"The Cemetery Connection"

Thomas R. Argust, Commissioner of the Department of Recreation and Community Services, was the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery on December 7, 1986. Argust spoke about the Washburn Street Cemetery in Scranton, Pennsylvania, where "the generations connected with each other." He explained that the memories of that place are strong "because of the bonding and a sense of history which a cemetery provides to families and to a community. And so it is with Mt. Hope Cemetery...It is a place that mirrors who we were, who we are and, if we learn from the past, who we can become.

You see, Mt. Hope is us. It is Rochester. It is the reflection of all our good times and all our unfortunate times. It is the place where generations meet. It is where our history becomes real."

Argust continued; "The cornerstone of any vibrant civilization is found in the reality of community. Unless we have a shared sense of belonging to something greater than ourselves, then we will drift aimlessly along the winds of chance, disruption and rootlessness. The sense of community, the sense of bonding, the sense of connectedness is the gift of the place called Mt. Hope. May we, and generations to come, protect and preserve this hallowed ground and may we always experience from it the meaning of its name. Hope: a feeling that what is wanted, will happen."

Out of the Mouth of Babes

"Tis an old saw, children speak true," said the 16th-century English poet, John Lyly. We believe that children haven't changed since then. They still express their thoughts in open, uninhibited, and genuine ways. You ought to hear what they say about Mt. Hope Cemetery!

We hear it often. Tours for children are one of our most popular offerings, and one of our most rewarding activities as well. Last year, more than 700 school children were given tours of the cemetery by our experienced staff of tour guides. And what did all of these children say about the tours?

"I really like that place better than any other place, because it is very pretty," said Jenny.
"I enjoyed the cemetery. I really liked the trees. I liked the fountain. The statues were neat. I liked it so much, I want to take my Mom!" said David.
"This field trip was the most informing in my lifetime," said Kevin, "I would love to buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery. I bet you would too!"
"I liked the tour so much, I want to bring my family!" said Chris.

Some of these young people have a feeling for the historical aspects of the cemetery. For example, history is what particularly struck Alex. He said, "I especially liked the way you explained what Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, and George Selden did when they were living."
The Marlatts - Turn-of-the-century Rochester Artists

My first recollection of the Marlatts, the Rochester father and son artists, came from my father who told this tale. He was asked one day in 1909 by his mother to fetch her purse so she could see if she had enough money to pay for the framing of a large painting done by H. I. Marlatt. The painting was his payment to her for being one of 20 subscribers who had sent him to Europe to pursue his art studies. Now he was back, and the painting had been chosen. My grandmother had only to pay for the cost of framing, said by the artist to be $300.

Upon checking her purse, my grandmother found only $220. My father thought the painter seemed glad to get that, but I'm sure she paid him the balance later, for she subsequently bought a number of Marlatt paintings. From that day to this, that painting has been a prized possession of my family. It is a pastoral scene of a farm and barn on the horizon against a yellow sunset with plowed fields and split rail fences in the foreground.

After retiring, I decided to research the Marlatts, Wilson, the father and Hamilton Irving, the son. I was lucky in being able to meet and talk with Wilson's only granddaughter, Frances Marlatt. She was a lawyer in Mt. Vernon, New York until her death about ten years ago.

The Marlatts were descended from a French Huguenot, Gideon Merlat, who came to New Amsterdam in 1624. Wilson was born November 29, 1837 in Woodhull, New York, six miles from Jasper in Wyoming County. He married Mary Doty at Woodhull. After a colorful career that featured a bandwagon with several other Woodhull residents, where he could play every instrument, a side career in oratory and the Bible, he became a photographer in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. But he displayed such a talent with the brush that he soon began to devote all his time to painting.

Wilson Marlatt came to Rochester in 1897. Here he painted many rural scenes in oils, many which included sheep and cattle. One of his favorite spots for sketching was the Genesee Valley Park, then known as South Park, where sheep habitually grazed. During this period he suffered from palsy which gave his landscapes a characteristic wavy Corot effect. His son, H. I., moved to Buffalo after a marriage to Lillie Knocke in 1894. They had one child, Frances K. Marlatt, who I met several times in Mt. Vernon.

The younger Marlatt was sent to France to study art in the Barbizon school. The Rev. Charles Albertson, pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church of Rochester, secured a list of 20 subscribers to finance his studies on the Continent. My grandmother, Mrs. Henry Wray Jr., being one of the twenty.

Many of the scenes he painted for the subscribers were painted while in Scotland, England and Holland, as requested by the patrons. When he returned to Rochester in 1908, Marlatt held an exhibition on April 12, in the Cornwall Building. 94 paintings were listed in the catalog, all by Wilson and H. I. Marlatt.

Father and son shared a number of other exhibits including one in 1909 at the Hotel Seneca and another one in 1910 at East High School. The exhibit in the Seneca was particularly exciting because it was then that his murals on the hotel lobby walls were displayed to the public for the first time. There were 4 murals altogether. One, on the stairway of the famous Native American chief, Red Jacket; one was of the Grand Canyon, one portrayed Aztec Indians and the fourth was of a Dutch girl. I regret never photographing these murals, perhaps someone did.

In 1911 Wilson died of palsy at his home on Plymouth Ave. He and his wife are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Section BB, row 79, 31.32. By that time H. I. and his wife had moved to Mt. Vernon where his wife taught school and their only child, Frances, grew up. It was there I met her during the 1970's, picking up information that was missing from my family's memories.

H. I. Marlatt lived the rest of his life in Mt. Vernon, during which time he made many trips to the West which he recorded on canvas. Many of these adorned the covers of the Literary Digest, Saturday Evening Post, and Ladies Home Journal prior to 1922. According to his daughter, he would paint on anything, even window shades, when paper was scarce.

He exhibited at the National Academy of Design and the New York Watercolor Exhibit. He painted all the governors of New Jersey, from the beginning to 1928. He was well known in New York as a member of the Salamgundi Club and the National Arts Club, as well as Tres Arts Club of Cleveland.

H. I. Marlatt died October 11, 1929 leaving his wife and daughter. Frances died without issue, in the seventies, leaving her home and remaining paintings to her secretary of many years.
What catches the eyes of other children is the great variety of design features that man has placed in the cemetery over the last 149 years. Referring to the rock fountain in Sylvan Waters, Robert said, "I liked the part about the pond. It looked like it had a beehive in the middle. It was a super trip."

After seeing the newly restored Florentine fountain, Gary was moved to write, "The fountain was neat." Commenting on the prevalent design for reincarnation, Rodney said, "The endless knot was cool.

Chris split his design likes between the engraving of the first automobile on George B. Selden’s tombstone and the bronze statue of Carlo, the dog who decorates the front lawn of the Pratt mausoleum. Concerning Carlo, Kristina agreed with Chris. She said, "Thank you for showing us kids around. I enjoyed it, because it was pretty. I liked the dog the most."

And Rodney picked a rock to like. However, it was the boulder, flecked with jasper, that the great geologist, Henry A. Ward, found in the Lake of the Bays, Ontario, and selected for his tombstone. Rodney said, "The best thing I liked was the dotted rock."

Some young people even have a taste for the macabre. Gary said, "I liked the big house they burned the bodies in."

Whatever primary impressions children leave Mt. Hope Cemetery with, on the tour they have experienced an unusual geological landscape carved by glaciers, magnificent specimen trees and lovely wild flowers, handsome Victorian designs, and a significant dose of Rochester history - not to mention a reasoned exposure to the concept of death.

We feel that these special tours for young people are a very worthwhile activity for the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery, and your contributions help support them.

Call us at 271-8389 to arrange a special children’s tour anytime of the year. Or bring your favorite young people along when next you take one of our regular 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. Sunday tours given from May through October. It is an enjoyable and rewarding way to discover that Mt. Hope Cemetery is a rich inheritance, for us and for our children.

Dick Reisem

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Georgia Lovecraft Myers (1866)

Thanks to Garden Volunteers

We are indebted to several persons and organizations for planting and maintaining the flower beds in Mt. Hope Cemetery. We wish to thank the following for their efforts in beautifying the cemetery:

Mr & Mrs John McKinney
Mr & Mrs Robert Tompkins
Mr & Mrs Edward Olinger
Ms Susan Maney
Mrs Louis Rivoli
Mr Robert Hoepfl
Mr William Orwen
Mr David Galli
Mr Edward Rosenberg
University Garden Club

John Pearsall

the Mouth of Babes don’t

Robert was also historically impressed. He wrote; "I liked the part when we went up the hill and saw the builder of the Erie Canal." (The builder, of course, was Myron Holley.)
President's Corner

I want to begin with some exciting news. As a result of our foyer restoration at the Gate House, the city of Rochester and primarily the Department of Recreation and Community Services, has applied for funds to repair walls, roof, and bell tower with funds from the State's 1986 Environmental Quality Bond Act. The cemetery Gate House is one of the four projects the city has listed as priorities for funding under a section of the bond act. The catalyst for this project is Commissioner Tom Argust, Department of Recreation and Community Services who is also a member of our Board of Trustees. Tom assigned Steve Carper, Senior Administrative Analyst in the department, to begin the grant submission process. Mr. Carper said the city would give $55,000 towards the Gate House restoration, bringing the total project cost to $110,000 (based on matching funds). Although we must wait for the state approval, it is very appropriate to give a large "thank you" to Tom Argust for starting the process.

"Mothers Day Event" at Mt. Hope was a huge success. Over 600 people toured the Ellwanger Mansions and garden. 275 people participated in Mt. Hope Cemetery tours. It was a lovely day and the gardens at the Ellwanger mansions and Mt. Hope Cemetery were fabulous. Many thanks to all of the board members who assisted in this event. Special thanks to Sue Maney who was co-chairperson of the event. The Landmark Society has indicated that our share of the proceeds will be $1,000. This will be placed in our restoration funds.

Remember, 1988 is the 150th year anniversary of Mt. Hope Cemetery (1838). The City of Rochester is planning a year long celebration that will coincide with the 100 year anniversary of the city parks system. This is an exciting event that you all will be hearing about in future editions of the newsletter.

Have a safe and wonderful summer and stop in at the Gate House on Sunday between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm and see our restoration project in the foyer or our picture gallery and pick up a new "Our Pocket Guide to Mt. Hope Cemetery" brochure.

Richard Brown