By Richard O. Reisem

In 2009 and 2010, the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery collaborated with World of Inquiry School #58 on an interesting project to discover underappreciated historic individuals buried in Mount Hope Cemetery, who made outstanding contributions to society. In 2009, WOIS #58 won the National Urban Excellence Award for its outstanding educational accomplishments, and this recent collaboration is an example of the innovative teaching and learning methods for which the school is recognized.

The project, called The Road to Freedom, engaged seventh-grade students in a study of national events, such as the American Revolution and Civil War, through a local lens. Students discovered that the people of Rochester played an integral role in America’s struggle for freedom, but many received little or no recognition. Through a unique partnership with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, each pair of students adopted a compelling character from Rochester’s history. In an effort to advocate for their character, students engaged in research, worked with local experts, attended numerous field studies, and gathered data through surveys. The final product is a proposal that includes historical timelines, survey data, and a persuasive essay. Students will present their findings to members of City Hall and hope to have a street, park, or plaque named after their compelling character from Rochester’s past.

The award-winning World of Inquiry School No. 58 is housed in this impressive stone and brick building at 200 University Avenue in downtown Rochester. The building was constructed in 1915-1916 from a design by the prominent Rochester architect, Edwin S. Gordon. This Roman Classical Revival structure sits on a site where there have been school buildings since 1827.

At the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery annual meeting on April 13, 2010, WOIS seventh-grade student, Taariq Cleveland, described the Road to Freedom project, which is a collaboration between the school and the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.
Marilyn Nolte, president of the Friends, provided the school with more than 30 names of permanent Mt. Hope Cemetery residents, who might qualify for more recognition. She visited the class at WOIS that was undertaking the project in order to introduce the students to Mount Hope. The students made several trips to the cemetery, in addition to the in-depth research that they needed to accomplish in libraries and elsewhere.

Some 60 students were involved in the project with each pair of students researching and presenting one of the 30 compelling characters. Students and faculty narrowed the field by successive elections until a list of six finalists resulted. A panel of judges was selected to make the final selection at WOIS on May 26. Judges included Marilyn Nolte, Friends president; Christine Ridarsky, city historian; Loretta Scott, city councilmember; Jennifer Gkourlias, executive director of social studies for Rochester City School District, and Richard Reisem, author of Mount Hope Cemetery books.

The judging panel reviewed six displays that had been prepared by the students about each of their candidates, read letters that they had composed and sent to Councilmember Elaine Spaull, and then listened to presentations made by one of each pair of students.

WOIS student Aileen De Leon wrote a letter about Rhoda DeGarmo. In it she said, “Susan B. Anthony is very well known, but I bet you have no clue about Rhoda DeGarmo. She was right there with Susan B. Anthony and helped with the Underground Railroad. There is not much known about how much she did, but she did help lead the slaves to freedom. If we get her name out there, maybe historians could find out more about her and what she did in her lifetime. This is another reason why there should be a street or square named after Rhoda DeGarmo. Everybody knows the famous people like Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony, but many do not know what Rhoda DeGarmo did. She worked with Susan B. Anthony and was an abolitionist and suffragette. She should be known, but was forgotten. If my compelling character, Rhoda DeGarmo, gets picked to have a street or square named after her, then she will be known, and not forgotten.”

WOIS student Nicolas Lopez wrote about his champion, Horace McGuire. He said, “Horace McGuire was an old war veteran. He fought for ten years in the Civil War. He also lived in Rochester. He was a very interesting person. I am writing to ask for you or anyone else in your office to help my school rename a street after Horace McGuire (or an other of the compelling characters we are researching). Horace McGuire deserves honor for the following reasons. Horace McGuire was one of the first generals to fight with African-American troops. He fought in many successful battles. Also, he worked with many famous African-American people. When he was a kid, he worked for Frederick Douglass’ newspaper, The North Star. He even taught Frederick Douglass’ daughter how to read. Those are just some of the reasons why we should rename a street or a square after Horace McGuire—a man who has done so much, but is recognized so little.”

WOIS student Quinterra Robinson wrote, “It takes a child to talk the talk, but it takes a true American hero to risk

**Elaborate classical architectural details decorate the arches and brickwork above the recessed entrance to the World of Inquiry School No. 58 at University Avenue and Scio Street. The notable façade has ten massive, two-story columns that support eleven Roman arches. Decorative cast stonework contrasts with the dark brick of the building walls to give particular distinction to this imposing structure.**

**EPITAPH**

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Basic annual membership is $20
Call (585) 461-3494 for a free pocket guide to Mount Hope Cemetery and a membership application.

See our colorful and informative Website: www.romhc.org
his life. Frank Appleton Badger was a private who died in the treacherous Battle of the Wilderness. I am writing to request your help in naming a street or square after Frank Appleton Badger. One reason why we need to honor Frank Appleton Badger is he fought in the Civil War for the 104th Regiment. He fought in the Battle of the Wilderness and died with his remains never found. It was a battle of many deaths and was held in Gettysburg, PA. This is one reason why Frank A. Badger should be honored. Another reason why we should honor Frank A. Badger is because we never honor our heroes with the ultimate respect. I mean a whole day off and parades on Veteran’s Day are great, but maybe we should do a little more every time. If the North would have lost, then the African-Americans might not be free today. So all that blood was shed for all the African-Americans in the world today. This is another reason why Frank A. Badger should be honored. Frank A. Badger is very important to history. Everybody has importance, and the slightest difference could change life as it is today. I always wonder what would happen if Frank A. Badger didn’t join the army. Then who would I have written about? All these questions may never be answered, but I still like the Compelling Character chosen for me. These are the reasons we should honor Frank Appleton Badger with a street or square name.”

WOIS student Vanessa Davis wrote, “My grandfather was a slaveholder. My father was an abolitionist. While a student in college, I learned to believe in the doctrine of the brotherhood of man and to hate slavery.” Thomas Jefferson Morgan said these words, and this is why I am writing this letter—to request should have a street or a square named after Thomas J. Morgan. Furthermore, he believed that American Indians deserved to be treated equally and should be able to be themselves. Thomas made a speech about it and said that if it were up to him, American Indians would ‘live like white people’. Next, he does not have anything against any race of people. This is another reason why we should have a street or a square named after him. Last, we should honor Thomas because he had so many jobs that not only helped people in Rochester, but helped people all around the world. For example, he was a pastor of a Baptist church. Also, Thomas was a professor at the Theological Seminary in Chicago. Furthermore, he was a president of a state normal school in Nebraska. That is another reason why we should honor Thomas Jefferson Morgan. Streets are important and some street names actually mean something. So I would be thankful if you would help me out and name a street or a square after Thomas J. Morgan.”

WOIS student Zack Smith wrote, “I am writing to you today because there is a Civil and Mexican-American War veteran from Rochester who has not been properly honored. His name is Isaac Quinby. I believe he deserves to be honored by the city of Rochester. One reason why we should honor Isaac Quinby is that he taught at the University of Rochester, and he was a friend of the president of the university. Mr. Quinby taught science and math at the university. This was important because he helped his students use science and math in the real world to solve problems.
and help explain our world. This is one reason why he should be honored. Another reason why you should rename a street or square after Isaac Quinby is because he was in the Civil War. He fought in the First Battle of Bull Run. This is important because the North lost the battle and a lot of men died. Hundreds of civilian people from Washington, D.C., actually came to watch the battle and had a picnic as they watched. The picnicking people ran away in fear and collided with Northern soldiers who were also running away. The North lost the battle badly, but as a result, Lincoln called for one million more soldiers to serve in the Union Army for three years. All these new soldiers would end up fighting to help the war and the North. Mr. Quinby survived the battle, which is important because many people didn’t. Isaac Quinby was also in the Mexican-American War. All this military service shows that Quinby was determined and hardworking. He liked his country and wanted to serve for it. Later he became the city of Rochester’s surveyor and a policeman. His work as a teacher, surveyor, policeman, and war veteran show he was a man who wanted to help our country and our city. These are all the reasons why you should rename a street or square after Isaac Quinby.”

WOIS student Doug Vorndran wrote: “Re: Private Albert G. Hotchkiss reported missing June 11, 1864. He left his beloved family. He fought in the terrible Civil War. He was captured by the South. He was brought to Andersonville Prison, where he died at the age of 18. He was Albert G. Hotchkiss, and he deserves a street or square named for him. Out of all the reasons this young hero should be remembered, one should be because he left his family to go to war. Hotchkiss was born on September 20, 1846. He came from a family of six, so it was hard to get by. No one in his family was in war, so that basically means that he wasn’t obligated to go to war. Albert left his home on Hudson Street in Rochester to go and fight in war. Andersonville Prisoner of War Camp. What word comes to your mind? Does something come with Andersonville? Or does something come quicker with the words ‘Prisoner of War Camp’? Andersonville was a prisoner of war camp that existed during the Civil War time. If you were captured by the South, you would go to Andersonville probably to die of starvation or disease. Do you still remember Albert? Good. I suppose you’ve already made the assumption that he went there. You’re right. He was captured by the South. And he was imprisoned in Andersonville Prisoner of War Camp. O.K., now that you know a little, I’m just going to lay a couple of facts out for you about Andersonville. First of all, the cloth that the people wore, after they died, that very cloth was their roof. The prisoners and the guards were eating, sleeping, breathing under the ripped, torn, smelly, gross, shirts, pants and used underwear of the dead. Of course, like every prison, it wasn’t easy to escape. If you tried to escape, you’d have to pass logs used as walls, shaped into sharp stakes. If you somehow passed the ‘logs of no escape’, you would be pretty mad to find that you needed to pass a river infested with human excrement. (I wouldn’t want to swim over that!) So anyway, it’d be pretty hard, if not impossible, to escape from Andersonville. Over 30,000 Northern troops died in that prison, just fighting for what they believed in. Hotchkiss was one of them. He should be remembered for these things. I don’t know about you, but if I went through something like that, I would want to be remembered. A year after Hotchkiss’ death, his father came from Rochester.

Albert Hotchkiss sarcophagus-shaped tombstone is in Section C, Lot 23.
to Andersonville to get Albert’s body and had him buried at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Rochester, where you can still find his grave with this quote inscribed on it: ‘I know I am in the way of duty, I die for a glorious cause.’—Albert G. Hotchkiss. Please consider naming a street or square after Albert G. Hotchkiss.”

After the student presentations, the five-person panel of judges deliberated on the persuasiveness of each presentation and the noteworthiness of each of their six candidates. The results ended in a tie with the judges selecting both Rhoda DeGarmo and Thomas Jefferson Morgan as suitable candidates to be considered for public recognition. So the next step will be to present the cases of DeGarmo and Morgan to the Rochester City Council, which will determine if recognition is suitable and what type it should be, like a street or park name, a plaque, a tree, or whatever.

Davin Reddington, social studies teacher at World of Inquiry School commented on what a great and memorable learning experience this project was for these seventh-grade students. The school, with about 300 students, is comprised of 76 percent African Americans, 10 percent Caucasian, 11 percent Hispanic, and 1 percent Asian. The school was one of six schools across America to win the National Change Award in 2007. And it won the National Urban Excellence Award in 2009. Outstanding achievement at the World of Inquiry School is the result of instruction that is different from that found in most U.S. schools. Educators have created interdisciplinary learning expeditions, established partnerships with local experts and professionals, and constructed units that result in the development and presentation of authentic products. The Road to Freedom program was the first WOIS collaboration with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.

(Editor’s Note: It is interesting to read these letters by 12-year-old students and feel the passion they express. The horror of Andersonville, for example, certainly comes through in Doug Vorndran’s letter about Albert Hotchkiss. Let me expand on some of his research findings by quoting my words about Hotchkiss in my book, Buried Treasures in Mount Hope Cemetery: “Hotchkiss, Albert (1846-1864), Section C, Lot 23, died at Andersonville in the Civil War. Andersonville was a Confederate military prison established in southwestern Georgia in 1864. There were no barracks or other shelters, and prisoners contrived tents of blankets and rags or burrowed into the ground. Overcrowding, poor sanitation, undernourishment, and exposure produced a fearful mortality. About 13,000 men out of 49,500 admitted died. After the war, prison superintendent Henry Wirz was tried before a military court and hanged.”

Hotchkiss’ body was recovered and buried in Mount Hope.

The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery are especially pleased with our new association with DES, because we believe it will lead to considerable benefits for our beautiful cemetery. Three members of the Friends Executive Committee (Marilyn Nolte, Dennis Carr, and myself) met with Paul Holahan, DES commissioner, and Mary Gaudioso, DES assistant commissioner, on June 21 to discuss the new organizational structure and its effect on the cemetery. We were wholeheartedly encouraged by the meeting.

Mount Hope Cemetery manager, Jeffery Simmons, has had a number of meetings with DES management and expressed his endorsement of the new arrangement in this statement: “I believe the transfer of the Rochester municipal cemeteries to the Department of Environmental Services will be a great opportunity. DES is an operations department that provides a host of services
to the Rochester community. The vast resources in their various departments will help the cemetery restore and maintain the beauty of Mount Hope.”

We asked Commissioner Paul Holahan to introduce his department and its capabilities to our Epitaph readers:

“Mary (Gaudioso) and I are thrilled to welcome the addition of the City’s cemeteries to the Department of Environmental Services (DES) as of July 1, 2010. Both Riverside and Mount Hope Cemeteries have unique elements that give Rochester-area residents exceptional choices when planning for final arrangements.

DES is an operational department that is proud to be on the front lines of City service provision. From leaf collection in the fall to snow plowing in the winter, and from street sweeping in the spring to pothole patching in the summer; our department is continually working hard to improve and maintain Rochester’s most essential infrastructure. We hope that our department can offer the critical support and resources that the cemeteries need to continue to be successful.

We are thankful that the day-to-day operation of the cemeteries will continue to be under the responsibility of Mr. Jeff Simmons, an experienced and capable manager whose passion for his work shows through within minutes of meeting him. Though the cemeteries are a new organizational addition to DES, many of our employees have worked closely with Mr. Simmons for years in providing additional support and lending manpower, equipment, or professional consultation whenever necessary.

In addition to the internal City Cemetery staff, DES is also eager to work alongside the Friends of Mount Hope. The Friends’ commitment to preserving the history, beauty, and grandeur of Mount Hope Cemetery is admirable. We look forward to collaborating on future projects with the Friends and growing the relationship that has benefited Mount Hope Cemetery so much already.

On a more personal note, Assistant Commissioner Mary Gaudioso has enjoyed the surroundings of both cemeteries during long walks ever since she was a child. Gaining oversight of some of her favorite spots in Rochester has turned out to be especially fortuitous.
Below is a list of some of the other services that DES provides to our city residents. You can learn more about DES through our Web site at www.cityofrochester.gov/des.

Please do not hesitate to contact either Mary or me directly if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you, Paul Holahan, Commissioner – DES

- DES Services at a Glance:
  - Snow plowing
  - Salting
  - Street sweeping
  - City building maintenance
  - Fleet/equipment maintenance
  - Lot maintenance
  - Graffiti removal
  - Refuse and recycling collection
  - Street lighting
  - Right-of-way regulation
  - Water supply, distribution, and system maintenance
  - Dead animal removal
  - Pothole, chip seal, and other street maintenance elements
  - Sidewalk repair
  - Engineering services including street reconstruction and rehabilitation
  - Architectural services including City building renovation
  - Trail and park maintenance
  - Forestry
  - Environmental quality services, including remediation of brownfields and contaminated areas

**UGLY WALL PROJECT CONTINUES WITH SUCCESS**

*By Marilyn Nolte*

The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery’s Ugly Wall Program, which allows members to sponsor the restoration of an unsightly area or toppled gravestone in Mount Hope Cemetery, is off to a successful start in 2010. Each project creates its own special challenges as well as offers an opportunity to learn something of interest about the permanent residents whose plots are being restored.

Sometimes, there are surprises. Take, for example, the Joseph Fay Denison plot located in Section A. Sharon and Ted Perkins provided funds to raise Denison’s tombstone and reset it on its foundation. Thank you, Sharon and Ted, for making Section A look better.

When we offered the opportunity to have his monument restored, it appeared to be a single stone nestled among overgrown vines. Cleanup of the plot, however, brought to light several additional stones, hidden by soil and overgrowth. In the photograph, you can see the procedure used to raise these heavy tombstones. The tripod/pulley/chain device dates back to the ancient Egyptians and remains an easy and efficient method to move and position stones today. Dick Miller is operating the mechanical contrivance. He has already reset and leveled the foundation to receive the stone (called a colonial tablet) and, when it is properly positioned, needs to cement the stone to the foundation. After that he will fill gravel under the foundation and add topsoil.

Not much is known about the Denisons other than they were early settlers in Rochester. Joseph was born in New Hampshire around 1816. Census records show him in Rochester in 1840, working as a mason. Ten years later his occupation was listed as a contractor and builder. His wife’s name was Harriet, and they had at least one child, Charles. We hope to discover more about this early Rochester family.

To learn how, for a modest donation, you can sponsor the restoration of a downed stone, watch for Ugly Wall information that will accompany your membership renewal form.
A recent citywide program has directed local artists to create inventive motifs painted on traffic-light control boxes. The corner of Mount Hope Avenue and Cypress Street was assigned to a very innovative artist, Joe Guy Allard. Just a few blocks down Mount Hope Avenue from Cypress Street is the renowned Mt. Hope Cemetery with 350,000 permanent residents, and Allard became concerned about possible Zombie threats. Notice the top half of the lettering is in sunlight, while the bottom half suggests the underground. Perhaps Allard feared soulless corpses being revived. On the broad face of the metal container are a "Danger" sign and some painted objects that might ward off Zombie threats, like Dr. John's Zombie Away tonic, special goggles that are brain protectors, painted map and literature dispensers, a lantern to light the gloom, and an axe to gather firewood. We believe Allard deserves an award for most inventive traffic control box decoration.