Last September, Carolyn Nail led a cemetery walking tour, “Art and Architecture in Mt. Hope,” for members and their guests. Others in the cemetery that day joined the tour also. The tour stopped at several gravestones designed by Claude Bragdon or Fletcher Steele, a well-known landscape architect. Other stops included cemetery buildings designed by either A. J. Warner or his son, J. Foster Warner, two statues sculpted by Nicola Cantalamessa-Papotti, and mausoleums of special architectural interest. Special tours, such as this one, are available to groups. For information about them call 461-3494 and leave a message. Someone will contact you. Before the opening of the regular tour season, there will be another special tour. Watch for the announcement and mark the date on your calendar.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Friends’ annual meeting was held in the historic Holy Sepulchre Cemetery Chapel. Kathleen Wolkowicz, curator of the George Eastman House, spoke and showed slides about its restoration. Elected to the Friends’ Board of Trustees for the 1991-1993 term were Dennis Carr, Carolyn Nail, Richard Reisem, Robert Schnacky, Michael Spencer, Shirley Stephens, and James Yarrington.
Mt. Hope Cemetery boasts many impressive monuments dedicated to Rochester's well-known and popular citizens. One that commands particular attention resides in the northeast corner of Range 2, and honors James D. Reid, who was known to telegraphers throughout the country as "The Father of the Telegraph." The memorial stands over eight feet tall, with a bronze bas-relief likeness of Reid and an inscription in his memory. The monument was erected in 1915 by the Association of Railway Telegraphers at a cost of $3000. Half of the sum was contributed by the telegraphers and the rest by Andrew Carnegie in memory of his dear friend. This lovely remembrance was designed and completed by noted sculptor Charles Keck, who had many famous works to his credit.

James Reid was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on March 22, 1819. He and his family moved to Toronto, Canada, in 1834 and subsequently moved to Rochester three years later. At eighteen, he became a postal clerk under Henry O'Reilly. That same year, Reid became assistant to O'Reilly and was assigned to the building of the telegraph line from Lancaster to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He next became Superintendent of the Magnetic Telegraph Company, followed by the position of Superintendent of the Atlantic and Ohio Telegraph Company, which ran from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia. In 1856, when Western Union began to absorb the individual lines, Reid was made Superintendent of the New York, Albany, and Buffalo Telegraph Company, which was eventually absorbed by Western Union. Reid was, in fact, the first railway telegraph superintendent in the United States and Europe.

Reid founded and edited the National Telegraphers Review and in 1877 he published his first edition of The Telegraph in America. He was the originator of the telegraphic signal of fraternity "78," which was known and used by telegraphers everywhere as the greeting of good will and friendship.

In 1889, Reid became Consul at Dunfermline, Scotland, and retained that position until 1897. He was appointed to the position by President Benjamin Harrison and continued under President Grover Cleveland.

In the March 21, 1872 issue of the Union and Advertiser, the following brief article appeared.
regarding Reid. “According to the Utica Observer, James D. Reid, long connected with the telegraph companies, has accepted a professorship in the University of Rochester. Mr. Reid will make a tour of Europe before entering upon his duties at the University.” (Between the years 1872-1878, Reid is only recorded as living in Rochester in the 1873-74 Rochester Directory, so it is not known if he assumed the professorship.)

Reid was married July 6, 1842, to Nancy Elton. They became the parents of three daughters and a son. The daughters, Mary, Clara, and Lizzie are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery with their parents. The boy, whose name was not available, was injured seriously while the family was living in Albany and may be buried there. Also in the family plot at Mt. Hope are Reid’s parents, Elizabeth and Hugh.

James Reid was a close friend and associate of Samuel F.B. Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph. In his farewell address, Morse referred to Reid as a pioneer whose unwearied labors early contributed so effectively to the establishment of telegraph lines. In addition, Reid was a friend of Hiram Sibley, founder of Western Union. His friendships were extensive and his popularity was expressed in the dedication of his monument on June 24, 1915. The main address was delivered by former Senator Walter C. Burton of Brooklyn, and the invocation was offered by Rev. William B. Wallace, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rochester.

Another of Reid’s close friends was Andrew Carnegie. They were both born in Scotland, not very far from one another. Both came to the United States at an early age and both were destined to make their mark.

When Carnegie was informed of the monument being erected in Reid’s honor, he relayed stories of the warm friendship between the two gentlemen; how Carnegie was once a messenger and telegraph operator and how that experience was a turning point in his life.

Carnegie was not able to attend the dedication ceremony, but sent a message indicating he would be there in spirit and signed his message with “73.”

NATIONAL GRAVESTONE STUDIES CONFERENCE

The Association for Gravestone Studies will hold its annual conference at Northfield Mt. Hermon School in Northfield, Massachusetts on June 17-30, 1991. The conference program is designed to inform those attending about ways to appreciate and preserve the nation’s burying grounds. There will be lectures, workshops, exhibits, guided cemetery tours, and a panel discussion relating to gravestone conservation issues. Also, there will be an introductory session for those new to gravestone studies.

For more conference information, write to Cornelia Jenness, HCR 10, Box 643, Spofford, NH 03462. For registration information write the Association for Gravestone Studies, 46 Plymouth Road, Needham, MA 02192 or phone (617) 455-8180. Pre-registration is required.

SYMBOLISM IN MT. HOPE

In the 19th Century the lamb was the most common marker for a child’s grave. It represents innocence or meekness. This gravestone has a graceful lamb in repose, framed within an arch, making it particularly effective.
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED
The Friends need volunteers to answer genealogical inquiries at the cemetery office. Training will be provided. For information please call 461-3494 and leave a message. Someone will contact you.

MUSEUM CLASS
Laurel Gabel will teach a class, GRAVEN IMAGES: 18th & 19th CENTURY GRAVMARKERS & THE STORIES THEY TELL, at the Gannett School of the Rochester Museum & Science Center. It will be held on three Tuesdays, April 23-May 7, 7:30-9 p.m. On May 11, 1-2:30 p.m., she will lead the class on a walking tour of Mt. Hope Cemetery. For Gannett School of Science & Man’s free spring catalog with registration forms, call 271-4320, Ext. 501.

SLIDE PROGRAM
The Friend’s slide program about Mt. Hope is available to groups and organizations call Ellie Klein at 473-0778 for arrangements.

THE FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE CEMETERY

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

NEW MEMBERS
Alice S. Baker, Donald P. Lombardo
Sara L. Oakley, John Schwartz
Dr. Grauman Wiksten

CEMETERY TOURS
The regular Sunday tours from the gatehouse will resume on May 5, 1991, at 2 and 3 o’clock in the afternoon. During the 1990 tour season, about 1400 people took either the Sunday tours or special ones that are available upon request.

Get up-to-date information on Friends of Mt. Hope activities.

Use The Talking Phone Book.

Call 427-7777
ROCHESTER TALKING PHONE BOOK

THE FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE CEMETERY

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