

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 31

Medina, Ohio

December 2014



Photo by Lisa Macino

Annual Meeting

The Friends held their Annual Meeting on September 14, 2014. Teresa Merkle, President, reported on the various projects undertaken by the Friends in 2014 which included the restoration of the Spring Grove mausoleum stained glass windows, the bronze entry doors and exterior stone restoration.

Dennis Leach, Linda Fenn, Teresa Merkle and Cynthia Szunyog were elected to serve 4-year terms as Trustees. Teresa Merkle

was re-elected President of the organization, John Gill was re-elected Vice President and Vickie Fleming was re-elected Treasurer. Linda Fenn was elected to her first term as Secretary. Following the business meeting, Friends member and genealogist, Pat Morgan, spoke to those in attendance on the subject of how to use cemeteries in genealogy research. Helen Strett provided refreshments for the gathering.

Friends of the Cemetery

445 W. Liberty Street, Suite 219
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Teresa Merkle
Cynthia Szunyog

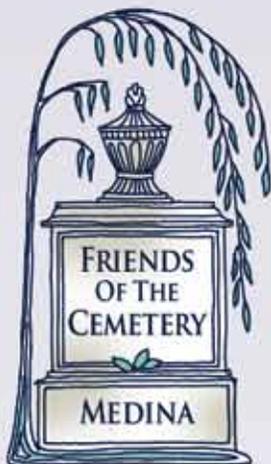
Photos

John Gill
Lisa Macino
Teresa Merkle

Board Meetings

First Thursday at 7 pm
FOC office-Liberty Row
445 W. Liberty Street
Conference Room
Please call first.

Designed by
Ron Bell/Advision



Janis Zachman's Departure

*F*riends Trustee and Secretary Janis Zachman moved out of state this summer. Janis, an attorney, was a great asset to the Friends organization and had been involved with the Friends of the Cemetery and the Medina City Cemetery Commission since 1995. She will surely be missed. We wish Janis and her husband, Jay, much success in their new venture.



Leadership Medina County History Day Visit

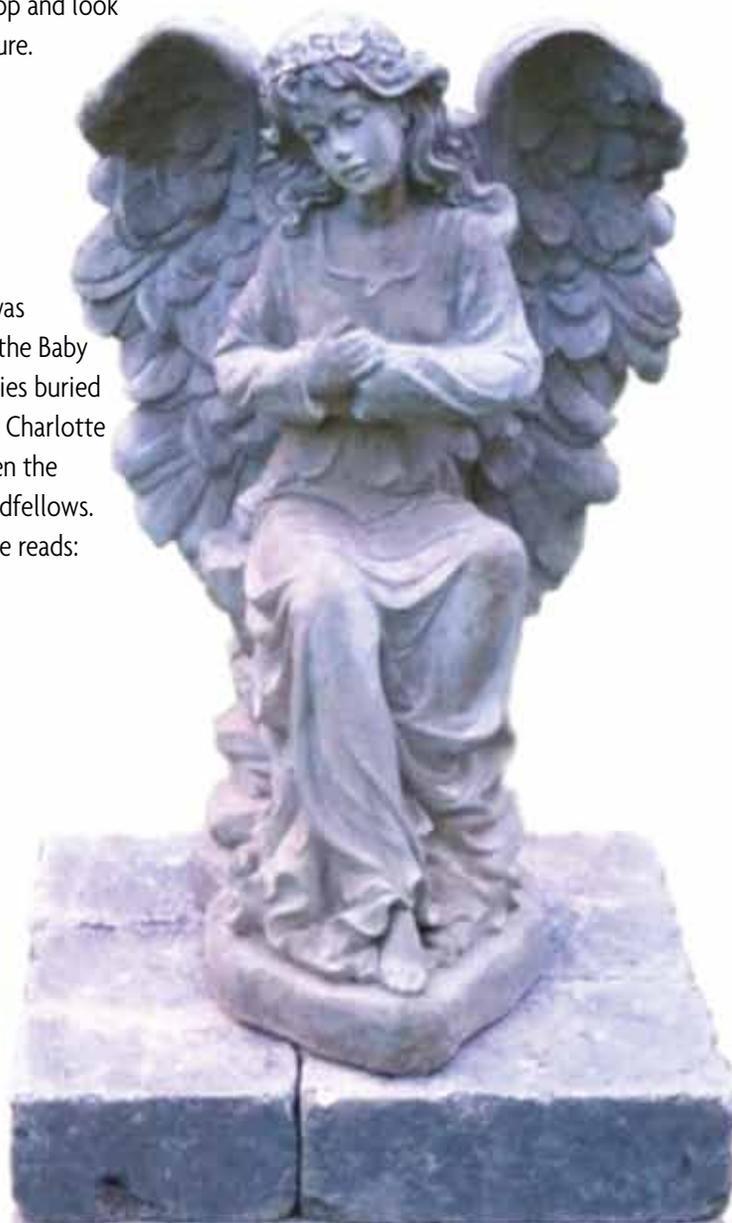
*T*he 2015 class of Leadership Medina County made a stop at Spring Grove Cemetery during their History Day tour in October to learn about the history of the cemetery and its historic structures. The group of approximately fifty visited the mausoleum and chapel. The Friends were happy to host this stop and look forward to hosting this tour in the future.

Baby Section Angel

A lovely angel statue was recently donated to the Baby Section by family members of two babies buried there – Megan Emily Merkle (1982) and Charlotte Lillian Hall Merkle (2010). It sits between the two sections on a base built by the Oddfellows. A memorial plaque affixed to the statue reads:

*"Keeping watch o'er the babies.
The blessed angels draw near.
Keeping vigil through the ages,
Bathing earth with silent tears.
Now tender watch I too will keep,
From morn till day is done.
So rest your head and be at peace;
I'll never leave your beloved one."*

By: Colleen Leedy (aunt and great-aunt to Megan & Charlotte)



Christmas Pine Roping and Wreaths

As is customary, the Friends provided lovely pine roping and bows for the fence in the Baby Section along Rte. 3 and the Oddfellows decorated the Christmas tree in the Baby Section for the holidays.

Wreaths for the chapel and holiday swags for the mausoleum doors have been placed by the Friends as well.

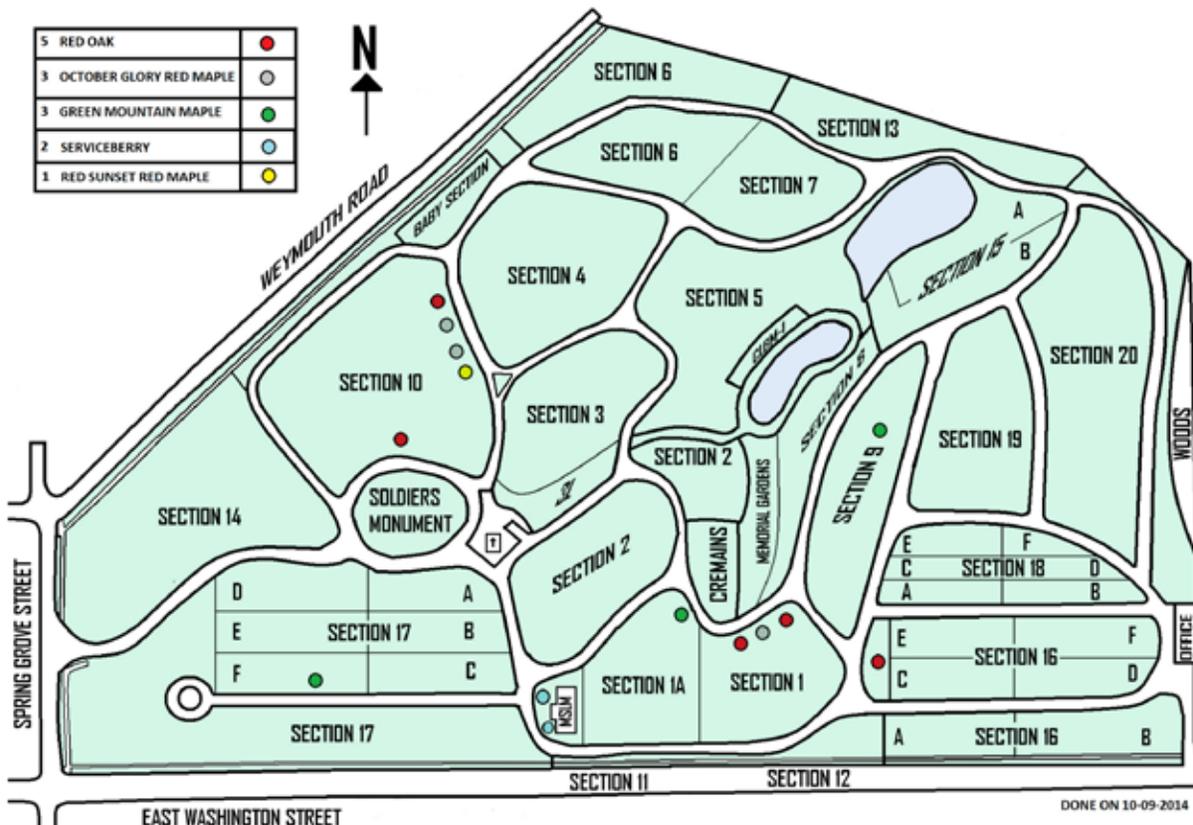
For the first time ever, the Friends decorated the wrought iron fence and gate on the East Liberty Street side of Old Town Graveyard. The pine roping with bows and the wreath hanging on the gate were in place for the annual Candlelight Walk festivities the weekend before Thanksgiving.



New Trees for Spring Grove

Each year, the Friends of the Cemetery fund winter tree maintenance and fertilization for the trees in Spring Grove Cemetery and Old Town Graveyard. We have done such a good job at this that the City Arborist did not see the need for maintenance or fertilization this year. Instead, the Friends funded the purchase of 14 new trees that were planted at Spring Grove in October. These trees replace some of the ash

trees the City has had to remove from the cemetery due to the infestation of the emerald ash borer. The species planted were five red oaks, three October Glory red maples, three Green Mountain maples, two Serviceberry and one Red Sunset maple. Below is a map of where the new trees are located. The Friends are dedicated to the beautification of our cemeteries and believe trees are high priority.



Charles C. Chapman

1820 ~ 1888

By **Donna Gawell**

If you lived in Medina in 1860, you would have known Charles C. Chapman, better known as “Charley”, the resident drayman** in Medina. Charley and his team of mules would have been a frequent site in town as the townspeople likely questioned him as to whether their long awaited package was aboard his cart. Delivering packages to the town from the local depot was his job for over thirty years.

Charley came to Medina in 1830 from Genesee County, New York at age nine with his uncle, Charles Shaw.

It is hard for us to imagine what life was like for Charley in Medina’s early days. The early settlers waged continual battle against the bears, wolves, foxes, weasels and other predators of their livestock. According to Henry Howe’s History of Ohio, in 1840, the village of Medina “contains 1 Presbyterian, 1 Episcopal, 1 Baptist, 1 Free Will Baptist, 1 Methodist and 1 Universalist church, 7 dry goods, 5 grocery, 1 book and 2 apothecary stores, 1 newspaper printing office, a woolen and an axe factory, a flouring mill, a furnace, and had 655 inhabitants.”

Charley worked alongside his uncle, Charles Shaw, on his own farm during his early years of marriage to Fanny Dorcas Chandler (m. 1846) and then purchased a home that still stands today on East Liberty St in Medina.



Charley was written about in several news articles and it is obvious that he wore many hats in Medina. He was the town’s early meteorologist. As noted in the Medina Gazette in 1870, “Charly Chapman, Medina’s veteran drayman, reports the

roads so bad that if it were not for his mules’ ears, he would not know he had a team.” As the common man’s philanthropist and good sport, Charley agreed to be a participant in the charity spelling bee and the proceeds would go to “the relief of the Western sufferers.” The community gathered to watch Medina’s teachers, lawyers, doctors and other townspeople fall as they attempted to spell the words from the McGuffey Reader. The news article reports “Charley Chapman, city expressman, who ought to be a good speller from the constant practice of reading the directions on packages, retired on ‘masure’ for measure”... Charley helped the others earn \$3,500 for this worthy cause.

Charley also made the newspaper when it was reported that

he “came near furnishing a case of spontaneous combustion.” “While going up the street in his usual meditative manner, thinking of the peculiarities of that ‘cussed off mule,’ he smelled a smell of smoke. A passerby yelled frantically to Charley that he was burning up. His wamus (wool jacket) was pretty well burnt off, his vest was gone as to one side, his watch was dangling in the air by the chain.”

Charley gave some clues about his early years in another Medina Gazette article written in 1882. “Fifty-two years ago today,’ said Charley Chapman, Medina City Expressman, as he came into the Gazette office this morning, ‘52 years ago today, I landed in Medina.’ ... There is not a man living in Medina who was living in the village when he came, but there were two women.” Charley went on to describe in great detail the cabins, taverns, the old Court house and jail and how the town had changed in his fifty-two years in Medina. “The (town) square was a common, ball playing ground and the place where wicked circuses and menageries pitched their tents.”

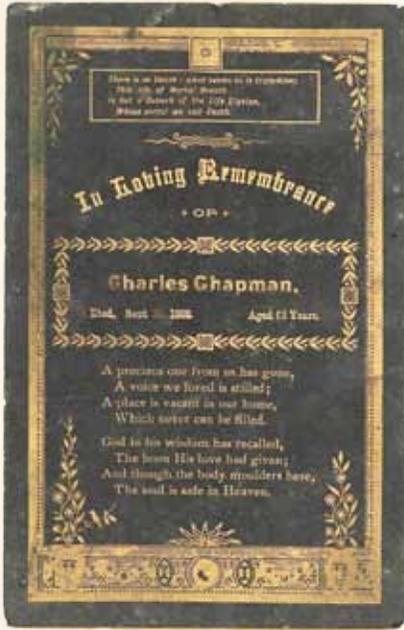


Charley died just six years after giving this interview and his Gazette obituary described how he complained of dizziness and a difficulty of speaking on Friday morning but hitched up his mules and went to work as usual, working all day. He died in his bed that evening.

Funerals at that time were held in homes and two local pastors conducted the services. The funeral was one of the largest ever held in Medina, as reported in the Gazette on Oct 5, 1888. The writer ended his obituary saying “There is not now a single person living here who was living here when he came to the village. During his whole life he had been a quiet, inoffensive, industrious man and in his sphere his life was useful. He will be missed more than almost any of our citizen. Peace to his ashes!”

One hundred forty years ago Charley would have been the person who brought Medina residents smiles and shouts of gratitude through his loyal service and friendly manner as he

2014 Spring Grove Historical Walk



and his team of mules made their deliveries. Charley lived his life honoring the words of scripture living a quiet and productive life. Although Charley likely came to Medina as an orphan he died honored, respected and treasured by his family and community.

***"A drayman was historically the driver of a dray, a low, flat-bed wagon, pulled generally by horses or mules that were used for transport of all kinds of goods."*

– source: Wikipedia

Editor's Note: Charles and his wife Fanny are believed to be buried in Row P at Old Town Graveyard even though a cemetery plot map shows

the entire Row P was moved to Spring Grove. There are no records of their reburial at Spring Grove. Donna Gawell of Westerville, OH, the author of this article, is the great, great granddaughter of Charles and Fanny Chapman and we thank Donna for sharing her research with us!



The Friends sponsored the annual historical walk on September 20, 2014. This year we returned to Spring Grove Cemetery for the walk after having it at Old Town Graveyard in 2012 and 2013. It was a picture perfect day – beautiful, bright sunshine with temperatures in the mid-70's. We met at the chapel where Teresa Merkle gave a brief history of Spring Grove cemetery and its historical structures and introduced the day's historical walk presenters – Pat Morgan, Nancy Mishler, Lisa Macino and Don Simmons. The group then strolled over to the mausoleum to view the newly restored stained glass windows and doors.

Pat Morgan, our first presenter of the day, researched the Lowe and Albro families and the Lucius Brown family. William and Jane Lowe immigrated to Medina County from Scotland in 1854. The family prospered as farmers and tradesmen in Medina, but never lost their love of their homeland, often traveling back and forth. Family reunions were held every year here in Medina and the favorite activities at these events were to sing "Auld Lang Syne," and dance Scottish dances. Charles B. Lowe, grandson of William and Jane, served as superintendent of Spring Grove Cemetery from 1913 – 1932. The Lowe family monument, in Section 8, is an obelisk and is the tallest stone in Spring Grove Cemetery.

On the corner of West Washington and North Court Street, adjacent to the southwest corner of Medina's Uptown Park (square), sits the Albro building which was built by James Albro and his son Willis in 1876. Willis Albro ran a successful drug store from that site for over 30 years. The building now houses the Medina County Visitors Bureau. John and Mary Bradley Albro came to Medina in 1836 from Massachusetts. They became prominent citizens of the village of Medina. John, his son, James, and grandson, Willis, were successful businessmen and civic leaders. Willis was a 33rd degree Mason – the only one in Medina County – and had an extensive library and was known for his love of old books. The Albro stone is also one of the larger stones in the cemetery. It sits alongside the large Lowe memorial in Section 8.

Pat's third presentation of the day was at the Brown family plot in Section 3. Lucius O. Brown was born in Ohio. He served in the Civil War and was briefly a POW. He became a successful clothing merchant with his son, Lucius H. Brown. Lucius O. served as a Medina County Commissioner from 1900-1904. After Lucius O.'s death, Lucius H. left the clothing business, moved to Florida, married and became a citrus grove owner.

In the May issue of this newsletter we featured an article about Civil War soldier, Private Stephen Harrington. His ancestor, Nancy Mishler of Wooster, our next presenter, spoke of her research of the Harrington family and the discovery she made that Stephen was buried at Andersonville prison camp

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where he was imprisoned in 1864. His name and date of death appear on the Harrington family stone at Spring Grove, so it had been unclear as to where Stephen was actually interred. It was not until Nancy viewed a documentary on the Andersonville prison that she dug deeper and was able to locate Stephen's name in a record of interments at what is now Andersonville, Georgia National Cemetery. Nancy also talked about Emerson Rood, Stephen's cousin who is buried in the Harrington plot. He, too, was a Civil War soldier, enlisting on April 24, 1861, however, Emerson enlisted as a Private in Co K 2nd Wisconsin Infantry. It is odd that Emerson enlisted in a Wisconsin outfit since he had been living in Medina since 1853. Nancy's research found that the original Co K was known as the Wisconsin Rifles and joined three regiments from New York. Emerson was born in 1830 in Leicester, New York and Nancy wonders if he joined this unit because of the New York connection instead of an Ohio unit. Further research found that after the war Emerson was a druggist in Maysville, Missouri around 1887 and that same year contracted "congestion of the brain." He was admitted to the National Military Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers in Leavenworth, Kansas. Ten years later in September, 1897, he was discharged and transferred to the Marion Branch in Marion, Indiana. He died there in 1910 and his remains were returned to Medina for burial at Spring Grove.

The next presenter, Lisa Macino, related the heartwarming story of Samuel Ingham, Medina's "famous" fife and drum corps leader. Samuel was born in a log cabin southeast of Medina in 1849 and took up the drums as a young boy. A doctor advised him to take up the flute to correct a lung disorder as a young man. He played in the 8th regiment band, in Ganyards' Band in Granger and the Sharon band. In 1884 he organized his own band with family and neighbors. He entertained scores of Medina County residents at public events like the Medina County Fair and Memorial Day parades and ceremonies throughout his long life until his death in 1938.

There is an interesting footnote discovered during Lisa's research of Samuel Ingham. Samuel's death on October 14, 1938 was a front page story in the Medina County Gazette. The article, entitled, "*Death Stills Fife Forever*," stated that his death occurred on October 11, 1938, but the date of death carved on his gravestone reads that he died in 1936! The Spring Grove Sexton confirmed Samuel's date of death as being October 11,

1938 per Spring Grove cemetery records, so his tombstone was evidently carved incorrectly. A copy of his obituary has now been attached to the cemetery record card for future reference. This discovery has made us wonder if this mistake had been overlooked and just now been found out after 76 years - or if the mistake was realized and just not corrected?

Don Simmons, our final presenter of the day, said that Medina was never the same after Amos Mears drove his big Cadillac into town in 1956. Amos Mears was a great entrepreneur and business man with a knack for making things happen. Amos was responsible for the "industrial revolution" Medina experienced from 1959 through 1971 and was responsible for approximately 60 industrial buildings on the west side of Medina. He also built the Medical Arts plaza on East Washington Street and the two buildings called the Professional Building on West Washington Street. Amos was born in Illinois in 1902 and had 14 older siblings. He was out and on his own at the age of 15 with only a 5th grade education, but that did not suppress his drive to succeed. He held many jobs and positions through the years in different parts of the country, but eventually made his way to Cleveland, Ohio. He "retired" to Medina in 1956 after selling his business, the Cleveland Lathe Company. His "retirement," however, didn't last long in Medina, as he reached out to local folks, like the Simmons brothers, to help achieve his business venture goals for Medina. Don summed up Amos' impact on Medina, "Several of the successful companies that started in Medina in the 1959-1971 time frame owed their existence to Amos's trust in them."

Amos Mears son, Edward C., left his entire estate to the Friends of the Cemetery in 2003. One request left by Ed was to build some sort of memorial to his father and the other industrialists and movers and shakers in Medina that worked with Amos during the 1959-1971 era. We are in the planning process of building the Amos C. Mears Memorial Building at Spring Grove Cemetery that will serve as a memorial to him and to his colleagues, as well as a lovely facility that will house offices for the Friends of the Cemetery, the Spring Grove Sexton and the City's Forestry Department. There will also be a conference room in the Amos C. Mears Memorial Building that will be available for meetings and events before or after funeral services. The Friends are funding the production of a documentary about Amos C. Mears. Don Simmons has agreed to help in that effort by sharing his memories about Mr. Mears and the impact he had on the Medina we know today.



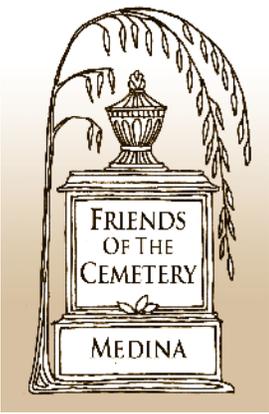
Friends of the Cemetery

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* designates new member
 ** designates Life-Time member

*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

445 W. Liberty Street,
Suite 219
Medina, Ohio 44256



New Members since May 2014:

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"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

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