LEONARD HENKLE (1834-1904) 
EXTRAORDINARY INVENTOR

By Nicholas Fedorka

The Rochester newspaper, the Democrat and Chronicle, on the morning of September 12, 1904 featured an article titled “Death comes to Noted Inventor...Mechanic of Rare Skill.” A well-known inventor, Leonard Henkle dedicated his life to the betterment of his fellow citizens. He did this not only through his inventive genius, but also through philosophical, political, and economic ideals that were in reality ahead of his time.

Leonard Henkle was born May 16, 1834 in Ohio. As a young man, he lived for nine years among the Sioux Indians, from whom he gained much respect. This was due to his dedication for the improvement of the condition of the tribe and also his skill in marksmanship, Indians, assisted him during one of the more trying periods of his life, the Civil War.

It is unclear as to his actual involvement in the war, but we do know that he enlisted as a file player in a military band on August 12, 1862 and discharged for disability on June 29, 1865. According to one source, he became a sharpshooter for the Union Army. This is extremely plausible given his extraordinary marksmanship. According to another source, he was assigned to hospital duty. The Democrat and Chronicle stated that Henkle “enlisted in Company A of the

Leonard Henkle had a grand plan for Niagara Falls.

which they regarded as near supernatural. At the end of his tenure, the natives considered him close to a member of their tribe. These shooting skills, which were developed with the
34th Ohio Infantry. For a considerable portion of the time he was in the service, he was assigned to hospital duty, having charge of several different hospitals.” Either way, when duty called Leonard Henkle to defend the Union, he answered willingly.

After the war, Henkle moved to Rochester, New York where he spent the rest of his life. Residing at No. 12 Lamberton Park, he quickly made a name for himself with one of his earliest and most recognized inventions, the Rochester Lamp. It was developed with assistance from Charles Upton, who was dissatisfied with the amount of light produced by regular lamps for reading. Becoming aware of Leonard Henkle’s inventive reputation, Upton agreed to meet him at the Powers Hotel in Rochester. After pondering ideas for a couple of hours, they noticed tin cuspidors on the floor, which sparked an idea for the new lamp’s fuel container. They left the hotel, purchased two spittoons, and proceeded to Henkle’s repair shop to develop a working model. Henkle conceived an ingenious idea to put a perforated thimble on top of the lamp to spread the flame, thereby producing a brighter light. Upton, with Henkle’s assistance, formed the Rochester Lamp Company, purchasing the manufacturing rights to patent No. 292,114, dated January 15, 1884, and Henkle received most of his income during his lifetime from royalties on this product.

During the summer of 1887, the city of Buffalo offered $100,000 to anyone who could invent the best practical method for utilizing the waterpower of the Niagara River. Whether it was the task of producing a creative solution or the promise of money, Henkle jumped to the task. After much time contemplating how to approach the subject, he told newspapers that he had developed a plan. He claimed that this invention could produce roughly 300,000,000 horsepower and generate enough electricity from turbine generators to light the country. Henkle viewed his plan with high regard, stating that it “is the embodiment of simplicity and perfection, comprehending the magnitude of the scheme as well as each and every difficulty that inventive genius and engineering skill might find necessary to overcome”.

Keeping his plan secret, it would be another eight years before he went public. In an article in the Rochester Union and Advertiser, Henkle described his plan in detail. The building itself would have enormous proportions, measuring a width of 1,600 feet and a height at the center of 801 feet and rising more than 50 stories tall. It would be divided into three parts, which included an east and west wing, and a middle or main section of the building. The top floor would be a massive hall used for social, religious, or political gatherings. The lower part of the building would be used for the production of electricity, consisting of 122 pairs of twin turbine wheels (732,000 horsepower under a twenty-eight foot head of water). This building “Mr. Henkle says will enable the company which operates the plant to furnish electricity for every city in the United States and Canada”.

The greatest struggle for Mr. Henkle was funding the structure, with overall costs estimated to be $38,000,000. He regarded this building as a dynamic palace, and one that would change not only how we produce electricity, but also how international relations were practiced.

With the estimated money made from this investment, Henkle intended to fund two additional plans. First, he intended to build a fleet of steamships to sail out of the St. Lawrence River to every major port in the world. Second, he would build two transcontinental railroads. One would operate from British Columbia to the St. Lawrence, the other would run from California to Maine. They would both cross Niagara Falls, right through the dynamic palace. Henkle had no small ideas. Sadly, his plan failed due to a lack of funding and the realization that the power of the falls was limited. Yet if we look past the inability to build such a structure, we see innovation ahead of its time. Not only was this an engineering miracle on paper, it also was moral enlightenment.

Henkle envisioned the Grand Hall on the top floor to be a sort of United Nations where “nations of the world would be welcomed to assemble in this hall, to be taught to cease the conflicts of war and love one another. The social distinctions between poverty and wealth would be destroyed, while thousands of children would be invited there to be made better in youth, grow up to bless the world and honor their maker”. Well before Woodrow Wilson’s “League of Nations,” this idea was revolutionary. Also, his method for generating electricity by using river current was later put into practice at Niagara Falls. Considered unconventional when first purposed, this idea was regarded as the future of the
production of electricity at the time of his death.

Leonard Henkle produced many more inventions that, while not well known, were extremely important. The first was a hydraulic press, which was regarded as the most powerful machine in America at that time. The machine was able to produce a total force of 2,400,000 pounds of pressure and intended to produce galvanized iron for construction of buildings and various products. The process of galvanizing iron prevents rust, thereby creating longer life for products and buildings.

Leonard Henkle also developed a safe way to burn acetylene, which is an extremely flammable and powerful gas. When first discovered accidentally by smelting limestone and coke, the combination only needed water to produce the gas. Considered an explosive, a manufacturing company based in New York City started to produce the gas in steel tubes for public purchase. But the manufacturers did not give proper instructions to consumers for safe usage.

Realizing acetylene’s potential, Leonard Henkle developed a generator in his basement that could burn a cubic half-foot of gas an hour. This same burner would burn 4-6 cubic feet of coal gas, but if one uses a ton of stone (with water added), the generator would furnish about 12,000 cubic feet of gas. He believed that a man could light his house for one night with only four cubic feet of acetylene. So confident in his invention was Henkle that he stated a “man one hundred miles from a gas main can have as good a light by simply turning on a burner cock and applying a match”.

Leonard Henkle was responsible for over two dozen inventions. The inventions stated above are several examples of the mechanical genius of Mr. Henkle. But being an inventor was just one aspect of his life; he was also a politician, though this was a position that was originally thrust upon him by his devoted followers and not from a desire for personal gain.

On the morning of September 22, 1894, 200 people marched upon No. 12 Lamberton Park. Their purpose was not malicious, but one of hope. They called themselves the Workingmen Party, and wanted Leonard Henkle to represent their interest in the United States Congress. Called Henkletes, they elected him chairman of their party and named him their first representative. He developed a curious platform while running for office, which stated: “Suppose that Rochester’s cemeteries, the sacred abodes of the dead, were abandoned by the authorities; would they become desecrated? No! That sentiment which lives in the hearts of the people, born of kindred love for our departed ones, now sleeping in death, would instantly arise in protection of these consecrated places.” He also requested that voters stand with him for “one God, the father of all, one humanity, the children of God; one country, the home of all; one constitution and system of justice for all, both rich and poor; one religion, supreme reverence for God, and the Golden Rule for every man”. His campaign was short-lived, as he lost the election and his political dreams with it.

Leonard Henkle was also a devoted father and husband. His first wife, Mary, died at an early age of 54 due to unknown causes on February 16, 1893. He remarried two years later to one of his housekeepers. An article published by the Democrat and Chronicle attacked his choice in marrying the housekeeper. He lashed back by sticking up for “housekeepers” and discussing how he considered “a housekeeper or any other honest worker as honorable as their employer so long as they behave as well”. Yet the same article noted his reason for the marriage:

“The same day that communication was published, Mr. Henkle called this office and requested that the Union and Advertiser make public the fact that he had been united in marriage to the lady who had for sometime acted as his housekeeper. He states that a short time ago he said to her: ‘You have been a good housekeeper and have never received as much money as you should have. I will take you as my wife.’ Mr. Henkle stated that his humanitarian feelings had caused him to take the step. The lady had been betrayed in her early life, he said, and he wished to show the world that he was not a man to try to keep a person down because of one mistake. ‘I would rather,’ he said, ‘have inscribed on my tombstone that I had done all I could to help a deserving woman than be president of these United States.” —Union and Advertiser, March 13, 1895

Was this marriage a consequence of Mr. Henkle’s philanthropist ideas, a political maneuver to secure the lower middle-class vote, or was it true love? If it was true love, a court case causes one to view it unlikely. The affair originated in a dispute over the two children in the family. Complaints came to attention of police that the second Mrs. Henkle was abusing the children, one of them...
adopted. After investigation, both husband and wife were accusing one another on different accounts of abuse, either upon themselves or the children. Eventually, allegations were made that Mr. Henkle made a blow to his wife’s head, which she deflected with her arm, causing an abrasion. At trial, it came to the attention of the court that the matter was over the adopted daughter. Mr. Henkle and the adopted daughter both testified that it was Mrs. Henkle who started the abusive action, threatening to hit them both over the head with a chair. By the end of the trial, Judge Ernst ruled that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute Leonard Henkle.

Leonard Henkle was also a member of C.J. Power Post, G. A. R., and organized the Independent Veterans Battalion of Rochester. He was given the honorary title of Colonel and made Commander. He wrote on many subjects, such as a famous tribute to Frederick Douglass. He also wrote a pamphlet titled “Inspiration” in which he discussed his religious beliefs. These beliefs were difficult to understand, but the foundation of his creed was “the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.” After a prolonged illness, he died due to a complication of diseases. His wife and two daughters, Mrs. Arthur Underwood, and Miss Elsie May Henkle survived him.

Leonard Henkle’s obituary in the Democrat and Chronicle on September 12, 1904 beautifully summed up his life by stating “while Leonard Henkle shared, with successful inventors generally, a degree of eccentricity, he was in reality ahead of his time.” Everything from his inventions, political views, and philosophy on life may have seemed “eccentric” during his life, but were commonly viewed and accepted over time. He was buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Section A, Lot 21. His tombstone has been heavily damaged by acid rain and vandalism. The text inscribed on the tombstone is barely visible, and it has fallen off its base, resting on the surrounding uneven earth. Though his views were considered eccentric, his stone is simple and direct.

To leave a tombstone at a place of burial is basic human desire for immortality. Robert Lifton in The Broken Connection touches upon this subject and goes into detail of other ways in which a human feels a sense of immortality when faced with the subject of death. One of the aspects of immortality touched upon was that of a creative nature, as humans feel a sense of continuity through works of art, literature, or more humble influences. It is here that Leonard Henkle has become immortal. His inventions and philosophical ideology have rendered his name everlasting. His dedication to the betterment of the human race is one that is still remembered a century after his death.

Editor’s Note: The author, Nicholas Fedorika, is a student at the University of Rochester and prepared this essay as part of course work for Speaking Stones, taught by Professor Emil Homerin, who is also a trustee of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.

THANKS TO UGLY WALL CONTRIBUTORS

By Marilyn Notle

A couple of years ago, we started taking pictures of damaged or unsightly gravesites in Mount Hope Cemetery with the idea of posting their pictures on a wall and then finding a way to fix those sites by asking for contributions from members. Below are the individuals who contributed to the Ugly Wall Program in 2011, thereby making a substantial improvement in the appearance of the cemetery:

- William and Marge Boehme adopted
  Katherine Whiteley - Range 2 Lot 247
- Joyce Eustance adopted Harriet Peek
  Range 2 Lot 248
- Mary Fisher adopted Louise Kohler
  Range 2 Lot 179 and Elizabeth Schmidt
  Range 2 Lot 283
- David Hanna adopted Elijah Denison
  Section A Lot 57
- Penny Illingworth adopted Lizzie
  Range 2 Lot # unknown
- Grace Jones adopted Henry Weichkert
  Range 2 Lot 278
- Charles & Carol Klinger adopted
  David Bentley - Section C Lot 171
- Rick & Marie Leistman adopted Sarah Baker
  Range 2 Lot 258
- Carol Lombard adopted Chester Kellogg
  Range 2 Lot 85
- Carolyn & Ed Maruggi adopted Herman Beyer
  Range 2 Lot 262 and Michael Baker
  Range 2 Lot 258
- Sharon & Ted Perkins adopted Minnie
  Bonzer - Range 2 Lot 249
- Peter Seagle adopted stones in
  Congregation Beth Israel - Range 3
- Jeremy Smith adopted William Lewis
  Range 2 Lot 261
• Linda Smith adopted Frederick Paul - Range 2 Lot 261
• Joan Schumaker adopted Joseph Mensing - Range 2 Lot 258
• Sue Stewart adopted the Wicken Killick obelisk - Section B Lot 7
• Rick & Rosanne Tarbold adopted Valentin Gerling - Range 2 Lot 260
• Carolyn & Ed Maraggi adopted Herman Beyer - Range 2 Lot 262
• Terry Yount adopted Wilfred Phillips - Range 2 Lot 280

In 2010 and 2011, Ugly Wall participants have been responsible for an extremely significant improvement in one area of Range 2. Other participants made it possible to put up some significant stones and to continue the work of restoring old abandoned lots.

Stones put up in 2010 were reviewed to make certain that they are still standing and in good condition, and we are happy to report that all of them are fine.

In 2012 we will continue work in Range 2 and, depending on resources, begin work in other critical areas.

Thanks to all of you who supported the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery Ugly Wall program. We would like to show you photographs of what each of you accomplished, but space permits only a couple of samples.

**FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING**

The annual meeting of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery will be held on Tuesday, April 17, 2012, at Brighton Town Hall, 2300 Elmwood Avenue, Rochester, NY. Sharon Bloemendaal will be the guest speaker, giving a presentation about architects of the Kaebler family and other Browneroff area residents now in Mount Hope Cemetery.
Frank Gillespie was a longtime trustee of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, extraordinary photographer of the cemetery, and genealogists' friend in finding ancestral gravesites. His association with the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery dates back two decades.

Although Frank was born in Idaho, he was raised and educated in Wyoming. He was taking photographs and processing them in a dirt-floor cellar darkroom in Laramie, Wyoming, since he was 10 years old. His serious introduction to photography came as an aerial photographer in the U.S. Navy followed by a stint as a commercial photographer. After receiving a master's degree from the University of Wyoming, he joined Eastman Kodak Company where he worked for 25 years. When pressed, he told tales of his disc jockey days, spinning records and announcing for a Rawlins, Wyoming radio station. And he could also mention his life as a classical musician, playing the cello. He built a replica of a 1928 Mercedes roadster on a VW Beetle chassis and restored antique furniture.

He married a Wyoming gal, Marilyn, in September 1961 in Laramie, and immediately after Frank's graduation in 1966, the couple moved to Rochester where Frank started his career at Kodak Park and Marilyn became a notable artist. They are the parents of two lovely daughters, Dawn (John) Martin and Jenene (Andrew) Hoyer, and have five vivacious grandchildren.

I first met Frank in the early 1980s; he was “Mr. Quality Control” at Kodak Park, when I was producing a program on Kodak quality control efforts. Frank, Marilyn, and I became members of a Corn Hill group known as the Friends of Hervey Ely House, owned by the D.A.R., which needed funds for restoration. At one of our Sunday afternoon fundraising meetings, Frank, Cemetery. His first collection of cemetery photographs became an exhibition at the Link Gallery at City Hall, where the Friends staged a champagne reception. At the end of the evening, Frank, thinking beyond the month-long exhibit, said, "It seems a shame to put all these photographs in storage after this show." I suggested we publish a book of his photos with me playing his cello, and several musician associates provided a concert of classical music.

One day in 1993, Frank called me to say he had purchased a new lens for his camera and was looking for a peaceful spot to test its capabilities. I said I knew exactly the spot, namely, Mount Hope adding historical text. That became the coffee-table book, Mount Hope: America’s First Municipal Victorian Cemetery. Frank and I personally financed the printing costs. It sold out in less than a year. After peddling books to retail outlets for all those months, we gave the rights to the Landmark Society and persuaded them to reprint it. In fact,
the Society reprinted it a second time, and even that is now sold out.

During warm months from 1992 to 1997, Frank Gillespie, Jack McKinney, and I conducted a systematic survey of the cemetery to identify vulnerable sculpture, that is, monuments of particular historic or aesthetic interest and other objects of value to antique dealers and collectors—sculpture that would be attractive in private gardens. Our project was to catalog all of it for reference in case any of it was damaged or stolen. Frank photographed each selected subject, which turned out to be more than 500 objects; Jack made notes about the permanent residents buried at each site and determined the exact field location. I measured each item and placed an identification number on the site to appear in the photograph.

In 2002, the Friends published a second book called Buried Treasures in Mount Hope Cemetery. It was a pictorial field guide that contained more than 500 burial sites of famous, interesting, and even some notorious permanent residents. The book even included a dictionary of Victorian symbols. Again, Frank took 191 photographs in stunning black-and-white, and I wrote what I considered inspired biographical text.

Frank has also been the official photographer for the Epitaph, the quarterly 8-page newsletter of the Friends. He did this for years before I became editor of the Epitaph in 1996, providing a stellar collection of photographs for more than 60 issues.

When Jack McKinney, who as a volunteer answered public inquiries concerning friends and relatives buried in Mount Hope, died in 1998, Frank Gillespie, now retired, stepped in, also as a volunteer, to research genealogical inquiries. In a typical year like 2001, he received 265 requests for information. These 265 inquiries resulted in providing information about more than 1,600 individuals buried in Mount Hope. Including field trips to burial sites, an average inquiry takes two or three hours to complete.

For walk-in requests, Frank decided to provide easier access to gravesites by producing about 70 maps of the 35 cemetery sections, each map showing every lot and its number and on the reverse side the family name on the end monument in each row of lots. With an overall cemetery map and a detailed section map, anyone could quickly find the desired gravesite. Developing the section maps was an enormous task for Frank, but an instant success for the public.

After the launch of the map project, Frank led a plan to microfilm the entire interment records for 350,000 burials and transfer all that data to computer-searchable CDs. The ultimate solution, of course, is fully computerized files, which requires manual entering of each burial data as computerized data, and Frank developed the plan for this enormous task with the help of volunteers from the Rochester Genealogical Society.

As if genealogical searches, map production, and making photographs was not enough to keep him busy, Frank decided to prepare a complete study of the 82 mausoleums in the cemetery—photographing them and noting all relevant information about their permanent residents. He asked me if I would provide descriptions of the architectural styles and physical details of the structures, which I was happy to supply.

In 2010, I wrote a book published by the Friends and titled Frederick Douglass and the Underground Railroad. To make it more interesting, the book needed photographs of safe houses, LUGR stops, escape tunnels, historic plaques and signs, departure ports, sculptures, gravestones, and a host of physical things that related to

the Underground Railroad. So I asked Frank to take the photos and gave him a long list. As he always did, Frank produced an amazing collection of pictures that marvelously illustrated the text. In the process, he nearly fell into the Genesee gorge, took photos on his hands and knees in cramped quarters, visited sites at odd hours to eliminate traffic or obtain ideal lighting, got kicked off private property, and suffered a variety of other difficulties. But he made the book exciting.

One of Frank’s most recent major projects was building a dollhouse for his granddaughter, Lindsay, who is the daughter of Jennie and Andrew Heyer. Frank presented the dollhouse to her when she was seven years old. It was an elaborate affair three feet high, 32 inches wide when closed and 68 inches wide when open, with six rooms and three more in the attic. It had two porches and was fully electrified, with hardwood floors, wallpapered rooms, operating doors and windows, and very tastefully furnished.

Frank Gillespie died on Sunday afternoon, January 15, at Highland Hospital where he was being treated for pneumonia and cancer. On the following Sunday afternoon, January 22, Frank’s family, the City of Rochester, the Mount Hope Cemetery staff, and the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery held a public gathering in his honor at the cemetery office. An amazing number of his friends packed the rooms at the office. We all miss him.
THANKS TO CONTRIBUTORS TO FITCH MAUSOLEUM REPAIR

By Marilyn Nolte

Last fall, in a windstorm, a large tree fell in Mount Hope Cemetery, unfortunately falling on the Fitch mausoleum and destroying a large portion of the upper left corner of the structure. No living descendants of the Fitch family could be located, so we issued a special appeal to raise money to make repairs. The following people contributed generously (a total of $3,577.30) to the Fitch Mausoleum repair. And the remaining amount needed ($2,242.70) was supplied by Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery membership contributions.

Anderson, Ronald
Angell, Catherine
Beh, Kathleen
Benoy, Marjorie
Billingsley, Barbara
Boehme, Larry & Marje
Bryden, Charles
Bushnell, Julie
Badick, Joan
Chase, Richard
Cincenello, Susan
Clay, Marianne Dade
Copeland, Charles
Crenshin, Pat
Dennison, Richard & Diane
Dresen, Roberta
Eustance, Joyce
Fowler, Gail
Gerhard, Gail & Gwenyth
Grabb, Herbert
Hasler, Peter & Barbara
Henderberg, Linda
Howk, Cynthia
Hunt, Roger
Husson, Christopher
Hustler, Barbara
Jones, Ann
Kearney, Margaret
Kempshall, Eaton
Kral, Karen
Kwon, Jennifer
Lawrence, Jane & Doug
Leisman, Richard & Marie
Maletzke, Martha
Maruzzi, Carolyn
McCown, Cecelia
NSDAR Irondequoit Chapter
Oatman, Carolyn
Oukes, Jake
Park, Ann
Patzvold, Gail Ann
Schenk, Janet & Werner
Seagle, Peter
Shapiro, Miriam
Smith, Linda
Stewart, Sue S.
Stork, Carol
Swan, Judy & Phil
VanDiehl, Margaret
VanSice, Marc & Barbara Ann
White, James & Joanne
Wiser, Jennifer
Zuber, Jacqueline

We are so grateful to the people on this impressive list for their financial help on this project. The Fitch mausoleum stands strong and secure because of you. The left finial was broken beyond repair and will be replaced later.

CORRECTION

Jeanne Maybee Kelley pointed out to us that on page 2 of the Fall issue we printed an incorrect battle resulting in Col. Patrick O’Rorke’s death. He died in the Battle of Little Round Top.