ANNUAL MEETING and ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The annual meeting of the Friends was held on Sunday, November 13, at the Brewster-Burke House, headquarters of the Landmark Society. The following trustees were elected for a three-year term:

- Joseph Barnes
- Richard Brown
- John C. Clark III
- John S. Pearsall
- Robert E. Hoepfl
- Kathryn M. Hunter
- John McKinney
- Laurel Gabel

Following the business meeting, Seth Colby, Director of Public Relations of Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo gave a slide show presentation and talk on "The History of Buffalo and Forest Lawn, 1750 to the Present." Like Mt. Hope, Forest Lawn has been intimately connected with the history of the city and region, and its preservation is of community interest.

At the December 7 meeting of the Board of Trustees Richard G. Brown was elected president. Other officers elected are: Alma Burner Creek, first vice-president; Richard Squires, second vice-president; Marjorie Ewell, membership secretary; Mary-Ellen Perry, recording secretary; John C. Clark III, treasurer.

A rising vote of thanks was given John Clark for his leadership as president for the past two years.

VANDALS SENTENCED TO HELP CEMETERY

Over fifty Christmas wreaths were stolen from graves early in December by three University of Rochester fraternity members — apparently to decorate the fraternity house! They were arrested and the wreaths recovered. The leader and his associates have been sentenced to do manual labor for the cemetery for several Saturdays in the spring. Ten other members of the fraternity will also help in the cemetery for two Saturdays during the period.

SYLVAN WATERS

As noted in our last Newsletter, Sylvan Waters has been drained and dredged for the first time in almost fifty years! No artifacts were discovered, but tons of rotting vegetation were removed. With this cause of oxygen depletion gone, it is hoped that fish will again be able to survive in the pond. Sylvan Waters, it turns out, is a typical glacial pool filled by a pipe supplying city water. This pipe, which was almost entirely clogged, has been replaced and means for an electrical conduit has been installed so that at some future time it may be possible to illuminate the pool on special occasions.

WARMING HUT

The Friends are again sponsoring a "warming hut" in the North Gatehouse for cross-country skiers and winter hikers in the cemetery. With abundant snow so far this year an increased number of people is expected to stop in for hot drinks and to learn about the cemetery. The gatehouse will be open Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 throughout February.
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help with the many plans and projects of the Friends of the coming year. Committees need additional members to carry out their functions. Especially needed are replacements for leaders of our popular walking tours of the cemetery. We need at least two leaders and a receptionist each Sunday from mid-April to November, as well as people who are available to conduct occasional groups during the week. Training will be provided. For more information call co-chairmen: Alma B. Creek (275-4494 days; 271-8751 evenings) or Jack McKinney (271-8389).

Please also look over the following list of other activities for which help is needed. Then check and mail the form at the end of this Newsletter to 791 Mt. Hope Ave., 14620, or call the chairman for further information.

Gardening: This involves maintaining rock gardens at the Old Gate, adopt-a-plot program, and identifying areas for new plantings or replacements. Co-chairmen: Bob Hoepfl (244-4640 days; 247-3874 evenings) or John Pearsall (244-0408).

Membership: Recruitment of new members and maintaining interest of current members are high priorities. Chairman: Marjorie Ewell (275-2984 days to 2330; 271-5374 evenings).

Newsletter: Not only news contributions, but assistance in addressing and preparing the Newsletter for mailing are needed. Editor: Dorothy Humes (473-3935).

Research: Research on the natural history, funeral customs, development of the cemetery, as well as personalities interred there, is needed for tours, weekly events, Newsletter or other publications. Co-chairmen: Joseph Banes (428-7340 days; 244-4776 evenings) or Stephen Thomas (473-1281).

Publicity: Ideas and help in obtaining media interest in Mt. Hope and the Friends would be appreciated, as well as publicity through clubs and other organizations you may belong to. Chairman: Rick Squires (325-5451).

Restoration: We want to identify and develop plans for restoration projects at Mt. Hope and to have representatives involved in historic restoration projects planned by the City.

Co-chairmen: Ed Olinger (442-3550 days, 244-0353 evenings) or Bob Schnacky (473-3271 days, 271-1638 evenings).

MORE PROJECTS AND FACELIFTS

Correction: Our Summer/Fall issue stated that the wall along Mt. Hope Avenue will be restored to its original height and appearance. While it will be restored to its original appearance, using the same materials, it will, on construction advice, be somewhat lower than its original height.

Other Projects: Repair of the "new" (1912) chapel's roof and stonework has been completed. Painting of the interior of the North Gatehouse (which includes Friends' headquarters) is under way and should be completed by early spring. Several dead trees in the northern part of the cemetery have been removed, opening up the view of the river in that area. About forty gravestones damaged by vandals have been repaired during the year. (The primary responsibility for gravestone repair belongs to the family, but if the family no longer exists, the city attempts repairs in areas made unsightly or difficult to maintain by the damage.)

ANOTHER CEMETERY OF INTEREST

On the tiny sacred island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland there is a small cemetery with plain, modest sized stones. St. Columba stopped here in 563 A.D. on his mission to Christianize Scotland, but the settlement is so old that its beginning is lost to history. The ruins of an 11th century chapel and the restored little Iona Cathedral stand guard. From earliest times it was a burial ground for royalty. There are 48 ancient Scottish kings (including Duncan and Macbeth), French, Norwegian and Irish kings, Viking warriors and native Celts. More kings are buried on Iona than in Westminster Abbey! The island is windswept and lashed by waves, yet there is a lovely feeling of tranquility and peaceful eternity. It is a place where the dead are remembered by careful preservation of their resting place. Five thousand miles to the west the same can be said of Mt. Hope Cemetery.
GIDEON COBB — PIONEER

Gideon Cobb (1791-1864), whose name is memorialized in Cobbs Hill Park and Reservoir, was among Rochester’s sturdy pioneers. His Mt. Hope gravesite may be found near the top of the slope just west of Fifth Avenue, not far north of the large Acheson-Whittle mausoleum. A modest obelisk marks the Cobb family plot. Born in Pawlet, Vermont, Cobb migrated to western New York just before the War of 1812, settling first in Aurora, Erie County. An older brother, Col. William Cobb, had migrated even earlier and had cast his lot with the Brown brothers, developers of Brown’s Race and the Frankfort Tract. When Brown’s Race was completed, the elder Cobb developed a machine shop and nail factory. Gideon joined him about 1813, boarding at first with the Oliver Culvers in nearby Brighton. Both brothers served in the War on the Niagara Frontier.

In 1814 Gideon Cobb began operating Rochester’s first “public conveyance,” a four-oxen wagon carrying goods and passengers on a route that connected Charlotte, Hanford’s Landing, and Rochester. He secured the contract for opening North Street and Monroe Avenue to Pittsford (known then as “Pittsford Street”). In the course of work on Monroe Avenue he discovered the value of the land in the vicinity of what is now Monroe and Highland Avenues and purchased a large holding.

Part of the land’s value lay in its potential for brick-making; suitable clay a foot thick could be found beneath the loam, and find sand beneath that. Before 1820 Cobb established the Monroe Avenue brickyards, which continued to operate until the twentieth century.

Perhaps as a byproduct of his brickmaking, Cobb gravitated toward construction, and he is credited with either building or being the brickwork contractor for a number of early buildings, including St. Mary’s Church, the Second Court House, and the County Penitentiary.

Following his marriage to Roxana [sic] Worden in 1819, Cobb built a substantial house in the southeast corner of Monroe and Highland Avenues. He and his wife operated a stagecoach tavern for a few years, but during most of its existence the house served simply as the seat of a prosperous farm family. It was occupied continuously by members of the Cobb family until well into the twentieth century.

Since Cobbs Hill Reservoir is presently undergoing renovation while marking its 75th anniversary, an additional note may be in order.

In 1904 the City purchased land for the 144,000,000 gallon reservoir from William Henry and Edna Cobb, Gideon’s son and daughter-in-law. Work was begun on the reservoir — a mammoth project — in 1905, and it was substantially complete in 1908. Its construction led to assembling surrounding lands by private donation and city purchase to make the reservoir the centerpiece of a public park.

If Mayor Hiram Edgerton had had his way, the park would be known as Lincoln Park. Fortunately, a minor public outcry by “antiquarians” scotched his plan. Edgerton proposed the name change in 1913 when, during the Civil War Semi-Centennial, gestures toward Abraham Lincoln were not uncommon. Mayor Edgerton’s motivations were probably blameless, but it is interesting to speculate whether or not some long-standing animosity stood between the Cobbs, who were brickmakers and sometime bricklayers, and the Edgertons, who were among the city’s foremost brickwork contractors.

Joseph W. Barnes
City Historian

DUES NOTICE

We periodically send out reminders of expiration of dues. Unfortunately because of postage costs, one reminder is all we have been able to afford. If you don’t remember whether or not you have paid, check the address label on this Newsletter. The numbers represent month and year of expiration. If your label reads before 4/84, it means you’re overdue! Since virtually all our revenue for programs and improvements (including this Newsletter), is derived from dues and contributions, please take a moment to check. Basic dues are $15 per year; contributing $25; patron $35; retired or student $5. Checks should be sent to 791 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester 14620.
CALENDAR

February
Gatehouse open 1:00-4:00 each Sunday

March
7 - Board Meeting 8:00 p.m.

April
Sunday tours start — 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.
from Gatehouse, North Entrance

Special Events: This involves programs for
events during the year. Call Dick Brown
(722-7293 days; 544-5532 evenings) or Alma
Creek (275-4494 days; 271-8751 evenings) or
Stephen Thomas (473-1281).

Please clip and mail to:
Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery, 791 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620

Yes, I'm interested in helping with the project(s) checked.

Name ______________________________ Address ______________________________

Telephone number ______________________________

Tours ___ Gardening ___ Membership ___ Newsletter ___ Research ___ Publicity

Restoration ___ Special Events

THE FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE CEMETERY
791 MT. HOPE AVENUE
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14620

James Truesdale (Mt. Marx)

obelisk in "O" d. 1871