ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the Friends was held on December 3 at the Garden Center. Jack and Trish McKinney showed slides and spoke about several European cemeteries that they had visited. It was an informative presentation illustrated with excellent color slides.

Dennis Carr, the Friends' president, introduced James Dorschel, Superintendent of Cemeteries, and Mary Lou Tyndall, Manager, Parks Enterprise Division/Cemeteries. He then presented the highlights of 1989.

1. The exterior restoration of the gatehouse has begun.
2. The gazebo needs repair. The City has contracted to have the condition stabilized and permanent repairs will be made later.
3. The Friends arranged and paid for the painting of the Florentine Fountain, drinking fountain, and benches at a cost of $1,595.
4. Friends helped identify gravestones to be reset or repaired.
5. Gardening Committee volunteers planted and maintained the gardens at the entrance. The committee also coordinated the “Adopt-A-Plot” program, involving 15 graves.
6. Approximately 30 slide presentations about Mt. Hope were given to various groups.
7. During 1989, about 3,000 people took either the regular or special tours of the cemetery. Dick Reisem gave two tours for the Rochester Museum & Science Center. Dick Brown developed a special Civil War tour, which includes the graves of some of the 14 generals buried in Mt. Hope and other veterans of note.
8. The first Membership Appreciation Night was held on September 13. Friends also acted as hosts for a RIT Photography Symposium on the evening of June 20.
9. There is a listing in the Rochester Talking Phone Book telling about the Friends.
10. Five issues of the newsletter were distributed in 1989.
11. There will be a Membership Drive in 1990.

Officers of the Friends for 1990 are: Dennis Carr, President; Edward Olinger, First Vice President; Shirley Stephens, Second Vice President; Richard Brown, Secretary; John McKinney, Associate Secretary; and Leon Creek, Treasurer.

Elected to the Board of Trustees for a three-year term (1990-1992) were Richard Brown, Frances Coleman, Laurel Gabel, Robert Hoepfl, John McKinney, Carol Truesdale, and Robert Vogt.

MATERIAL WANTED FOR ARCHIVES

Carolyn Nail, our archivist, is collecting old newspaper articles about Mt. Hope and local history books. Please call 461-3494 and leave a message if you have any material to donate. Carolyn will contact you.
A few hundred feet south of the old gatehouse in Mount Hope Cemetery and quite near Mount Hope Avenue itself is a modest, flat stone with a simple, but arresting, inscription:

NANCY HARRIS QUACKENBUSH
1818-1900
BORN ON THIS SITE

Born in the cemetery? Well, not exactly. But the story is interesting nonetheless. The first thing we need to remember is that Mount Hope Cemetery was opened in 1838, the land having been purchased by the city in 1837. So, Nancy Harris' birth preceded the cemetery by two decades.

When little Nancy was born in 1818, a log cabin stood on the site of her present grave. The cabin had been built by her maternal grandfather, Jacob Miller.

Miller came here prospecting for land around, we think, 1808. He established a farm in what is now the Elmwood/Mount Hope Avenue area. The western part of his farm formed the southeast portion of the old section of Mount Hope Cemetery. Jacob Miller built a log cabin on that portion of his land in 1810.

They had to barricade the door of the cabin at night to keep out the bears and wolves. When the British invaded Charlotte in the War of 1812, Miller feared he might lose his ox team to the British, should they be successful in their invasion. So his son, Harvey, drove the oxen through the woods near the cabin into a marsh (now Sylvan Waters in the cemetery) and hid there in the thick brush with the oxen until the all-clear signal came.

When Jacob Miller and his family moved out of the cabin in 1816, he let his daughter and son-in-law, Amanda and Daniel Harris, have the Mount Hope cabin. It was a crowded little cabin, because Amanda and Daniel arrived from Otsego County with nine children in tow. And Nancy hadn't even been born yet.

When Nancy Harris was born in 1818, the area surrounding her home was still wild. One pioneer's letter describes the place where the old entrance to Mount Hope Cemetery (a stone's throw from Nancy's cabin) stands today. He wrote: "There was a low, swampy place in there, filled in with a perfect mat of high alders, choke cherries, and high bush huckleberries, and people said that lights moved around there in the daytime, and in the night would start up and move off up into the hills, and that horrid sounds had been heard, and we boys always ran like a streak through there, or if we had a horse, we put him through on the double-quick till we rose on the hill going by Judge Warner's. It was literally a howling wilderness—so howling with wild beasts that at night, alone and unarmed, no individual dared venture along the road there, much less to penetrate the woods at the base of those hills. I can remember when no common Indian, versed..."
as he might be with the voices of the wild animals of the forests, could interpret the discordant sounds of beast and fowl and frog that were sprung upon the air there any fall night. It was through this passage that George G. Sil of Old Lyme, Connecticut, afterwards the first bookseller in Rochester, had to be escorted in the night by Daniel Harris, because the road was so blind, and there were so many wildcats, bears, and wolves in that neighborhood.

Here is where little Nancy spent her early years. She saw the forests leveled, the roads cut through, and the marshes drained and filled. She married a boatbuilder, John Quackenbush, on December 18, 1845, in the town of Greece.

In the 1850's, Nancy and John Quackenbush, along with their young daughter, Mary, and Nancy's mother, Amanda, lived at 7 Marshall Street, while John supported them with his boatbuilding trade, a highly needed craft in the days of the Erie Canal. Records that we studied disagree on when Quackenbush died, but it was probably in the late 1850's, so Nancy's marriage was all too brief.

Widow Nancy spent her final years in Buffalo, where she died of influenza at the age of 82. She was buried on April 3, 1900, in Mount Hope Cemetery on the site of her birth where the log cabin had disappeared perhaps sixty years before. Why not pay a visit to the grave of this Rochester pioneer and let your mind imagine the surroundings that young Nancy experienced.

SYMBOLISM IN MT. HOPE

The wreath, a symbol from the ancients, can be found on many monuments in Mt. Hope. Not only was it used as a symbol of death and mourning, and formed an eternal circle, but it also symbolized honor, triumph, special achievement, and bravery. The emperor's crown of gold laurel leaves and engineering staffs then planned the gatehouse restoration, and the City submitted the plans to New York State's Office of Historic Preservation for approval. After the plans were approved, the work was sent out to be bid and contracts awarded. Work started in November 1989 and will continue, weather permitting, until the project is completed.

The exterior restoration consists of:

Repairs to the slate roof, flashing, repointing and/or rebuilding of masonry, resetting of front entry stone steps, repair of exterior plaster ceiling at front entry, replacement of exterior basement door and frame, refinishing of front and rear entry doors, painting of all wood and trim and ornamental iron work, installing bird screens to all masonry openings of the tower bell room, and connecting all existing downsputs to new perimeter drainage which will discharge into an existing sewer lateral located in Mt. Hope Avenue.

In the future the Friends hope to apply for other grants to restore the interior of the gatehouse.

GATEHOUSE RESTORATION

In 1988 the Friends received a grant from the 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act to restore the gatehouse. The City of Rochester matched the grant and provided funds to cover a shortfall after bids on the work were received.

During 1989, representatives from the City and the Friends met to discuss the use of the grant. They decided to concentrate on the exterior, structural work. The City's architectural and
the winner's wreath of green laurel leaves were common in ancient Rome. Withered remains of wreaths 4,500 years old were found in an Egyptian Pharaoh's burial pyramid. Today wreaths are still used: a winner's floral wreath at a horse race, a welcoming lei in Hawaii, oak or laurel wreaths in some medal designs, as well as funeral wreaths, memorial wreaths, and the use of wreaths on monuments. The clasped hands within the wreath indicate farewell and a hope of meeting again in eternity.

CEMETERY TOURS
Guided tours of Mt. Hope will resume on Sunday, May 6, at 2 and 3 o'clock. Special tours can be arranged throughout the year by calling 461-3494 and leaving a message.

MUSEUM CLASS
Graveyards are really outdoor museums. Laurel Gabel will teach a course entitled, Graven Images: 18th and 19th Century Gravemarkers and the Stories They Tell. It will be held at the Gannett School of Science and Man of the Rochester Museum & Science Center on three Tuesdays, April 10, 17, 24; 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. On Sunday, May 20, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m., the class will meet at Mt. Hope Cemetery for a walking tour conducted by Mrs. Gabel. Call the Gannett School for registration information.

NEW MEMBERS
Wayne & Christine Garrison
Alan L. Heyneman
Janet & Werner Schenk

THE FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE CEMETERY
Membership Categories:

- Basic $15.00
- Contributing $25.00
- Supporting $50.00
- Patron $50.00
- Benefactor $100.00
- Life Membership $500.00 or more
- Retired/Student $5.00

THE FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE CEMETERY
791 Mt. Hope Avenue
Rochester, New York 14620

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