



# FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 33

Medina, Ohio

December 2015

## *The Amos Mears Memorial Office Building and Maintenance Complex*

*T*he Amos Mears Memorial Office Building and Maintenance Complex is now a reality! Construction of both buildings began in July and have progressed smoothly and on schedule. We expect both buildings to be ready for move in by early December. We thank everyone involved in this project from the beginning to its completion - especially Architect Tony Cerny of Architectural Design Studios for designing both facilities as well as his oversight from the concept phase, to the bidding process through to the end of construction. An article written by Tony detailing the history and timeline of this project is included in

this newsletter. Thank you to Jim Gowe and 620 Construction for the excellent job constructing the office building. We also thank Amy Douglass of The Interior Design Studio for her expertise in the interior design of the office building. Classic Construction of Apple Creek, OH was awarded the maintenance building contract from the City and they also did an excellent job. The Friends thank and appreciate Friends Trustee Jerry Gunner for spearheading this project and for seeing it through from start to finish – even double knee replacement surgery did not



# Friends of the Cemetery

775 East Washington Street  
Medina, Ohio 44256

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

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## Board Meetings

First Thursday at 7 pm

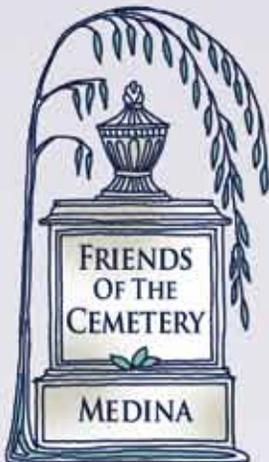
FOC office

775 East Washington Street

Conference Room

*Please call first.*

Designed by  
Ron Bell/Advision



keep Jerry down! Finally, we would be remiss to not acknowledge the Estate of Edward C. Mears for the tremendous financial gift to the Friends of the Cemetery for the benefit of the preservation, beautification and upkeep of Spring Grove Cemetery. Stay tuned for details of an open house hosted by the Friends next year.

## Evolution of the Amos Mears Memorial Office & Maintenance Complex Project

*By: Anthony J. Cerny, AIA*

In going back over our files to reconstruct the history of this project, we had an initial job number for the project dating back to February 2004. At that time, the Friends of the Cemetery were looking to develop an office building with a memorial garden and were thinking of adding onto the old cemetery maintenance building. The preliminary plan called for the new office building to be located just off to the north of the third drive accessed from Washington Street. This is almost immediately to the west of the location for the new maintenance building. In this original design, the existing garage would be expanded to the north. The office building was oriented east and west with the garden and pool on the west side, along with the entrance. After we developed this initial concept, the project basically stopped until November 2011.

In 2011, we met with the City to discuss the idea of developing a new maintenance garage in conjunction with new offices for both the Friends of the Cemetery and City staff. We did a quick evaluation on the idea of renovating the existing facility and determined it was in such poor condition and would be inadequate to adequately service the cemetery into the future. At this time, a new program was developed for the office building and the City evaluated their long-term needs for a maintenance building. The City had already started working on drawings to expand the available lots within the cemetery and incorporated the original location for the office building in their layout for new lots.

In February 2012, we presented a new concept for the office building and maintenance facility. This design placed the new office building in approximately the same location as the existing maintenance building and provided for a new maintenance structure move to the north. In this design, the existing maintenance structure needed to come down to make room for the new offices and the parking and material storage bins would be located between the offices and the new maintenance structure. Based upon this design, we prepared an initial project estimate of \$605,000. This represented \$300,000 for the new maintenance building, \$240,000 for the office building and the balance for lot development.

At this time, while the City was interested in the concept, they were not prepared to commit to the new maintenance structure. We were then asked to revise the design to allow for the office building to be constructed now while allowing for the maintenance building to remain. It would then be demolished in the future along with the construction of a new maintenance building in the future. We presented this revised site layout in October 2012. This design is essentially the current layout with a parking lot between the new offices and the maintenance building and the material storage bins moved to the north side of the new maintenance building.

At this point, with the City uncommitted to proceeding with the maintenance building, the Friends had us continue development of the office building. We presented an 80% complete set of documents to the Friends in July 2013. The project was then basically placed on hold, pending City approval of the project. In February 2014, we made formal

submission to the City's planning commission for the office building project. The submission included the new parking lot to the north of the office and showed the future demolition of the existing maintenance building and the approximate location of the future maintenance building. The concept was approved by the Planning Commission, but the project was still on hold pending approval of City Council.

With planning commission approval in hand, we waited on the City to decide how they would proceed. In July 2014, we presented an updated estimate of the construction costs for the office building based upon the current design. The estimated cost of construction at this time for the office was \$253,000. This did not reflect any costs associated with site development. At this time the City had proceeded with site development documents for the expansion of cemetery lots, allowing for the future maintenance building. Their estimate for the site development costs was \$220,000. We provided the Friends with a couple scenarios on how this cost might be split between the City and the Friends. The Friends would be responsible for between 30% to 40% of the costs, or between \$66,000 to \$88,000, depending on how you attribute the needs of the site development.

In October 2014, the City requested a proposal from us to develop the construction drawings for the maintenance building. We were given approval to proceed with construction documents shortly thereafter and presented a preliminary set for the City's review by mid-December 2014. At the same time, we completed the construction documents for the office building. The office building was submitted to the City for building permit in February 2015. We also issued the office building drawings for bidding. Bids for the project were received by the end of March 2015, with the low bid for the office building being submitted by 620 Construction of Medina for \$342,078.

The City issued their documents for bidding in April 2015 with bids due at the beginning of May. The Friends entered into an agreement for the construction with 620 Construction the first of June 2015, approximately the same time the City entered into an agreement with Classic Construction for the site work and maintenance garage. Construction officially started in July 2015. Pending no delays, 620 Construction will be completed with the office building by December 3, 2015, nearly 12 years from when we first started to explore the idea.



## 2015 Spring Grove Tree Maintenance Program

The Friends funded \$1,350 for the pruning of six trees this fall at Spring Grove in Sections 3, 5, 6, 16 and 17. The contractor focused on removing large deadwood and subordinating limbs back to live branches, according to Parks and Recreation Director, Jansen Wehrley.

The Friends' and the City's annual tree planting project will be pushed back to the spring of 2016 because the ash trees we

are intending to replace with the new plantings have yet to be removed. The City's plan for new trees planted in Spring Grove over the next two years will be focused mainly on ash tree replacements.

**"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is today." – Chinese proverb**

*(submitted by Virginia Jeandrevin)*

# 2015 Historical Walk

By Cynthia Szunyog

We were blessed with a lovely sunny day for the annual cemetery walk on Saturday August 22. It was a friendly event bringing back Pat Morgan from the Genealogical Society to tell about the life of Frank Bowman, with new presenters, Roger Ingraham speaking about Walter Kennedy, Paula Banks presenting Emma Philips and Murray Van Epp telling about his ancestor Nicolas Van Epp. We were fortunate to have a couple of volunteers who had connections with the people whom they presented and we welcomed our new presenters with open arms!

The walk began at the chapel where Cynthia Szunyog spoke briefly about the history of the cemetery and its historical structures. Our first stop was at the grave of Emma Phillips, 1869-1937. Emma was the sister of Fremont O. Phillips, a teacher, lawyer, congressman, mayor of Medina 1886-1890 and Medina County Probate judge 1924-1932.

Emma and her family moved from a farm in Lafayette Township to Medina Village after the Great Fire and her father was elected sheriff. Later the family moved from S. Elmwood to a 45-acre farm on Wadsworth Road about a block south of S. Broadway Street. Emma never married. She worked first as a cashier and clerk at Zieglers Department Store on the West side of the Square and then became her brother's deputy while he was Probate judge. We like to tell about the lives of ordinary Medina people as well as more famous ones. The lives of women, however, are harder to document but they did play a very important role in the history of Medina Village and the surrounding area.

Our next stop was the grave of Walter Kennedy who built Bunker Hill Golf Course in 1927 on a property at the corner of Route 42 and Hamilton Road. The farm had been passed down in the family of Walter's ancestor William Kennedy who fled Canada in 1838. He had had a dangerous encounter with Tories and escaped with only some clothing, lunch and \$2.50 wrapped in a knapsack. Finding no work in Cleveland, he started down the Old Pike and arrived at Hamilton's Corners where he found a job chopping wood for Arso Hamilton's widow and stayed on and eventually married her daughter.

After serving in the Philippines during the Spanish American War, Walter went into the road building business and Route 42 was one of his jobs. He inherited the farm in the 20's and, having no interest in farming, he presented the idea of a golf course to a group of Medina businessmen who helped with the funding. He named the golf course Bunker Hill to remember his ancestor, John Kennedy, who drove oxen up Bunker Hill during the Revolutionary War. Walter died in 1936 and the golf course

went to the Old Phoenix Bank. Our presenter Roger Ingraham's parents, Berneta and Roger Ingraham, bought the golf course in 1940. Roger and his brother Arnold were raised there and Arnold is currently the manager and owner.

Cynthia Szunyog spoke about George Gruninger 1850-1919, a designer and builder who worked in Medina around the time of the Great Fire. He was born in Liverpool Township to a family of German Protestants and came from a long line of carpenters and wood workers. His father, Michael Gruninger, settled in Liverpool in 1837 where he built many houses and became the local undertaker, no doubt-at least in part-because he also built the coffins! George learned his father's trade and came to Medina from Akron in 1870 just in time to help rebuild some of the buildings on the Square that had burned in the Great Fire of 1870. He and his brothers formed a construction company called Gruninger Brothers and together they worked to reconstruct many buildings around the Square. George was responsible for building the Brenner House Hotel on the Town Hill (South Court). Some of the finest homes on Medina's major streets were George Gruninger's work including the R.M. McDowell House at the end of W. Washington Street, G.W. Reinhardt House on E. Washington, the C. L. Griesinger House on S. Court Street and his own home at 598 S. Court Street. Clark and Gruninger built the Town Hall and Engine House in 1878. In Spring Grove Cemetery he built the Entry Gate and the Chapel in 1884. Later, in 1892, he built the Savings Deposit Bank Building (now P.J. Marleys) and in 1898 the Gazette Block on the south side of the Square.

Murray Van Epp spoke about his great-great grandfather, Nicolas Van Epp, who was wounded in the Civil War. Born in 1844, he joined the 10th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry and was wounded near Fayetteville, N.C. He later became Clerk of Courts in Medina. He was one of "Sherman's Boys." His injury was from a bullet lodged in his body for 28 years which caused him enormous pain. There will be a more detailed article about Nicolas Van Epp in our May 2016 newsletter.

Our last stop on the walk was at the grave of Frank Bowman with Pat Morgan presenting. Despite Pat's great successes in researching ancestors and people buried in our cemeteries, Frank Bowman presented a challenge. There was not a lot written about Frank, especially in his later life. To make it more difficult, there are several men of the same name buried in Spring Grove and our Frank Bowman did not have a marker on his grave so there was no definite indication of exactly where he was buried. Frank Bowman was born on July 8, 1861

in Lafayette Township to William and Sarah Traxler Bowman. Frank became a circus performer under the nickname "The World's Smallest Man" (he was 48 inches tall). He traveled the circus circuit with Captain Martin Van Buren Bates – the giant of Seville. After Frank's circus career was over he lived quietly in Medina. In 1920 Frank was living on West Smith Road but in February 1923 an article in the Medina Sentinel reported that he had been taken to the Medina County Home after it was determined that his living conditions - a shack on the southwest part of the village - were "hazardous" to his health. Frank lived at the County Home until November 15, 1933 when he died. The Sentinel announced his passing in a bold

headline on the front page of the paper the next day. Frank was buried in Spring Grove Cemetery but there is no marker. Using cemetery records it was determined that Frank is buried next to his parents just to the left of their graves. Frank experienced fame during his lifetime, yet almost all references to him never fail to mention his association with Captain Bates.

John Gill surprised us all at the end of the talk by showing us a depression on the family lot and we all agreed that we had found Frank. A fitting end to our walk. We all enjoyed ourselves immensely and hope to have another great success next year.

## ***Friends of the Cemetery Annual Meeting***

The Friends held their Annual Meeting on Sunday, September 13, 2015 at Spring Grove chapel. Teresa Merkle, President reported on projects the Friends have been working on during the 2014-2015 year and plans for the future.

The current slate of officers – Teresa Merkle, President, John Gill, Vice President, Linda Fenn, Secretary and Vickie Fleming, Treasurer – were re-elected. Jerry Gunner, David Kellogg and Bonnie Leach were elected to serve three year terms as Trustees.

## **Mausoleum Stained Glass Illumination**



Last year, the Friends of the Cemetery funded the major restoration of our c.1921 Spring Grove mausoleum's stained glass windows. The windows were painstakingly removed and taken to the studios of Whitney Glass in Cleveland where they were completely taken apart and re-leaded, then cleaned, repaired and reglazed before being reinstalled at the mausoleum. The windows are lovely works of art and since the beauty of stained glass windows is greatly enhanced when illuminated by light,

the decision was made to run electricity into the building in order to incandesce the windows at night with a soft glow. This project was completed by Ron Pfaff Electric in October and was funded by the Friends of the Cemetery. The windows are softly lit in the evenings and early mornings. If you haven't yet seen them, please take the time some evening to drive by the cemetery on Rt. 18. An additional benefit to having electricity in the mausoleum is that the City will have the means to run equipment for the cleaning and maintenance of the building.

# Entry Gate Repairs

**A**fter the thaw last winter, it was observed that the mortar on the Spring Grove Entry Gate was failing, especially at the keystone point of the structure. It was apparent that repair of the keystone had to be done immediately. The City was willing to fund the \$950 estimated to repair the keystone, but was going to put off the repair of the rest of the archway until a later date. The Friends of the Cemetery stepped forward and agreed to fund the remaining \$5,500 of the total tuckpoint project. In May, Rocco Masonry was contracted to do the masonry work on the arch. The masons ground out the deteriorating and cracked joints and filled the voids with new mortar to match the existing mortar. Rocco Masonry has experience working at Spring Grove as they tuckpointed the chapel when the Friends funded the restoration of the chapel in 2009. The Friends are committed to the preservation and maintenance of our historic structures at Spring Grove Cemetery.

## Dr. Streett

**H**arry Streett was born in Jarrettsville, Maryland in 1871. After completing his elementary school days, he attended Baltimore City College and then the Baltimore Medical College where he graduated in 1894. He interned at Maryland General Hospital for one year and then taught pathology at the college for two years before opening a medical office in Baltimore where he practiced until July 1898 when he entered the army. Dr. Streett served during the Spanish-American War as a first lieutenant in the medical corps in Puerto Rico under General Nelson A. Miles' command from 1898-1899. After his discharge from the army, he returned to Maryland General Hospital for a short time before moving to Litchfield, Ohio in 1900 where he practiced for the next 45 years! It is said that he doctored everyone in the Litchfield/Chatham/York Township area – from birthing babies, setting bones, tending the sick and infirmed to comforting the dying. He ran a medical office out of his house, but most of his doctoring was done via house calls to which he always arrived in his Packard automobile (he always drove a Packard).

Dr. Streett was instrumental in establishing the hospital at Lodi, Ohio and was always a loyal supporter of the institution, serving on the Board of Directors and as its Chair. His portrait hung on the wall at Lodi Community Hospital until just recently



when the hospital was acquired by Akron General. He was also a member of the Congregational church and a 32nd degree Mason.

He joined the Litchfield Masonic Lodge in 1900. Service to his community, service to his country and his family certainly describe his life! When his brother passed away, leaving two daughters, Mary and Helen, Dr. Streett and his wife took the girls in and raised them to adulthood. Both Mary and Helen carried on Dr. Streett's medical legacy by becoming nurses.

Dr. Streett retired from the practice of medicine in 1945. He only lived five years beyond his retirement. His February, 1950 obituary begins, "Dr. Harry Streett, one of Medina County's best loved and most respected physicians and citizens passed away

at Lodi Hospital Tuesday evening following a severe heart attack suffered earlier in the day." He was 78 years old. He and his wife, Dora, are interred in the mausoleum at Spring Grove Cemetery. Other relatives of Dr. Streett buried at Spring Grove include his son, Harry, and Harry's wife, Edna and Dr. Streett's niece, Mary E. Streett Williams and his nephew, John Thomas Streett.

*Thanks to Helen Streett and Beth Streett Cassella for providing memories and information for this article! Dr. Street was Helen Streett's husband's uncle and Beth Streett Cassella's great uncle. Dr. Streett was also the attending physician at Helen's birth and at the birth of her siblings.*

# *Friends of the Cemetery*

## MEMBERSHIP LISTING - DECEMBER 2015

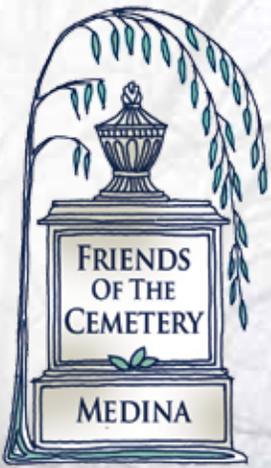
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Dean Bowman	Charles C. Griesinger **	Charles & Teresa Merkle	Joseph Thompson
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Nancy Brintnall	Macy Hallock Family	Pat Morgan	Ruth Tubbs
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\* designates new member  
\*\* designates life-time member

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David & Gloria Brown	Marliese Leggett	Emogene Neuman-Eriksson	Murray & Susan Van Epp

*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

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