THE FRIENDS OF MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

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CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

by Richard O. Reitem

On the evening of December 6, 1979, a group of Rochesterians met at the home of Drs. Rowland and Sarah Collins on Arnold Park to discuss the formation of a non-profit organization that would (as the evening's resolution read) "restore, preserve, and encourage the public use and enjoyment of the significant cultural resource that is Mount Hope Cemetery." About 20 people, including several city administrators, attended the meeting. The name that was selected that evening for the budding group was the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery.

For several years preceding this historic meeting, an ad hoc group had been giving tours of the cemetery, usually on summer Sundays. One of those tours, which occurred earlier in 1979, was given to New York State's new U.S. Senator, Daniel Patrick Moynihan. When he was shown the deteriorating Moonish gazebo, Moynihan remarked, "You know, you folks should get out some hammers and nails and a bucket of paint and restore that gazebo. It's too fine a piece of architecture to let it go like this."

Moynihan's statement was one of several important catalysts that prompted the December 6 meeting, and the gazebo became the first restoration project that the Friends undertook. The organization's first meeting was held in the old gatehouse, and it was an event of demonstrated dedication and commitment. Memberships would be solicited. Tour guides would be trained, primarily by Steve Thomas, director emeritus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. A newsletter was proposed. And fundraising for Moynihan's gazebo project would be pursued.

By the time the gazebo was restored a few years later, the hammers, nails and bucket of paint had translated into $13,000 of professional architectural design and construction. The Friends asked Senator Moynihan to come back and see our handiwork. He did so gladly and gave a nice speech at a public event that the Friends orchestrated.

Now, 20 years later, the Friends can look back on two decades of considerable accomplishment and a pronounced increase in public awareness of Mount Hope. Over the two decades, there have been many restoration projects – one, the Florentine fountain, involving over $50,000.

Many members have adopted plots, making formerly ignored historic sites in the cemetery look particularly nice today. Our garden committee has developed several sites that are meticulously maintained every year. Our informational slide/tape presentation has visited hundreds of venues in metro Rochester. A coffee-table book about this famous place was published by two Friends trustees with the organization's support.

Major event collaborations have been made with the Landmark Society of Western New York, the Rochester Civic Garden Center, the Memorial Art Gallery, and the Rochester Museum and Science Center. Individual members have undertaken special projects of enormous scope, such as the restoration of sign and guard posts, the uprighting of more than 1,500 fallen tombstones, a detailed inventory of more than 500 noteworthy sculptures in the cemetery, the design and execution of many special tours, two photo contests,

(continued on page 2)
WILLIAM S. KIMBALL
INVENTOR, MASTER MARKETER
AND CIVIC LEADER

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detailed mapping of the entire cemetery, computerization of cemetery records, and the list continues with countless only slightly less-involved projects.

But the star in the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery firmament is tours. Literally many thousands of people have taken guided tours of this wonderful, historic place. We have maintained over all these years a dedicated group of talented, informed, and entertaining tour guides, who have created one of the most extensive walking-tour programs in our area. It is a program that receives perpetual accolades from the large public that we serve.

So here we are today, the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, out of our teens and nearly into maturity. Every single member of our organization over these years has contributed to this success, whether through financial contributions, active participation, or even verbal encouragement. We love you all, and need you to continue with us for lasting growth.

by Warren Kling

William Smith Kimball (1837-1895)

William Smith Kimball (3/30/1837 – 3/26/1895) operated a company in Rochester, New York, which by 1880 ranked among the largest tobacco-manufacturing firms in the world. It eventually became part of the American Tobacco Company Trust, one of the world’s wealthiest corporations at the time, due largely to Kimball’s control of key patents and his ability as a master marketer. William S. Kimball & Co. produced over 750 million cigarettes of various brands every year, shipping them all over the world.

The story began in 1852 when young William, who was born in Boscawen, New Hampshire, became a machinist’s apprentice at Lawrence Locomotive Works in Massachusetts. His driving ambition to excel and his mechanical aptitude served him well during his studies at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he graduated with honors in engineering.

After college, he landed a job in Concord, New Hampshire, rebuilding railroad locomotives. He moved to Rochester in 1858. Eventually, he enlisted in the Navy during the Civil War, where he was trained to repair machinery on transport ships and gunboats, earning the rank of master mechanic. During his naval experience, he commanded a group of over 100 mechanics and converted a number of whaling vessels into Civil War gunboats. Two of these were the former Nantucket whalers, the Indis and the Edward.

In June 1863, Kimball resigned his position in the navy and returned to Rochester, becoming a co-owner with Henry Suggett in an existing tobacco company originally founded in 1846 by Suggett. In 1867 when Henry Suggett retired, Kimball changed the company name from Suggett & Kimball to William S. Kimball & Co., Peerless Tobacco Works.

Kimball recognized one key to success was being able to find a way to reduce the costs of packaging plug tobacco and making cigarettes. His mechanical training served him well in evaluating various new tobacco-packaging inventions, securing the patent rights to those having the most merit. One of these was a cigarette-making machine developed by a navy veteran named Oscar Allison. Kimball and Allison formed the Allison Machine and Tool Company to refine and build these machines, which were capable of producing over 7,000 cigarettes per minute. These machines enabled Kimball to be the lowest-cost packager in the industry. He held a controlling interest in AM&TC and patented a number of other inventions himself, including a tobacco-compacting machine.

During its heyday in the 1880s, Kimball’s tobacco company was a major Rochester employer with over 1,200 workers, most of whom were young women known as “cigarette girls.” The company achieved annual gross revenues of $2.5 million and paid tobacco taxes to the federal government of $300,000 annually.

Although Kimball was generally thought of as a fair employer, one incident tarnished that image. The event occurred in
The University of Wisconsin-Madison, often referred to as "Wisconsin," is a public research university located in Madison, Wisconsin. The university offers a wide range of academic programs and is one of the top public universities in the United States, known for its strong research and educational programs.

In 1903, the university's traditional academic year began with the inauguration of the school year on September 2nd, as stipulated by the university's charter. This tradition continued until 1976, after which the academic year began on the first Monday in September. The university's academic calendar includes a fall semester from September to December, a winter break from December to January, a spring semester from January to May, and a summer session from June to August.

The university is divided into several schools and colleges, including the College of Letters and Science, the School of Business, the School of Engineering, the School of Law, the School of Medicine and Public Health, and the School of Social Work. It also offers a range of graduate and professional degree programs, as well as online courses and distance learning options.

The university has a strong focus on research and innovation, with numerous research centers and institutes dedicated to various fields, including health sciences, engineering, and social sciences. The university is also known for its strong athletic programs, particularly in football, basketball, and swimming.

The campus is located on the shores of Lake Mendota, offering a beautiful and picturesque setting for both students and faculty. With a student population of over 40,000, the university is one of the largest public universities in the United States and is consistently ranked among the top universities in the world.
In 1974, Mercury was reinstalled on top of Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Company, near its original location.

Today, the historic copper statue of Mercury is a significant feature on Rochester's skyline.

where he once stood. Mercury is still atop the Aqueduct building, now owned by the West Group, at Broad and Exchange streets.

Master Marketer

The tobacco business was not well thought of, even back at the turn of the last century. Cigarettes were regarded, even then, as unhealthy, as well as immoral in some circles, and often referred to as "coffin nails." Doctors of the day, however, had vastly different opinions as to whether smoking was hazardous to anyone’s health. Kimball turned this to his advantage by promoting certain brands as beneficial to your health. One of Kimball’s brands, New Cataract Cigarettes, was touted as “a mild remedy for catarah, asthma, and hay fever – unlike any in the market.”

Competition in the tobacco industry was fierce, and Kimball was recognized as a master marketer whose products not only had a world-class reputation for quality and taste, but also originality in packaging and label designs. He conducted his own market studies, cleverly placing giveaway coupons for pipes in various products. One would mail in the coupon in order to redeem it. This then provided key information on where to focus new marketing efforts. The company had many brands of pipe tobacco – such as Post Boy, Regatta, Black Dragon, and Vanity Fair – to name a few. The cigarettes won 17 first-class medals at various world fairs.

Civic Pursuits and Hobbies

Kimball was very involved in civic affairs, being one of the founders of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce along with H. H. Warner, and serving as its second president. William Kimball was also president of Post Express Printing, a trustee of Rochester Savings Bank, president of Union Bank, president of the City Hospital, vice president of Security Trust, vice president of American Tobacco Company, vice president of Lyceum Theater, a director of Rochester Railway Company, and a director of the Toronto, Buffalo, Hamilton Railroad.

His avocations consisted of raising orchids, and collecting pepperboxes, books, and fine art. He had a very large and valuable collection of orchids, an extensive library, and the world’s finest collection of pepperboxes. Kimball also had a fine-art collection in a specially built gallery in his home, with numerous works from many world-famous artists.

Personal Information

William Kimball married Marion Elizabeth Keeler (3/15/1836-7/9/1879), daughter of Rufus Keeler, who was mayor of Rochester in 1857. William and Marion were married on October 7, 1858. They had two children, Harold Chandler (3/5/1861-1/31/1911) and Margaret (3/25/1864-8/25/1864). William Kimball remarried on August 11, 1880 to Laura Page Mitchell of Rochester. They also had two children, Cecelia born 10/2/1882 and Ernest (3/5/1884-6/16/1898). Kimball died while on vacation at Virginia Beach, Virginia. He had been a longtime sufferer of vertigo and contracted a mastoid infection, which spread to his brain. He was just a few days shy of his 58th birthday. He ranked among the top ten wealthiest men in Rochester when he died in 1895. His personal estate, worth over $2.5 million, was left to his second wife, Laura and his children: Harold Chandler Kimball, Cecelia Kimball Gordon, and Ernest Kimball.

William Kimball lived at 145 Troup Street, where he owned one of the most elegant houses in the city, nicknamed "Kimball Castle." It was torn down, unfortunately, to build I-490. The mansion was staffed with Japanese servants, and the stables held thoroughbred horses. There was a pipe organ in a specially-constructed music gallery with walls covered in red velvet and thick oriental rugs on the floor. Later, he moved to a beautiful mansion at 19 East Boulevard.

The funeral of William Smith Kimball was a spectacular event in Rochester. St. Peter’s Presbyterian Church on Grove Street was beautifully decorated with hundreds of orchids, palms, a broken column of white roses six feet high with a base of pink roses, wreaths of violets, and many other baskets of flowers from friends. Every seat in the church was occupied. Hundreds of other people, unable to gain admission, stood outside. Directors of American Tobacco Company were present, along with many local business executives. Pallbearers included James Gould Cutler, his brother Joseph Warren Cutler, Samuel Wilder, and John Harry Stedman.
A small obelisk just north of Nathaniel Rochester's plot still marks the original spot of William Kimball's burial in Section R, Lot 6, which was owned by his father-in-law Rufus Keeler. In 1923, Kimball, his first wife Marion, and his baby daughter Margaret were relocated to Section MM, Lot 263, purchased by his daughter from his second marriage, Cecilia Kimball Gordon. She did this so that her mother Laura could also be buried with her father. William Kimball now rests between his two wives with children from both marriages alongside, just to the west of the Gannett monument in Mount Hope Cemetery.

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HERITAGE FOUNDATION FORMED FOR MOUNT HOPE

by Richard O. Reisem

Mount Hope Cemetery is one of the most famous cemeteries in America. This is not an idle statement. First, Mount Hope is the first Victorian cemetery in the U.S. to be established by a municipality. That was in 1838, just seven years after the first private rural cemetery in the country was founded outside of Boston.

Second, many famous people are buried in Mount Hope. Consider Susan B. Anthony, leader of the women's rights movement in the country; Frederick Douglass, founder of America's civil rights movement; Hiram Sibley, who began Western Union and instigated the purchase of Alaska; Hartwell Carver, father of the transcontinental railroad; Frank Gannett, founder of the great newspaper empire; George Selden, inventor of the automobile; and on and on.

Third, the 196 acres of the cemetery present one of the most interesting geological landscapes anywhere with its hills and valleys, eskers and kettles, and a veritable arboretum of trees.

The preservation and enhancement of this important historic place was an important reason for the recent establishment of the Rochester Cemeteries Heritage Foundation. It is a not-for-profit organization, already approved by the State of New York, that will solicit donations to an endowment fund to perpetuate the care and improvement of this beautiful cemetery. The foundation also includes Riverside Cemetery in its territorial scope. A board of directors is currently being selected for the foundation.

The goal of the new foundation is to raise $3 million over a five-year period. Among the projects that the foundation is considering to fund at Mount Hope include restoration of large monuments and sculptures, improved perimeter fencing, preservation of cobblestone roads, and
restoration of various plots, such as Civil War, Spanish-American War, and Nathaniel Rochester. The idea is to enhance the overall appearance and attraction of Mount Hope.

Special projects might also be undertaken. Nancy Hilliard, manager of Mount Hope Cemetery, suggested, "It would be nice to reconstruct the observatory on top of Mount Hope itself, which was an enormously popular community attraction in the early days of the cemetery."

The foundation does not in any way diminish the involvement of the city of Rochester and the Friends of Mount Hope in their current efforts. The city retains responsibility for careful day-to-day maintenance of the cemetery. And the Friends will continue to pursue their goals of educating the public concerning this valuable cultural resource, restoring the grounds in specific aesthetic ways, preserving historic gravesites, maintaining garden features, and encouraging public use and enjoyment of the significant landmark that is Mount Hope. The Friends, in fact, plan to increase their educational and informational programs to fulfill their goals. In the future, there will be more collaborations with area cultural institutions - such as those with the Memorial Art Gallery, the Landmark Society, and the Rochester Museum and Science Center that have occurred in the recent past.

The Mount Hope Cemetery chapel built in 1912 is being stabilized in preparation for its future role as a mausoleum. Photograph by Frank A. Gillespie.

TWO CEMETERY BUILDINGS PREPARED FOR FUTURE ROLES

by Richard O. Reisem

If you visited or drove by Mount Hope Cemetery's main office (on Mount Hope Avenue near Elmwood Avenue) last fall, you may have noticed workmen, construction equipment, and a large crane near the 1912 chapel. They were involved in major repairs to the roof and bell tower of the stone structure. After almost 90 years of Rochester weather, the entire roof of the building needed to be replaced, and the bell tower had to be disassembled and reconstructed, hence the high crane.

Although the chapel - designed by J. Foster Warner, one of Rochester's foremost architects - is extraordinarily well built, copper elements of the roof began to develop pinhole leaks after this length of time. Cemetery manager Nancy Hilliard said, "The work was done in order to stabilize the building and protect it from deterioration."

The chapel roof incorporates a system to direct rainwater through downspouts inside the walls of the structure. "We have installed heat traces in these drainspouts so that we won't have to heat the building while it remains unused. This will keep
water from freezing in the lines, thereby causing pipes to burst,” Hilliard said. The stabilization work will be completed in the spring.

Although the chapel is currently unused, a significant future is planned for it. “Our plan for this handsome building,” Hilliard said, “is to convert it into a mausoleum with both crypt and niche spaces, but that probably won’t begin for three or four years.” Architectural plans for the conversion have been prepared, but the development approach will be to finance the project with pre-need sales of crypts and niches.

The older chapel at the north entrance to the cemetery (opposite Robinson Drive) was built in 1862 and is similarly undergoing extensive stabilization. The 138-year-old deteriorated slate roof has been removed, the roof structure repaired, and beautiful new matching slate stone has been applied.

“This old chapel was built very close to a steep hillside in order to provide a connection to an underground holding vault where coffins could be stored through winter months and then buried in the spring,” explained Hilliard, “but the hill was so close to the chapel that roots of trees began to invade the chapel walls, and the eroding hillside began to bank against the chapel’s stone walls.” So roots and earth were excavated from the chapel walls, and PVC pipes were installed to drain water away from the chapel.

A future similar to that for the 1912 chapel is planned for the 1862 structure. This fine Gothic Revival style chapel, however, will have to wait for the mausoleum conversion in the newer chapel to be completed first.
The old 1862 cemetery chapel has undergone extensive repairs to preserve the structure for conversion in the future to a mausoleum.