flying lead and crimson steel  
They plunged for Freedom and the Right.

May we, their grateful children, learn  
Their strength, who lie beneath this sod,  
Who went through fire and death to earn  
At last the accolade of God.

In shining rank on rank arrayed  
They march, the legions of the Lord;  
He is their Captain unafraid,  
The Prince of Peace... Who brought a sword.

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# Cemetery Celebrates Sesquicentennial



2003 marks the 150th Anniversary of the founding of the Cortland Rural Cemetery, and several special events are planned to commemorate it.

On Wednesday evening, July 9th, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. the Cemetery will have an Open House with tours, a slide show, music and food. The history of the Cortland area is remembered in the many citizens now buried in our historic Cemetery. While we mourn their passing, we celebrate their achievements and the legacy of a beautiful and peaceful community they've created for us.

Come join us on the 9th of July for a tour and a

fine evening of relaxation in our peaceful and serene setting. There will be hot dogs, lemonade, popcorn and ice cream at old fashioned prices! We have scheduled several interesting presentations in our restored Chapel along with a tent outside to enjoy a (hopefully) wonderful summer evening.

A further event is being planned for November (the actual date of the anniversary) with a formal rededication ceremony in the Chapel. Details will be announced later. ♣



**Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation**

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