President's Corner

I want to begin with a "thank you" to the membership for a very successful 1986. Your support of the Friends has really made the difference.

The 1986 Tour season at Mt. Hope Cemetery has ended. It has been a very successful year with approximately 2000 people participating in special and Sunday tours. The tour committee worked very hard to coordinate and schedule these many tour events. They are to be congratulated along with our corp. of Tour Guides.

Restoration plans for the old North Gate House is progressing to a point where we will begin work on the entrance foyer. The plans are to restore this to its original state (circa 1874).

Our picture gallery is scheduled for installation in November. It will be located in the "Waiting Room" area of the Gate House. Pictures of the cemetery and related subjects will be on display. We are expecting to have a number of Sundays during the winter when we will open the Gate House. These dates will be announced in the next newsletter, so make plans to stop in and see the new gallery.

1987 is shaping up to be a very active year for the Friends. We are planning a formal perennial garden for the Florentine Fountain, continued restoration plans for the Gate House plus gardening projects and developing a new "Pocket Guide to Mt. Hope Cemetery". A self guided tour, with special markers at the grave sites, are also in the planning stage.

Epitaphs of Mt. Hope Cemetery

In the Fireman's plot near the Veteran's area is a large stone memorial erected by an act of State Legislature in 1891 for six men who were burned beyond the possibility of recognition in the disastrous Lantern Works Fire, often described as Rochester's worst catastrophe.

In the evening of the ninth of November, 1888

The Manufactory of The Steam Gauge and Lantern Company while filled with operatives, was destroyed by a fierce and sudden fire in which 34 lives were lost.

But God was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice.

Recently, members who live in the Mt. Hope Avenue area have noticed vehicles entering the cemetery at night through a construction driveway. After notifying the Cemetery Officials, this area will be fenced and a gate installed. The response and concern of City Officials was quite gratifying. Anything that can be done to reduce or curb vandalism at the Cemetery is important.

I want to wish you all a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Dick Brown
Dr. Rush Rhees

In 1900 Rush Rhees took over the presidency of the University of Rochester, then a 4 building college on University Ave. with 17 teachers, 159 students and a $700,000 endowment. In 1935 when he retired at age 75, he left a 2 campus university with an internationally known Music and Medical School and an endowment of $51 million.

Most of that money came from George Eastman, who had once said he wouldn't contribute one cent to the university. Someone changed his mind and that person was Dr. Rhees. Before the money came, President Rhees guided the small, struggling college through rough waters and directed its slow steady growth.

Born in Chicago on Feb. 8, 1860, Rhees was the son of a commission merchant who died when the boy was only 2 years old. The widow and her 3 children went to Brooklyn to live with her father, William McCuchen, a dour, pious contractor of Scottish descent. Grandfather McCuchen gave the boy a set of tools and Rush became skilled at woodworking, which remained a life-long hobby with him.

Rhees' first degree was from Amherst College in 1883. For 3 years he studied at Hartford Theological Seminary. Both his grandfather and great-grandfather had been Baptist preachers. Cast in the Welsh mould, Rhees was short and stout, with inscrutable blue eyes, a little mustache that whitened with the years and an air of imperturable dignity and a vast reserve.

Most people thought him cold, austere. Few really knew him, least of all his students. Only his few intimates knew the basic warmth of an inherently shy man and the many kindly deeds he performed so quietly.

For 3 years Rhees was pastor of a small Baptist church at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. In 1892 he joined the Newton Theological Institute in Massachusetts as professor of New Testament interpretation. In 1899 the first ovations came to him from the University of Rochester, which had been without a president for 3 years since David Jayne Hill left to enter the diplomatic service.

July 6, 1899 was a memorable day in his life. On that day he was married to Harriet Seelye, the daughter of the president of Smith College. That same day he was elected third president of the University of Rochester.

The 50 year old president who had little administrative experience, faced a tremendous job at the 50 year old college. The University had meager funds, small prestige and an encumbering sectarian flavor. It had begun as a Baptist institution and until 1906 the board of trustees had a rule that 2/3 of its members must belong to the Baptist faith.

The year Dr. Rhees took office, women were admitted for the first time on equal basis with men.

When in 1903 the University sought funds for a new biology and physics building, its president went to the Rochesterian who was making the most money - George Eastman. The educator's spunk and persistence tickled Eastman. A friendship soon developed between the two men.

Once tempted in 1912 to take the presidency of Amherst College, Rhees decided to use their offer to pressure Rochesterians into raising one million dollars for a coordinated women's college. The sum was raised with Eastman giving one half.

In 1930 when he was 70, Dr. Rhees offered his resignation. The trustees would not hear of it. For 1930 was the climactic year when the new campus was completed and dedicated.

Also a public minded citizen, Rhees at his own expense, had special lenses and frames supplied for needy persons with poor eyesight.

In 1939 when he died, Dr. Rhees was buried in the University of Rochester plot on a high spot near Sylvan Waters. His marker is a polished pale pink granite stone.

Information taken from Arch Merrill's "Fame in Our Time"
COL. POND'S STELAE

One of Mt. Hope's most interesting sections is Section C. It is within a few yards of the gatehouse and is the resting place of many Rochester notables, including Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Woodbury Strong, George and Henry Selden, and another famous father and son combination, Andrew Jackson Warner (architect of the gatehouse) and his son, J. Foster Warner (architect of the Chapel).

Another individual of personal interest to me is Col. N. P. Pond (1832-1921), a Rochester publisher who was born in Brockport. A Civil War veteran, Pond has the name of his company, "Rochester Printing Co." on the face of his tombstone (a little posthumus advertising).

I always tell my tours that the monuments of the dead reflect their personality or those near and dear to them. Col. Pond's monument is a good example of this. Close to the bottom of the stone, on the left side and deeply cut into the surface are the words "perpetual care". Was Col. Pond making sure his grass would always be cut?

This monument is a stelae and there are very few of them in Mt. Hope Cemetery. The upright stelae is an Egyptian stone used for commemorative purposes and there are many examples of Roman tombstones of a similar kind. There are some excellent specimens in museums at Colchester, Cirencester, and other Roman-British sites.

Col. Pond must have been a fascinating and likeable fellow. A long time resident of the old Ruffled Shirt Ward (The Third Ward), he could almost be found behind the scene at the Twigs' annual sale, apron tied around his neck, carving the turkeys for the noon recess of business men who waited all year for the event.

In Virginia Jeffrey Smith's Reminiscences of the Ruffled Shirt Ward, she tells of Col. Pond being knocked down by an automobile driven by a woman, picking himself up, flicking the dust from his coat and apologizing to her, for having been in her way. A true gallant was Col. Pond.


Shirley Stephens

Collins Gift

Mrs. Sarah Collins, the widow of Prof. Rowland Collins, has donated his collection of books and slides on cemeteries to the Friends. The donation consists of fourteen books and over 170 slides. The slides are photographs taken by Prof. Collins on his visits to various cemeteries. Among them are views of: Old Highgate, New Highgate, Kensal Green, Pere la Chaise, Mt. Hope, Mount Auburn, and Grove Street Cemetery (New Haven).

The collection is presently housed in and maintained by the library of the Landmark Society of Western New York. A bookcase of Prof. Collins also donated to the Friends, is the present location of these works.

Those interested may make use of the collection at the Landmark Society library on weekdays (Monday through Friday) between 9a.m. and 5p.m. A Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery bookplate is being prepared and will be placed in the books at some future date.

The Friends would welcome other contributions related to the cemetery for its library.

Leon Creek
CALENDAR

Board Meetings will be held:

January 7, 1987    July 1, 1987
February 4, 1987  August 5, 1987
March 4, 1987    September 2, 1987
April 1, 1987     October 7, 1987
May 7, 1987      November 4, 1987
June 3, 1987   (Annual Meeting)

This newsletter is published by the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery.

OFFICERS

Richard G. Brown     President
Jack V. McKinney    1st Vice-President
W. Stephen Thomas  2nd Vice-President
Shirley Stephens    Membership Secretary
Rick Squires        Recording Secretary
Marjorie Ewell      Asst. Recording Secretary
Joseph Barnes       Treasurer
Leon J. Creek       Asst. Treasurer
Carolyn Swanton     Editor