



FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

Issue 41

Medina, Ohio

December 2019

TREE STONE MARKERS

By Paul Wood

If you have ever walked through Spring Grove Cemetery you've probably noticed the "tree stone" grave markers that are styled like a pile of logs or upright tree stump. Both types of markers are located at Spring Grove. If you are like me, you've wondered if the person or family was in the lumber business or just had an affinity for trees. While recently touring a cemetery in Asheville, NC, I saw the same type "tree stone" markers as we have at Spring Grove and so went up to closely inspect them and noticed an inscription that read, "Woodman of the World." Naturally, I Googled that information right then and there and had my answer.

A company called Modern Woodman of America out of Rock Island, Illinois offered some sort of tree stone grave marker through their fraternal insurance group. Eventually, the founder of Modern Woodman splintered off from that group and founded Woodman of the World in Omaha, Nebraska. In 1890 and for the next ten years, WOW offered the so called "tree stone markers" at no cost to their members. After 1900, they charged \$100 for the marker, but that ended in 1920 as costs rose. Upon further research, I found that Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward also offered tree stone markers in their respective catalogs. It was noted that with the pile of logs style grave stone, the number of logs in the pile would often represent the number of children of the deceased. To tell if the tree stone marker is Modern Woodman or Woodman of the World, just look for their insignia carved into the stone or a medal attached to the stone. If there is no notation, it was probably from Sears or Montgomery Ward.

What an interesting and fun fact about our beautiful cemetery!



Friends of the Cemetery

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Medina, Ohio 44256

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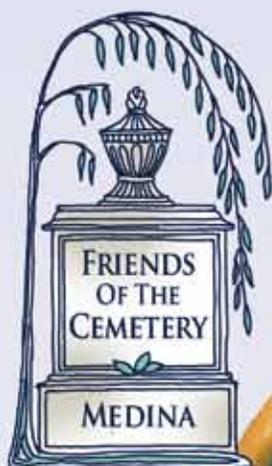
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FOC Annual Members Meeting

On September 8, 2019, Friends of the Cemetery members were invited to meet with FOC Board members to review Friends projects over the 2018-2019 year and to hear about exciting future project planning. We appreciate all our members and look forward each September to the opportunity of meeting with members who attend. Friends' past year's projects include Spring Grove historic structures preservation, partnering with the City on Spring Grove drainage, perennial garden and lake maintenance, public relations/marketing focus, tree acquisition, planting and maintenance, and our continued partnership with the City Cemetery Commission and Administration. A grand total of \$102,635, including operating costs, was funded by Friends of the Cemetery from September 2018 – September 2019. Our 2020 budget is designed to continue and expand some of these projects as well as launch several new ones this next year.



We want to thank and acknowledge those volunteers who assisted in removing the tattered Memorial Day flags from veterans' graves ahead of our November snow and those who placed endowment Christmas wreaths on graves in the snow at Spring Grove. With 34-acres to cover, both jobs were a work-out! We know the cemetery staff also appreciated your help very much. Thank you Founders Way North Historic Neighborhood Association and Medina County Historical Society! Thanks, too, FOC Trustees Paul Wood, Hank Waite, Karen Thorn and, Karen's husband, Greg.

Mark Your Calendars!

Plans are being made for another Friends-sponsored outing to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument at Public Square in downtown Cleveland on Saturday, May 30, 2020. Dedicated in 1894, the 125' monument commemorates the sacrifices of soldiers and sailors from Cuyahoga County during the Civil War.

Our visit will include a guided tour of the interior of the monument and a public Memorial Day observance at the monument (May 30 is the traditional date of Memorial Day). Also on this trip, we plan to visit another historic Cleveland location (more on that later!) and, of course, have lunch downtown too. Details will be sent to our members in the spring. If you haven't yet joined the Friends, do so soon to be included in our mail-out about our special events.

Fall and Winter Decorations

The regulations for Spring Grove Cemetery call for fall decorations to be removed by December 15 and Winter Decorations removed by March 15. On or after those dates, cemetery staff will remove any remaining and/or unsightly decorations.

Spring Grove Drainage Project

This past spring the Friends contracted with Cunningham & Associates, Inc., Civil Engineering & Surveying, to research existing historical records and perform a field survey to prepare a storm sewer survey and evaluate Spring Grove drainage issues. From this surveying and engineering analysis, the City was able to address and remediate, in-house, a number of drainage problems at Spring Grove, but more arduous drainage work remains. So,

the Friends of the Cemetery entered into a contract this fall with Cunningham & Associates, Inc., to prepare an existing conditions plan, construction improvement plan and construction costs estimate to address the drainage problems in Sections 11 & 12 and the nearby corners of Section 1, 16 & 18 (this area is located near the mausoleum along Rt. 18). Once that document is in hand, the Friends will hire a contractor to do the work.

Historical Walk By Cynthia Szunyog

The annual Friends of the Cemetery Historical Walk took place in Spring Grove on August 3 with a large number of people attending. The goal of the Walk Committee, Pat Morgan, Paul Wood and Cynthia Szunyog, is to remember those buried in the cemetery, whether they were important or simply ordinary people, and to make a connection between them and those who live here now. Some of us are already steeped in local history but many attendees are eager to know more about those who preceded them and what their life was like. People new to the community want to acquire a sense of belonging to this place and we enjoy doing research and sharing our memories.

Often, we have speakers who tell stories about their ancestors or have special knowledge. This time Gloria Brown, an authority on the Blake/McDowell family, spoke about R. M. and Elizabeth Blake McDowell and their daughter Bessie McDowell Hewes who lived in the big red house at the end of W. Washington Street which the Medina County Historical Society is purchasing to become a museum. Cynthia Szunyog told about the life of Florence Phillips, respected Medina teacher. Florence was the sister of Tom Phillips who married the daughter of Bessie McDowell Hewes. Tom and Florence grew up in the white house that used to stand where the Franklin Sylvester Library is today and was moved to N. Broadway Street.

Paul Wood told about the tragic life of James Collins which misfortunes were detailed in a Gazette article in 1918. He was severely injured when run over by a truck, committed suicide in the cemetery four years later and is buried there with no gravestone. Paul also spoke about Cornell Starr, a deputy sheriff, and his wife Sally, a Medina teacher, who are interred in the mausoleum. The mausoleum has been restored and is only open on Memorial Day and during cemetery walks.

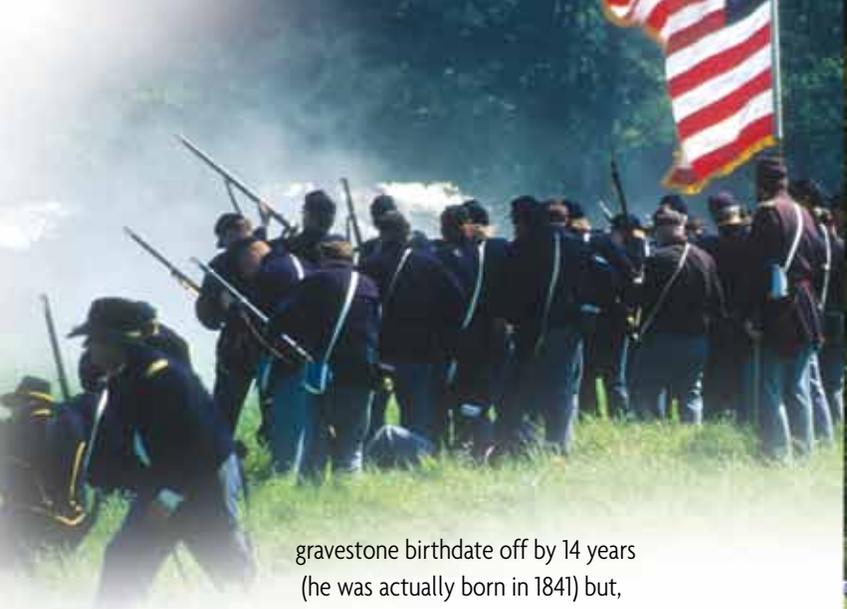
Pat Morgan presented Sophia Huntington Parker whose father purchased land on what is now Huntington Street in 1834. When Sophia died in 1903, her will stipulated that her land go to an organization that would build a home for elderly women. Eventually, after many arguments in Court, the property was awarded to the Pythian Sisters and the home was finished in 1918, opened two years later and only closed in 2000. Sophia's house was just recently moved to a nearby lot so that it can be preserved and restored.

You will note that we were able to include stories about five women, although women are not well recorded in local history, and we mentioned three historic houses that have been or are being moved and preserved.



Civil War I.D. Update

FOC Trustee, Paul Wood, continues the tedious task of identifying Civil War veterans buried at Spring Grove Cemetery. His work began in the summer of 2018 when the Friends set out to place markers on Civil War veterans' graves for the Spring Grove Civil War Encampment. While locating these Civil War gravestones, FOC volunteers noted several discrepancies in the records we had, as well as a number of Civil War graves that were not included on our lists. Paul has since made several trips to the Ohio History Museum in Columbus to review lists of Ohio Civil War soldiers on microfilm. These lists were compiled by the WPA in the 1930's. Paul has spent hours cross-checking these documents with the documents we have, followed by walking through Spring Grove, section by section, to cross-check the accuracy of documents vs. grave markers. Some of the challenges he has encountered include cemetery markers that note Civil War service, but no documentation in state records to confirm service and, misspelled names and/or transposed numbers since documents from the 1800's were all handwritten. In one particular instance, the birthdate of Spring Grove Civil War veteran Asa Ingraham's stone is listed as 1855. Given the birthdate on the stone, Asa would have only been about 6 years old when he enlisted in 1861. Furthermore, Asa's date of death on his gravestone is etched as 1928, but upon further research, it was discovered that not only is Asa's



gravestone birthdate off by 14 years (he was actually born in 1841) but, his date of death was actually 1920, not 1928 as etched on the stone. It seems incredible to us living in the 21st century that such mistakes "etched in stone" could have been made and not corrected, but this is not an unusual find for historians and genealogists. Paul has been meeting to compare notes with Medina County Historical Society's Judith Parrish who has spent a couple years researching for the Society's "Save the Soldiers" campaign to restore photos of and identify Medina County Civil War soldiers. We thank Paul for his dedication to this project and look forward to the day when each and every Civil War veteran's grave at Spring Grove and, eventually, Old Town Graveyard are identified and marked.

Lakeview Cemetery Tour

The October 5 Friends tour to Cleveland's Lake View Cemetery was a great success! Fifty folks enjoyed a glorious, sunny N.E. Ohio autumn day at the Lake View grounds, with presentations at the President Garfield Memorial and magnificent Wade Chapel. The day was topped off with a delicious lunch at Cleveland's famous Hofbrauhaus restaurant that was enjoyed by all. Special thanks go to Dottie Nemec, FOC member and public relations coordinator, for her work in planning and bringing the trip together!





Spring Grove Arboretum

The Friends have begun to explore the creation of an arboretum at Spring Grove Cemetery. Definitions of “arboretum” include: “a collection of trees,” “outdoor living tree museum,” a place where trees and plants are grown to be studied or seen by the public,” “trees grown with a purpose.”

At its inception in 1884, Spring Grove was designed after the “rural cemetery movement” or “garden cemetery movement.” The Friends mission has been and remains the historic preservation, beautification and maintenance of Spring Grove and Old Town Graveyard.

Spring Grove is a fine example of an “urban forest” (a forest or a collection of trees that grow within a city, town or a suburb) and also serves as a fine example of a public garden (an institution

that maintains collections of plants for the purposes of public education and enjoyment).

Since 1997, the Friends of the Cemetery have invested thousands upon thousands of dollars funding the maintenance of cemetery trees and funding the purchase and planting of trees and plant material throughout Spring Grove Cemetery.

To establish an arboretum at Spring Grove would greatly enhance what already exists there. We have a fine, diverse collection of trees and plants and already have in place a new tree and maintenance program that adds to the collection yearly. The arboretum would serve as an educational destination and be the first and only arboretum in Medina County.

We will keep you updated as this exciting new project progresses.

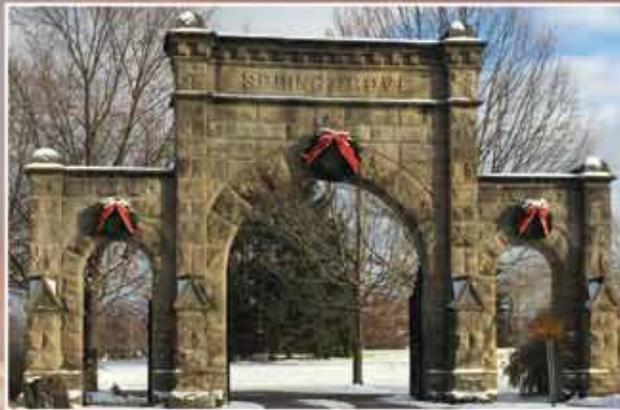
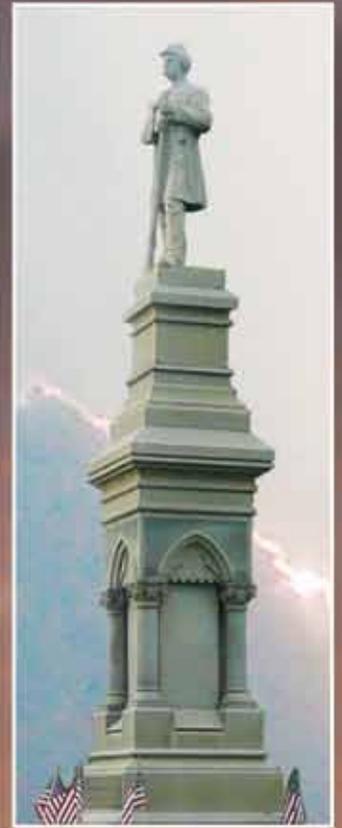
Columbarium Wall Construction

The construction of the new columbarium wall has continued to be delayed and, unfortunately, has not yet been started. The City of Medina is funding and overseeing the project which has been delayed for over a year due to the customized sizing and color of the niches. The Sexton continues to compile a waiting list of niche buyers for the new wall, so contact him at 330-722-9056 if

you would like to reserve a place. The new wall will be located at the southeast corner of the Letha E. House lake on the edge of the Pat Mears memorial garden. The cost is \$1,350 per niche in the top row, \$1,250 per niche in the middle row and \$1,150 per niche on the bottom row. Opening and closing per each interment is \$250. Niche face engraving is actual cost determined by the monument company.

Historic Structures Preservation

The 2018 Spring Grove Master Plan includes an historic structure maintenance plan for the Spring Grove chapel, mausoleum, soldiers' monument and carriage entry gate. In October, the Friends hired restoration architects from the Perspectus architectural firm in Cleveland to assess each historic structure to prioritize current maintenance issues. The preservation of these structures ranks high on our priority list and we look forward to the report from Perspectus so that we may quickly address any maintenance issues.



Friends of the Cemetery

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 * designates new member
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 ◊ designates corporate member

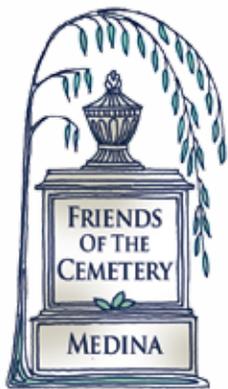
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New Lifetime Members since May 2019:

David J. Gill
 Janet Moxley
 Jim Shields

If 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



Memberships are available as follows:

Senior _____	\$10.00	Supporting _____	\$100.00
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Contributing _____	\$50.00	Corporate _____	\$1,000.00

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