A DAY IN MT. HOPE

by Mattie Morrison (1841-1906)

Monday, the Fourth of July 1864 dawned bright and beautiful. Three days previous, I had left home and friends in Ohio to spend the summer in Rochester, N.Y., the city so justly celebrated by travelers for its beauty and quiet. And in honor of my arrival, this, the great national gala day, had been set apart for a family gathering and picnic. With well stocked baskets, our party chartered a streetcar and set out for Mt. Hope.

Everywhere were signs of gayety and festive joy. Streetcars were crowded with pleasure-seekers. Omnibuses were rolling by, freighted with living gayety and beauty. Hacks and private carriages were rushing along over the paved streets with a din and haste that well accorded with Jonathan’s past notions.

Only eighty-eight years since America was declared among the nations. Pains then, but struggling fiercely for the freedom that was her right. In the cradle then, but with a rapidity which Mother Britain could not understand. Her Yankee child, imbued and inspired with the glorious spirit of its well earned freedom, had outgrown its cradle and attained such colossal proportions that its arms touched either sea.

Within her proud domain was raging another fierce and terrible conflict. A conflict destined to wash from her fair pages the only blot upon her national character—destined to hand unsullied to future generations the motto of America’s independence: “All men are born free and equal.” Upon every breeze floated spirit-stirring notes reminding us of our national greatness. Everywhere the eye turned, it was met with floating banners and brilliant decorations. Even the grand steeds pranced more gaily beneath the pleasant folds of the starry banners that decorated their heads.

Uncle B. pointed out many objects of interest as we rolled rapidly onward. A ride of fifteen minutes brought us to our destination. “Mt. Hope; alight here,” yelled our excited conductor. Stepping from the car and following the rest of the party, I soon found myself standing first in front of an arched gateway, which was handsomely decorated with evergreens and flowers. The gate was closed and all who wished to enter must first enter the office, procure tickets of admission, and register their names. Uncle J. entered the office, registered the names of his party, and soon returned, presenting his tickets. The gate was at once opened, and we passed beneath the arch to find ourselves but a small part of the tide of visitors already threading the pilgrim’s path of this beautiful city of the dead.

Save the murmur of many voices and the sound of leaves rustled by the summer breeze, naught disturbed the soul (in the) subduing quiet that reigned upon the mount and through the vales of this sweet place of repose where so many thousands from out the busy delving city three miles to the north of us had found their last earthly rest, where free from sorrow, and undisturbed by the dull cares of life, they quietly await the glorious dawn that shall usher them into life beyond the tomb.

We wended our way along the broad avenue to the little stone chapel, built for the accommodation of those living beyond the city limits. It was but just completed, and we found a simple, neat,
yet handsome little building. The entrance door stood open inviting us to enter. At the rear of the chapel was a door opening into the strangers' vault. We glanced through the grating and counted six coffins, all strangers. They had passed to another sphere from the midst of strangers. Strangers' hands had closed their eyes and folded, meekly over the silent breast, hands once loved and caressed by loving friends, but now they rested alone, waiting here for some kindred to come and claim the moulderig dust.

Tears dimmed the eyes of all our party as turning away we climbed higher up the mount. The path was narrow and wound around among the graves of great and small. How many and diversified were the monuments of affection reared to the noble boy, but death had called him early, and in their loneliness and grief, they sought to rear an impending token of their idolizing love.

But not more a token of affection and the heart's deep grief was that monument in its chaste beauty than just beyond was the simple white upon a child's grave. Perhaps a mother's hand had placed there, watering it the while with tears of lonely bitter anguish to shed its sweet perfume above her heart's darling. There was many a rustic seat inviting the weary to rest, but we passed them by to gaze upon the surrounding tokens of undying love and friendship.

An exclamation of surprise broke from the lips of our guide and those of us who had halted to admire some fresh bequest evidently not long before placed upon some big graves that lay near our path. Started hastily forward, now could we wonder at the surprise of our leader. As we looked within the simple white paling, there upon the bright green sod rested a large New Foundland dog, and close to it with its head resting upon the back of the dog was a little child sleeping. One arm lay upon the dog's side, and the little dimpled cheek touched it. The other had fallen in front of it, and the little fingers held a half-open rose. "Fidelity" was engraved upon the collar that encircled the animal's neck. Although executed in marble, it seemed that both must breathe and move, so natural was the appearance. A card fastened to the railing told a touching story. The foot stone bore the simple inscription "Sweet William." He had been found a few days before his death sleeping just as represented, dying suddenly with that terrible disease, diphtheria. His faithful friend and protector had fretted himself to death for his little playmate. And thus the two had been represented in death undivided.

But we passed on up the hillside. It were useless to attempt a full description of the combined beauties of nature and art, for both had been lavished here. Near the top of the mount, our eyes were arrested by a very large monument. We did not go very near it as we could inspect it better at a distance. We counted six inscriptions from our standpoint, and as we gazed, listened to its history given by Uncle J. The man has been a wealthy merchant of the then young city of Rochester. He had a wife and six children. Prosperity had seemed to own his life. One evening during the rage of the cholera in 1837, he returned to his home as well as usual, enjoy a pleasant hour with his family, and with a blessing upon each little head, they had retired. But ere the next day's sun had risen upon the city, that father's sun had declined and

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sunk beneath life's western horizon, and before the day's end had shed its last rays upon the city, the wife and mother lay beside. And within a week each one of us appeared, at intervals, a leaden-hued belt edging the amber horizon. I judged it to be Ontario. A gentleman standing near remarked that the lake appeared very rough today. "Yes, I see the white caps" was my uncle's response. I turned and looked at them both and could not restrain a laugh. "See the white caps, uncle; why I can scarcely see the lake."

"Oh that is nothing; your eye is not practiced," he replied. A gentleman not belonging to our party, hearing what we said, stepped forward and offered me a small hand telescope, being introduced by my uncle and informed that I was just from Ohio, remarked, "Then, Miss, you must take a good view of our surrounding scenery and the most prominent buildings in the city." Adjusting the telescope properly, I looked in the direction of the lake. There were white caps, sure enough, and a steamer chartered for the day as a pleasure boat had just left Charlotte harbor and soon rolled and pitched about in a manner I thought would conduce but little to the enjoyment of most of the pleasure seekers on board.

Bringing the instrument to a level with the city, the House of Refuge for vagrant girls and the Home of Correction for boys were then pointed out as two of the most prominent public buildings. Along the terraced roofs of either building, led by the teachers and superintendents, matrons, and so forth, were to be seen the inmates marching and countermarching, cheering the bright flags floating so proudly upon every breeze. Of these, I counted six upon each roof. And on inquiring, was informed that there were at that time one hundred and fifty girls in the house and two hundred and fifty boys in the house, all picked up in the streets by the city officers or rescued from incarceration in those schools of iniquity, the jails and almshouses, to be educated in the common English branches and taught some useful trade. "We have at the present time," remarked an elderly gentleman, "three gentlemen in our biblical institute, who have taken elders' orders, who received their first incentives to lives of virtue and usefulness at that institution. But for it, many of our youth, who now give promise of usefulness, would be lost entirely to society."

The next object of interest was the Orphans' Home. Standing there, I then had a bird's-eye view of it, but later in the day, I saw more of it. Tis of that nearer view I would speak. As we drew near the Home, I was struck with the beauty that adorned it on every hand. The building was not large nor ostentatious, but the grounds were ample and laid out in a
manner to please the most fastidious and decorated with flowers, shrubs, and evergreens. It was truly a garden spot wherein to rear the young homeless children of which there are always many in large cities. There was, outwardly at least, too much to instruct and cultivate the heart and mind, much to make the homeless orphans happy.

Upon the porch of the south wing were assembled the little boys with their matron. They were very neatly clad, and every clean little face beamed with joy. A large starry banner hung from the porch, and the matron was endeavoring to teach the little fellows to sing "Star Spangled Banner." She held one little lamb in her arms and he alone of the whole seventy gathered there seemed to be watching the passersby in the street. As we were nearing them, he clapped his hands eagerly and cried, "Oh, there's Mama." The matron ceased singing, pressing the lovely little fellow to her bosom. "No, Eddie, it is not your Mama," she said. And bringing him out to the gate, she told that his mother had been dead but a few days, and he seemed constantly on the watch for her.

The little girls, she told us, were absent. There were only fifty of them now in the home. They occupied the other wing under another matron, and she had, with her husband, accompanied them to the lake. But I must leave this interesting spot to conclude my observations from the tower, which I will read at another time.

(Editor's Note: This manuscript was discovered recently in an attic trunk in Ohio. The writer of the essay back in 1864 was Mattie Morrison (Martha Jane Morrison), whose great, great grandson, Randall Scott Clark, lives with his wife, Maureen, and family in Fairport. Since the essay concerns Rochester, Randy's Ohio relatives thoughtfully sent him this handwritten manuscript. Randy's wife, Maureen, became absorbed in this missive from 140 years ago and began to translate, laboriously word by word, the obviously quickly written document. Her careful analysis produced the article reproduced above.

Some phraseology is foreign to us today. For example, "Johny Boys" were apparently men from "over the lake" in Canada. An 1856 dictionary at the Rochester Historical Society, defined "Johny Boys," in one of its definitions of the term, as "dandies," which tends to fit what Mattie Morrison describes as men "sauntering about in holiday dress." Similarly, the Canadians' "cousins" that she refers to as "Johnathans" could perhaps be their American counterparts.

The article, besides describing interesting features in the cemetery that exist today 140 years later, uses the euphemistic language of Victorians. Notice that she talks both about the Revolutionary War and the Civil War without ever mentioning their names.

In the course of translating such roughly and quickly composed handwritten material, it is necessary to make some assumptions and therefore it is possible to introduce errors. But I think that Maureen has done as scrupulously accurate a job as is possible with this manuscript. And we extend our compliments to her.

Mattie Morrison was an accomplished writer and poet. Below is one of her poems mourning the death of a close friend. It is reproduced here with permission from Martha Miller Rabatin, author of the book in which the poem was published.

A DYING SON'S FAREWELL

"Hold me, father, I am going." Passing swift from earth away, And the spirit seemeth anxious To forsake its suffering clay.

"I would like to see my brothers, But I cannot bear their woe. Let them then sleep calmly, mother, Whilst from home and thee I go."

"Hold me, father, I am going." And the words sound like a prayer Breathed in feeble, fluttering accents On the Sabbath midnight air.

And the voice is hushed forever With that last faint, trembling breath, Whilst within that silent chamber Falls the stillness we call death.

Then the hand clasp slowly loosens, And across the pulseless breast, A stricken father gently foldeth His son's pale hands to rest.

—Mattie Morrison

We are particularly thankful to Maureen and Randy Clark for their permission to print this fascinating essay and a poem by Mattie Morrison, truly a voice from out of the past, the distant past of 1864.)
DESCENDANT'S DAY: A VERY SPECIAL EVENT IN MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

by Richard O. Reisem

On Saturday, June 5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Rochester Cemeteries Heritage Foundation, the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, and the City of Rochester staged a very special open house in Mount Hope. On this day, the public was invited to request information about relatives or friends who are buried in Mount Hope.

Frank Gillespie, Friends trustee and volunteer, and city staff members manned computers in the gatehouse and located burial sites and interment information, and then provided detailed maps to help visitors find the gravesites of relatives and friends. Several hundred people took advantage of this service, keeping the staff in the gatehouse busy all day.

Continuously operating vans escorted visitors to appropriate drop-off points and picked them up after their gravesite visits. Tour guides on the vans provided historic information and anecdotes as the van drove through the cemetery. These van tours were particularly popular during the entire day, and hundreds of people took advantage of them.

At some of the historic gravesites, costumed actors from the Rochester Museum and Science Center Players performed the roles of famous Rochesterians from our city’s rich history. In the north gatehouse area, there was instrumental music provided by Eastman School of Music players. Friends of Mount Hope tour guides led half-hour walking tours of the historic section around the gatehouse area. The highlight of these short tours was a visit to the grave of Susan B. Anthony, America’s great leader of the women’s rights movement. Friends volunteers staffed an information center and provided pamphlets, maps, and newsletters about the cemetery. “Buried Treasures,” the most recent publication of the Friends of Mount Hope, was a popular purchase item.

Three presentations enriched the experience of the more than 1000 visitors on Descendant’s Day. They included “Genealogy 101: A short course on genealogical research and family history,” presented by Dr. Larry Lee Blackman, associate professor of philosophy at SUNY Geneseo and former president of the Rochester Genealogical Society. (See Letter to the Editor.)

A second special presentation was “Things Spiritual: Religious Notions of the Civil War Period.” Benedict R. Maryniak played the role of Civil War chaplain, Philos G. Cook, of the 94th New York State volunteers.

And a third presentation was titled “To Live in Hearts that Love.” It was a special tour conducted by Th. Emil Homerin, professor of religion in the Department of Religion and Classics, University of Rochester. His tour discussed issues of gravestone art and epitaphs, and their use to console the living.

All in all, Descendant’s Day was a singular success, and the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery acquired more than two dozen new members.

I am writing this letter concerning a former friend, mentor, and outstanding Rochesterian, James Mamba McCuller. Mamba (as he preferred to be called) died April 7, 1992 and is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery, Section P, Lot 112.

During his lifetime, Mamba contributed greatly to the quality of life not only here in Rochester, but was a positive influence in matters social, economic, and political around the nation. Mamba guided “Action for a Better Community” (ABC) from its infancy into a multi-million-dollar, multifaceted organization that has touched the lives of thousands of individuals throughout the greater Rochester area. His quest was to involve the poor and disadvantaged and disenfranchised with the opportunity to contribute to the fabric of our community, and he was tremendously successful.

Many of Mamba’s accomplishments are documented in the book, “Building a Better Community” by Richard O. Reisem, as well as in electronic and print archives here in Monroe County.

Please accept this letter as a request and a suggestion that Mamba be recognized in the next printing of your publication, “Pocket Guide to Mt. Hope Cemetery.” To honor his legacy and contributions with a designation and biographical sketch in your “Map and Legend” section would bring long overdue recognition to this worthy man who labored tirelessly for our city and citizens.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for considering this request.

Robert Djed Snead
Roycroft Drive, Rochester
“STORIES IN STONE” MAKES ITS DEBUT

by Pat Corcoran

“Stories in Stone” is an innovative educational program produced by the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley for students in grades 4 to 12. It is aimed at promoting the incredible educational resources to be found at Mount Hope Cemetery. The program is now available for teachers and Girl Scout leaders.

The authors of “Stories in Stone” are Patricia Corcoran and Suzanne Jaschik, both of whom are trustees of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, and Mary Thran from the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley. The project is the result of an exciting collaboration between the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley and the Friends of Mount Hope. The idea for this effort came from Jean Czerkas, Friends trustee and archivist.

The program has seven goals:
1. To celebrate the contributions of local women buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.
2. To study in depth at least one woman buried in Mount Hope Cemetery.
3. To develop an appreciation of women as effective leaders and role models for social change.
4. To appreciate Mount Hope Cemetery as a local landmark and national historic treasure.
5. To discover other community cemeteries and appreciate their history.
6. To research and learn about careers.
7. To experience service learning.

The components of the program include a student manual, a teacher’s manual, a 20-minute video of Mount Hope Cemetery, a binder containing short biographies of 34 famous women buried at Mount Hope, and copies of the books, *Mount Hope: Rochester, New York, American’s First Municipal Victorian Cemetery* and *Buried Treasures in Mount Hope Cemetery, Rochester, New York, A Pictorial Field Guide*. Hard copies of the entire program can be borrowed from the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley by calling the Girl Scout Shop at 585-239-7901 or e-mailing pchop@gvgs.org. In addition, the program will be available on the Girl Scouts of Genesee Valley web site, www.gsgv.org, as well as the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery web site, www.fomh.org.

The activities in this program are correlated with New York State Learning Standards as well as Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences. Ideas are included for adapting the program to younger children, students with special needs, and English language learners. Students who successfully complete the program can purchase a “patch” to celebrate their accomplishment.
The great Gothic Revival north entrance gate in the above photo incorporated a gatehouse and was the second such structure on this site. The first one was a wooden Egyptian style affair which deteriorated. And this second stone version had inadequate office space and an entrance that eventually became too narrow. In 1874, the current High Victorian Gothic gatehouse was built as a separate structure, and the entrance gate became the three stone pylons with wrought-iron gates depicted below. The current gatehouse and gate were designed by the eminent Rochester architect, Andrew J. Warner.

THANK YOU,
FOMH MEMBERS

A message from Jan Wyland, membership chairman

The research and restoration projects highlighted in this and every issue of the Epitaph are made possible in great part by you, the members of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. Thanks to your support much has been accomplished, but much more remains to be done. When your renewal notice arrives, send it back promptly and consider increasing your membership level. Memberships also make wonderful gifts for those interested in local history. If you’re not currently a member of FOMH, now is the time to join! Send $20 for a basic, one-year membership to The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, 1133 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620. You’ll receive quarterly issues of the Epitaph, free admission to special theme tours, and the pleasure of knowing you are helping preserve and enhance beautiful Mount Hope.
KUDOS TO KEITH, VALUED VOLUNTEER

by Pat Corcoran

Keith Ebbecke is definitely a man of many talents. Besides doing scientific research at the University of Rochester Laser Laboratory, Keith has a pet memorial business. Also, for two years, he has used his talents in stone masonry to repair children's gravestones in Mount Hope Cemetery. He has repaired some crosses and larger stones as well. He hikes through the cemetery several times a week and is familiar with every nook and cranny.

Keith takes a special interest in fixing these stones and researching some of the families. For example, this summer he repaired a child's stone which appeared to be in the wrong place. Working closely with Frank Gillespie, Friends trustee who volunteers at the cemetery office, Keith discovered an area of Quaker burials in Section D.

"I can't begin to express my appreciation and that of our cemetery staff for volunteers like Keith," said Nancy Hilliard, cemetery manager. "Keith's dedication, hard work, and financial commitment allow us to reach our goals in Mount Hope."

Keith Ebbecke beside "Lillie" gravestone that he restored.