



# FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 36

Medina, Ohio

May 2017

## Medina in World War One

By James Banks

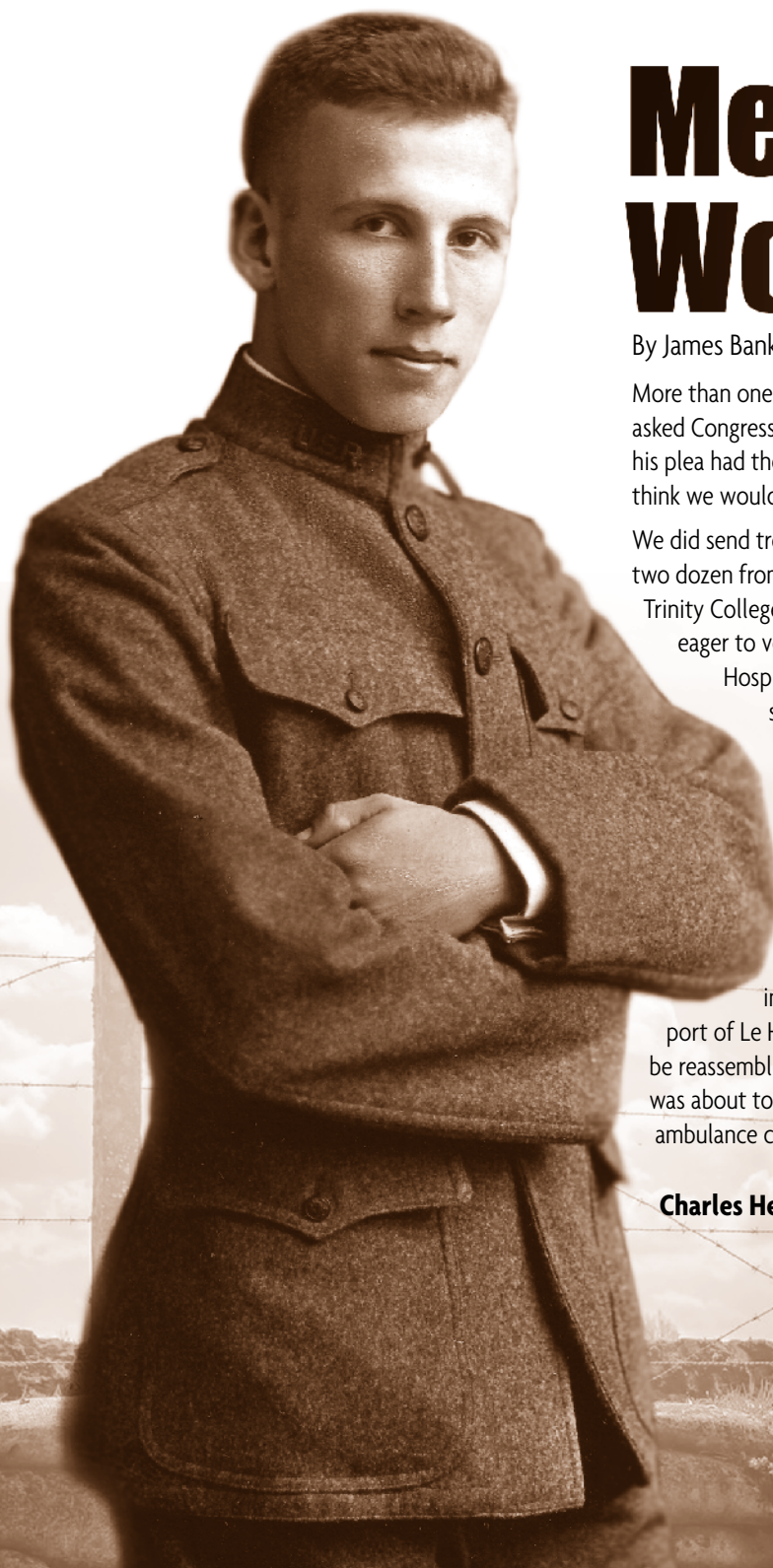
More than one hundred years ago, in April 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war “to make the world safe for democracy” his plea had the urgency of a crusade. Astonishingly, several in Congress did not think we would send troops “over there.”

We did send troops, two million. Charles Hewes Griesinger was one of more than two dozen from Medina who served. “Chuck,” as he was known, had entered Trinity College after graduation from Medina High School in 1916. He left college, eager to volunteer as an ambulance driver. He wanted to join the Lakeside Hospital unit of Cleveland, but they had met their quota. A friend suggested he try the University of Michigan. After induction he was sent to Camp Crane in Allentown, Pennsylvania for training. Young Griesinger was assigned to SSU 62/591.\*

He left Halifax on September 5, 1917 aboard the RMS Baltic headed for England. General Pershing had sailed on the same ship a few months earlier. Within sight of Liverpool a German torpedo hit the ship. There was damage, requiring the ship to be dry-docked. “It was an exciting few minutes,” he recalled in an oral interview.\* When his unit arrived at the French port of Le Harve, the ambulances were waiting. However, they had to be reassembled, still packed in crates. Griesinger, now twenty years old, was about to begin his adventure as a “gentleman volunteer” in the ambulance corps.

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**Charles Hewes Griesinger**





# Friends of the Cemetery

775 East Washington Street  
Medina, Ohio 44256

[www.friendsofmedinacemetery.org](http://www.friendsofmedinacemetery.org)

## To reach us:

[info@friendsofmedinacemetery.org](mailto:info@friendsofmedinacemetery.org)  
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## Board Meetings

First Thursday at 7 pm

FOC office

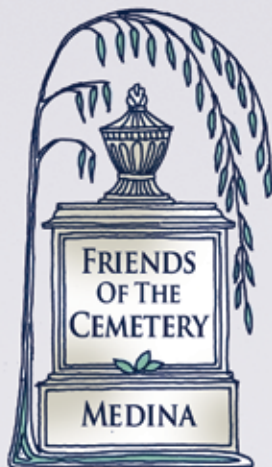
775 East Washington Street

Conference Room

*Please call first.*

Designed by

Ron Bell/Advision Design



## Continued from Page 1

According to the official history of Griesinger's unit, they were initially assigned to the French 4th Division and later transferred to the French 29th Division. It was with the 29th that he saw heavy fighting north of Soissons. According to an oral interview, much of their driving was at night complicated by blackouts. Poison gas was also a severe hazard, making driving without lights even more dangerous while wearing a gas mask. "It was the worst thing of the whole war," Griesinger recalled. In transporting the wounded he noted they could only carry four "hossies" on stretchers and one "blesses" in the passenger seat.

Griesinger's unit remained after the armistice providing some "rehabilitation work" in northern France. Two men in his group died and four were wounded. France awarded the unit the Croix de Guerre with two silver stars for courage. With "occupation" service completed, Chuck set sail for home on the Great Northern, and was discharged on April 29, 1919.

Returning to Medina he joined his father in their business, Griesinger Shoes, and retired in 1954. Charles Hewes Griesinger left a legacy of service to both the nation and his Medina community. He died August 27th, 1992 at the age of 94.

His son, "Charlie" carried the Griesinger name with pride, displaying similar courage. When the shock of Pearl Harbor gripped the nation in 1941, Charles Clark Griesinger enlisted in the Marine Corps facing combat in the Pacific.

The tradition of service is part of many Medina families. So on this Memorial Day, pause for an extra few minutes and remember all who served and are serving, as a tribute for their service and sacrifice.

*\* Material for this article was supplied by local author Gloria Brown, the Medina Country Historical Society's Oral History Collection, Cynthia Szunyog, and, John R. Smucker's, The History of the United States Army Ambulance Service with the French and Italian Armies 1917, 1918, 1919. Allentown, Pa, 1967*

**Editor's Note: FOC member, Jim Banks, is Professor Emeritus at the Western Campus of Cuyahoga Community College and is Director of the Crile Archives, focusing on the history of combat medicine.**



## Memorial Day 2017

The Friends will have the Spring Grove chapel and mausoleum open on Memorial Day, May 29, 2017, before, during and after the Memorial Day service. Please stop in.

## Friends Of The Cemetery Annual Meeting

Sunday, September 10, 2017 is the date set for the Friends of the Cemetery's Annual Meeting.

It will be held in the Spring Grove Chapel at 2:00 p.m.

All members of the Friends are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

# ***Annual Historical Walk***

This year's walk will take place on Saturday, August 19, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at Spring Grove Cemetery. We always look forward to this event and have a great turnout each year. While leisurely strolling through our historical cemetery, we stop here and there along the way at gravesites to hear stories of Medina folks who have long since passed. Often the presenters of these stories are ancestors of the deceased and other presenters have done extensive research into the lives of these individuals, but every presentation is

interesting and, often, fascinating with facts, family and folklore of Medina and its bygone residents.

We hope you'll reserve this date on your calendar and join us! The walk is doable for just about everybody - we've had folks in wheelchairs attend. We use a portable loud speaker system so everyone can hear what's being said and we provide cold bottled water for everyone. The program is free and open to the public. See you there!

## ***Christmas Decorations***

As is our custom, the Friends provided pine roping and red bows for the Baby Section fencing, pine swags with red bows for the mausoleum doors and pine wreaths with red bows for the chapel doors and the Mears office building doors. This past holiday season, however, the Friends decided to adorn the 1892 sandstone entry gate with wreaths and red bows. We purchased one 48" wreath for the center of the carriageway arch and two 36" wreaths - one for each walkway arch. We did not want to compromise

the stone in any way, so long pieces of cable were attached to each wreath and then once each wreath was hoisted into position, the long cable was then looped around the stone structure and fastened. It worked very well and the wreaths withstood December's snow and wind and, most importantly, our beautiful entry gate stone has no nail or hook holes. The Friends thank Sexton James Hjort and City employee, Tyler Strickland, for the work they did on a very cold morning to get the wreaths hung and for taking them down too.

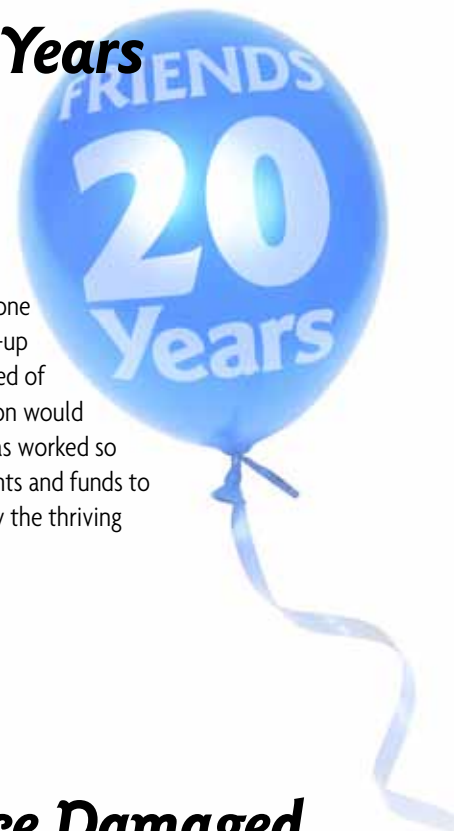




# ***Friends Of The Cemetery Celebrate 20 Years***

The Friends are celebrating 20 years of existence this year! In 1997 the Medina City Cemetery Commission received \$20,000 from the Letha E. House Foundation and \$2,000 from the City of Medina to have a Master Plan done for Spring Grove Cemetery. One of the recommendations of this Plan was to establish a 501(c)3 organization whose mission would be to advocate for the beautification, maintenance and historic preservation of the two Medina City owned and operated cemeteries – Spring Grove Cemetery and Old Town Graveyard. With that recommendation in mind, Teresa Merkle and Cynthia Szunyog, members of the Medina City Cemetery Commission at that time, sent out invitations to many people to attend a start-up organizational meeting at the Spring Grove chapel that same

year. There was a good turnout that first day and many of those folks who attended that first meeting and agreed to help form this new organization are still members of the Friends today! None of those who attended that start-up meeting 20 years ago ever dreamed of the future success this organization would enjoy. We thank everyone who has worked so hard and given of their time, talents and funds to make the Friends of the Cemetery the thriving organization it is today!



## ***Old Town Graveyard Wrought Iron Fence Damaged***

Unfortunately a motor vehicle accident occurred on February 26, 2017 at South Jefferson and East Liberty Street and the very old (no one knows just how old) Old Town Graveyard wrought iron fence was damaged significantly. The damaged section of fence was transported by the City to Standard Welding where the bends and twists, caused by the accident, were painstakingly straightened out as well as could be done. The section has now been refurbished

and the City has plans to re-do the entire fence by removing sections and transporting them to the garage, grinding off the rust and repainting them. They hope to have the work completed this summer.





## ***Mausoleum Gutters***

The Friends of the Cemetery will fund the installation of gutters on the Spring Grove mausoleum at a cost of \$3,900. In 2013 when we had the exterior walls of the mausoleum restored, the stone mason suggested installing gutters to help prevent the splash-

off of rain water directly onto the exterior walls. This water has caused discoloration over the years and is very difficult to remove without using harsh chemicals or pressure. We have contracted with Chippewa Roofing to do the work.

## ***Spoil Pile Pole Building***

The Friends have hired architect, Tony Cerny, to design a pole building that will cover existing spoil piles behind the new Spring Grove maintenance building. The pole building will be open to the west and will require reinforced poles and anchoring to withstand west winds. There will be vents in the back to allow

wind to proceed through. It will be approximately 44' in width, 14' high at the back and 20' high at the front to accommodate City dump trucks. The exterior will be sided to match the maintenance building and will provide a very nice finishing touch to the cemetery maintenance facility.

## ***Table for Chapel***

The Friends have hired Eastwood Furniture, of Medina, to design and build a new oak table for the chapel. This table will replace an oak table the Friends had built several years ago for the chapel. The original table proved to be too cumbersome when cemetery staff had to move it to accommodate a full-size casket at the front

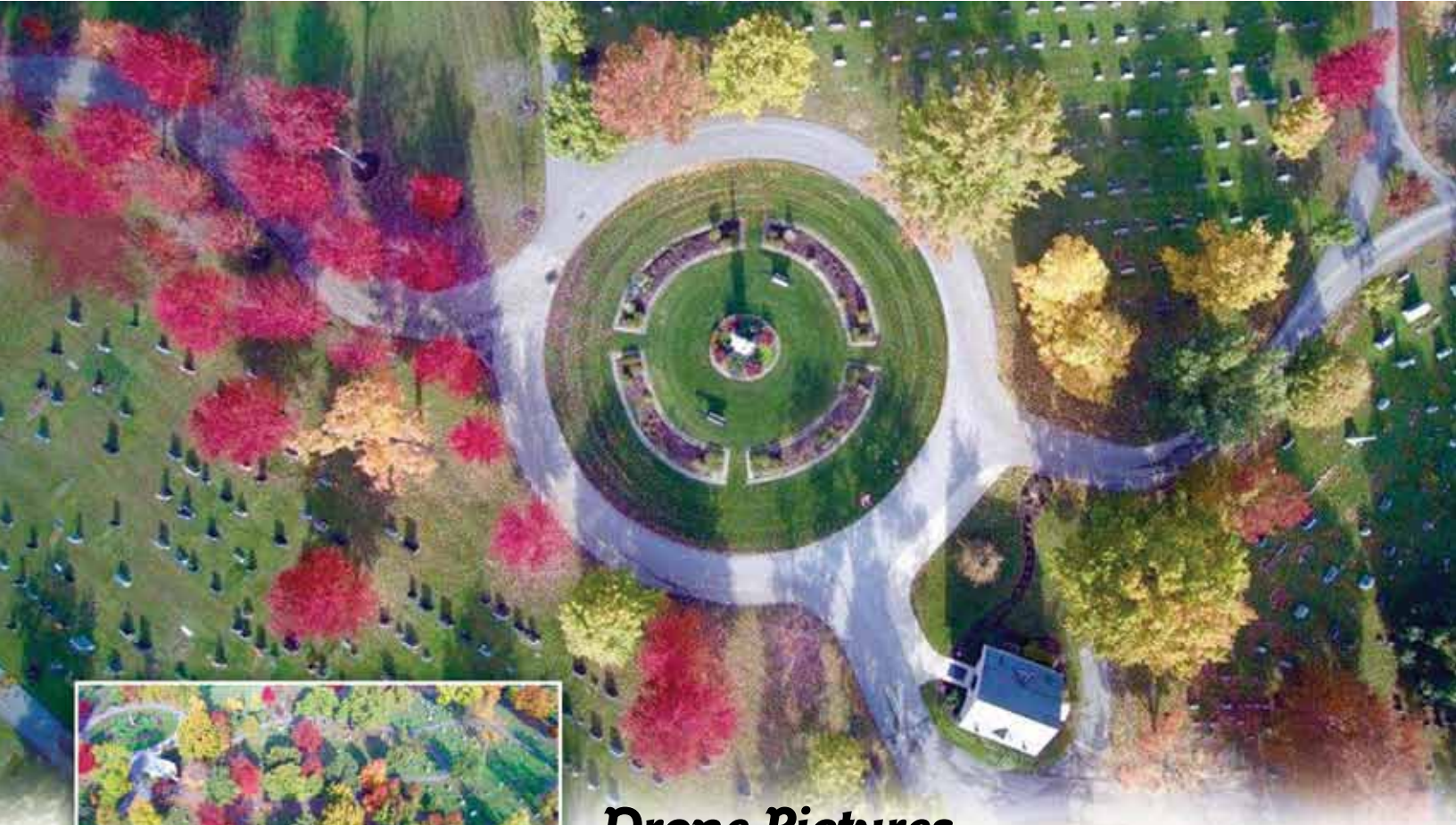
of the chapel. The old table is now in use at the Friends office at the Mears building. The new table is smaller and designed to hold flowers, cremains and up to 60" caskets. It is 30" in height and is on casters so that it will be much more easily moved off to the side when full-size caskets are brought in.

## ***Tree Planting Project***

Each year, the Friends of the Cemetery and the City of Medina cooperate on a tree planting and/or tree maintenance project in the City cemeteries. This program has been on hold the last two years while the City removed ash trees infested with Emerald Ash Borer. Approximately 25 ash trees at Spring Grove were taken down this past fall. The Friends of the Cemetery purchased 25 new trees to replace the ash trees and funded the installation of them. The City's plan is to diversify the species of trees being planted. The Friends purchased eight Gingko Biloba, six Sunburst Honey Locust, five Ornamental Red Bud, and six White oak from Davis Tree Farm and have contracted with Greenskeepers Lawn Service & Landscaping to do the installation.







## ***Drone Pictures***

These wonderful pictures were done by Miles Reed and his drone. We are so happy to share these with you and thank Miles for sharing his work with us. You may access the lovely video Miles produced using his drone at:

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXzxF7rsymo&feature=youtu.be>**

## ***In Memory of Helen Streett***

Dear friend and former FOC trustee, Helen Streett, passed away on April 14, 2017. Helen had been a trustee of the Friends board for many years until, due to declining health, she resigned just this

past August. Helen will be remembered for her kind, calm spirit and wise counsel. We extend our condolences to Helen's daughter, son, grandchildren and host of friends.

## ***Spring and Summer Planting Regulations***

All monuments are permitted a seasonal planting area extending no more than ten inches (10") from the foundation on the burial side of a monument. All decorations, ornaments and flowers must be installed within this area. No bushes or large plants are

permitted. Only one (1) shepherd's hook or one (1) potted plant is permitted on a marker. Bulbs make a lovely display in the spring. You might consider planting them at your graves this fall.





# *Friends of the Cemetery* MEMBERSHIP LISTING - MAY 2017

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Ross & Dolly Yowler  
Jay & Janis Zachman  
Betty Zarney †  
Steve Zetts †

## *Donations in Memory of Helen Streelt*

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Kevin Arters Family  
Greg Arters Family  
Ruth Beshire  
William & Jacquelyn Dunn  
Jerry Gunner  
Diane & Jonathan Kreglow  
D.E. & J.M. Logsdon  
Charles & Teresa Merkle  
Betty Riegger  
Cheryl Riegger-Krugh  
Anita L. Robertson-Szucs  
Janis Zachman

\* designates new member  
† designates life-time member  
♦ designates corporate member

### *New Members since December 2016:*

Elizabeth Batchelder Boring  
Friends of Westwood Cemetery  
Home Builders Realty, Inc.  
Deanne Longacre  
Gary & Rusty Mest  
Michael & Susan Sweet  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Thompson  
Darrell & Carolyn Waite

### *New Lifetime Members since December 2016:*

David L. & Michaelleen Bagley  
Steve Zetts

### *New Corporate Member since December 2016:*

620 Corporation

*I*f you have not yet joined the Friends of the Cemetery, please do so today. For your convenience, we have provided a self-addressed envelope in this newsletter. Our membership schedule is included on the envelope flap. If you have been a member in the past, but do not see your name listed above, please take time today to renew your membership using the enclosed envelope.



# FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

775 East Washington Street  
Medina, Ohio 44256

## *Become a Friend of the Cemetery*

*"Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the law of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."*

*William Gladstone*

Don't forget to check us out on the web at: **[www.friendsofmedinacemetery.org](http://www.friendsofmedinacemetery.org)**

Memberships are available as follows:

Senior _____	\$10.00	Supporting _____	\$100.00
Individual _____	\$15.00	Heritage _____	\$250.00
Family _____	\$25.00	Lifetime _____	\$500.00
Contributing _____	\$50.00	Corporate _____	\$1,000.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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