ROCHESTER HISTORY
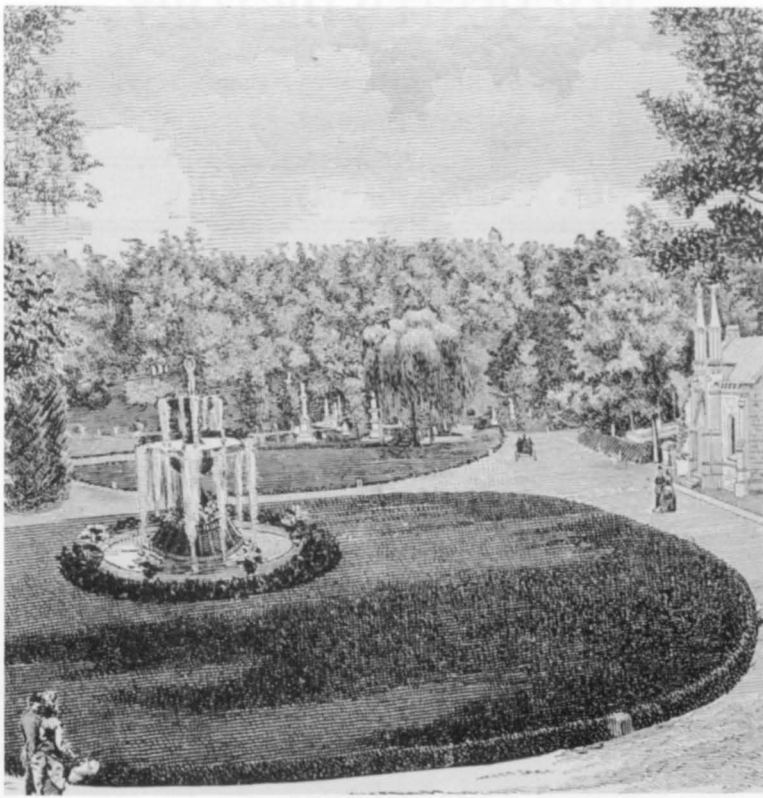
Sleepers' City

The Sesquicentennial History
of Mt. Hope Cemetery

*by W. Stephen Thomas and
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Above: The park atmosphere drew hundreds of people to Mt. Hope Cemetery where they enjoyed a stroll among the gardens, the Florentine fountain and monuments. The chapel is on the right. Engraving by Ramsdell.

Cover: Gazebo and Chapel at Mt. Hope Cemetery built in 1872. Photograph from the collection of Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum.

View from Mt. Hope Cemetery looking northwest.

Outgrowing the Pioneer Cemeteries

When Rochester was settled in 1812, family plots and small cemeteries were adequate to lay to rest the few pioneers that died here. But Rochester grew quickly. Its location in a rich agricultural region with water power to run its industries and transportation facilities to ship its goods by lake and canal, made Rochester one of America's first boom towns, growing from a village of 1,000 in 1817 to a city of 10,000 in 1834.

Such rapid growth created problems such as public health and encroachment on existing cemeteries. All over the nation, in cities more populated than Rochester, crowded burial grounds were becoming a danger to public health and many feared that the burial of victims of cholera, yellow fever and other communicable diseases within the city was dangerous.

The planning of Mt. Hope Cemetery came at a time when many northeastern cities were developing rural cemeteries. The Grove Street Cemetery (then the New Burying Ground) at New Haven, Connecticut, was first conceived by Connecticut Senator James

Hillhouse in 1796 as a "sacred and inviolable" burying ground. Other New Haven residents, hoping to protect their family burials after their own deaths joined with Hillhouse in what became a popular movement toward rural cemeteries.

Although New Haven initiated the movement, it was Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Boston that became the prototype of the new rural cemetery. Mt. Auburn was not only in a rural setting, the proceeds of its non-profit sales of cemetery plots were spent entirely on maintenance and improvements in the cemetery. Other cemetery associations adopted its plan; Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia (1836), Green Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn (1838) and Mt. Hope Cemetery (1838) in Rochester. Rochester was the first municipality to sponsor a rural cemetery and by the time land was purchased, the need for larger burial grounds was pressing.

Pioneer Cemeteries

Rochester's oldest cemetery was at King's Landing, now Hanford's Landing on Lake Avenue opposite Kodak Park. Soon after the Kings settled at the Lower Falls landing in the 1790s, "Genesee fever" killed several family members and the first cemetery was established. The Hanford brothers bought the Landing a few years later and some of their family members are buried there, too. Though the exact gravesites have been lost, it is known that a number of Revolutionary War veterans were also buried there. This cemetery can be seen today from Lake Avenue near Driving Park.

A burial ground nearly as old as Hanford's Landing Cemetery, The Rapids Cemetery, was established near the present day Brooks Avenue and Genesee Street. This served the settlement of "Castletown," at the fording place used by pioneers before the Main Street bridge was built in 1812.

Charlotte, settled before Rochester, established the Charlotte Cemetery, which still holds the remains of the famous daredevil Sam Patch. His leap from the Upper Falls on Friday, November 13th, 1829, ended in tragedy. His body was recovered the following spring from under the ice at the mouth of the river not far from his final resting place.

The Brighton Village cemetery at Hoyt Place, while not as old as these earlier mentioned cemeteries, is still active and holds the remains of William Bloss, abolitionist and temperance advocate.

Carved from the wilderness, Rochester had no established cemeteries that were a fitting memorial for the passing pioneers and numerous children carried off by illness. The first cemetery on the One Hundred Acre Tract was established on land donated by Nathaniel Rochester, William Fitzhugh and Charles Carroll. It was on Sophia (Plymouth Avenue) Street north of Spring Street, which at that time bordered on the wilderness. Edwin Scrantom recalled that his mother said, "At last we have a nice grave yard." For several nights after the first burial a night watch was kept for fear wolves might uncover the young wife of Dr. Gibbs.

A proper burial place was important to the early settlers but its exact nature was not agreed upon. The rapid growth of the village required larger burial grounds, so in 1821 the half-acre Sophia Street Cemetery was exchanged for a three- and -one-half acre tract on Buffalo (now Main Street West) Street. This West Burying Ground, earlier owned by Roswell Hart, was the first resting place of Col. Nathaniel Rochester who died in 1831. Expansion prompted the Common Council in 1859 to order the removal of interments from the West Burying Ground to Mt. Hope Cemetery to make way for a city hospital, now know as Rochester General Hospital.

In 1821 the Cherry Street, or East Avenue, Cemetery was laid out between Cherry (Gibbs) and Scio Streets and East Avenue and Main Street. Four years later burials were moved to the East Burying Ground on the state road to Pittsford (Monroe Avenue) near Alexander Street. The land was apparently already an informal cemetery owned by Charles Bixby. In 1872 the area was appropriated for the public schools, so these burials were removed to Mt. Hope Cemetery, making a third resting place for pioneers first buried on Cherry Street.

In *Rochester: A Story Historical* (1884), Jane Marsh Parker recorded Mrs. William Hanford's reminiscence of the East Burying Ground:

> *When they first began burying there, wolves howled in the woods to the south and wild foxes were plenty... Funerals did not cost much... A neighbor would dig a grave and possibly, preach the sermon. Daddy Harkins dug many of the graves.*

Revolutionary Hill the way it was proposed to appear. From Rochester: A Story Historical by Jane Marsh Parker.

Pine or cherry coffins were good enough for anybody and many a time I have seen a purse made up for the new grave, to pay the doctor's bill or other expenses.

There were once several cemeteries that are now either abandoned or effaced. Two of the largest of these are the early Catholic cemeteries, associated with the parishes of St. Patrick's and St. Boniface's Churches and located on either side of Clinton Avenue South in the Pinnacle Hills. These cemeteries were abandoned at the urging of Bishop Bernard McQuaid, for whom Holy Sepulchre Cemetery was a project of special significance. All burials in the two cemeteries were eventually moved to Holy Sepulchre. There was once a small German Catholic cemetery on Goodman Street south of the railroad tracks. Little is known about a pioneer cemetery once located near the intersection of Norton Street and St. Paul Boulevard.

Little is known either about two small cemeteries once located on the east side of Mt. Hope Avenue opposite the present grounds of Mt. Hope Cemetery; the Friends (Quaker) Burying Ground and the Brighton Cemetery (not the Brighton Village Cemetery at Hoyt

Place). The Commissioners of Mt. Hope assumed control of both in the nineteenth century, removed the burials to Mt. Hope and sold the land.

In 1984, the burial ground of more than a thousand people was accidently unearthed in what may be the largest "forgotton" cemetery in the city. The Almshouse Burial Ground in Highland Park south may have opened as early as the 1820's with the founding of the county poorhouse and continued until about 1863, when records at Mt. Hope Cemetery show that the paupers' burials began to be made there. The 296 burials removed from this site are expected to be reburied at Mt. Hope.

Now the resting place of pioneers who died long before the cemetery opened, Mt. Hope is among the most historic spots in the city. But deciding upon a location for the city's cemetery was not simple.

A Site For a Rural Cemetery

Considerable discussion and argument arose about the most suitable location for a new cemetery. The grounds had to be accessible, readily available and permanently held, which meant that it had to be distant enough from the city to allow for expansion. Distance was desirable, too, because of the fear of communicable disease. A cholera epidemic in 1832 and again in 1834 sickened thousands and killed well over a hundred people. In 1835 typhus broke out. Planning the cemetery soon after these deadly outbreaks made Rochesterians mindful of the danger of contaminated well water and soil. People were not then unaware that the absence of unpolluted water was the major cause of epidemics.

With these criteria, several sites, including the west shore of Irondequoit Bay were considered before Silas Andrews' fifty-acre tract on the east side of the Genesee River south of the city was agreed upon. Alderman David Scoville called for the formation of a committee on August 24, 1836 and Mayor Abraham M. Schermerhorn appointed Scoville, Manley Woodbury and Warham Whitney to examine the site.

The Andrews property was accepted by the Common Council after a public hearing. The Council purchased the property for

$5,386 and on December 27th, 1836, approved the issue of the ten-year city bonds in the amount of $8,000 to be used for improvements. Though many favored the new site, Jane Marsh Parker wrote "...and loud was the outcry against municipal extravagance and folly from many now sleeping where they declared the dead could never have a decent burial." Not only the expense, but the location so near a main road upset people concerned about the spread of disease.

Some inkling of the original appearance of the cemetery grounds can be gathered from the dedicatory address given on October 2, 1838, by the Rev. Pharcellus Church, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rochester.

> *At few points on the surface of the globe has nature been more liberal... rural scenery, ponds, undulating surface uniting features both of beauty and sublimity that may be easily cleared and made to present a smooth and shining surface expanse of molten silver, a dry and light soil peculiarly favorable alike to the opening of graves and the preservation of them from the intrusion of water, and a location retired and yet sufficiently contiguous to our city are some of the advantages which conspire to make Mt. Hope one of the most inviting cemeteries in the world. Good judges who have visited both, pronounce its scenery even more bold and picturesque, than that of the celebrated Mount Auburn...*

Rochesterians recognized that natural beauty formed by glaciers thousands of years ago needed little tending to surpass the beauty of other more famous places. Nearly thirty years after the cemetery opened the *Union and Advertiser* commented:

> *Rochester has at Mt. Hope the most beautiful cemetery in the United States. It does not contain such costly monuments as Green Wood and Mount Auburn or those evidences of wealth which might be looked for in the burial places of the great cities..., but in natural beauty, hill and valley, foliage, elevation and surroundings, together with its proximity, it has no rival... Mt. Hope is gradually improving under the strokes of art which at a small cost upon nature can make so favorable an impression and it is receiving new monuments and tablets from year to year which add much to its beauty. No expenditure upon marble and stone in a cemetery can be beautiful if the natural position is not good.*

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John McConnell was appointed by Council in January of 1837 to lay out the grounds. Council passed an ordinance containing six provisions to regulate the burial of the dead and to protect public cemeteries.

Finally, an organizational plan for the new cemetery was drawn up by a committee of five: Mayor Elisha Johnson, Joseph Strong, Elias Pond, Isaac Marsh and city surveyor Silas Cornell. William Peck, the historian, applauded Cornell for his capability as a landscape architect and for his habit of disturbing the natural contours of the grounds as little as possible.

There is no question that Mount Auburn was held up as a worthy model to Rochester's citizens. Not only did Rev. Church refer to it in his dedicatory speech, but Mayor Johnson said in his address to the Council, "This (Mt. Hope),... will be ...highly creditable to the place, and may with propriety be regarded the Mount Auburn of the city."

Silas Cornell even wanted to name the city's cemetery Mount Auburn, but William F. Peck in a biography of the mayor credited Mayor Johnson for suggesting the name Mt. Hope. The story most commonly accepted for the origin of that name is contained in separate accounts given by Jonathan Child and Jane Marsh Parker. They said that William Wilson, a laborer, persisted in sending bills to the City Treasurer for work completed at Mt. Hope. The name appeared as well in resolution to forbid hunting in the cemetery referred to as Mt. Hope five months before its dedication.

Henry O'Reilly, too, was influenced by the design of Mount Auburn and actively promoted it through the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*, which he edited, and through *Sketches of Rochester* (1838), the first history of the city. But Rochester was fortunate in its selection of the site, for at Mt. Hope the topography, moraines and kettles left by the glacier, naturally provided the Victorian landscaping so successful at Mount Auburn. In his dedication, Rev. Church expressed the view that was soon the dominant opinion of the residents; "To what object can a portion of our gains be more worthily devoted than to the provision of a resort so rural, so picturesque, so impressive, and yet so lovely and beautiful as this may be made."

Suffragists bearing flags stand in ceremony near the Florentine fountain at Mt. Hope Cemetery in the early 1900's. Photograph from the Stone collection at the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

Reflection of the City's Past

The history of Rochester from a wilderness to the present time is written in the lives of those buried at the 150-year-old cemetery. The remains of hundreds of pioneers in early cemeteries threatened by the expanding city were moved to Mt. Hope making many of the burials older than the cemetery itself and reaching far beyond its 150 years in the history it now tells.

Sometimes on reading the biography of one of the people, there is at least a twinge of sorrow that someone we will never know has passed from us. Writers, inventors, civic leaders, editors, pioneer aviators, explorers and mechanics, laborers and housewives; a mix of people not unlike the living city, all now lie still at Mt. Hope. But we learn to appreciate them and their contributions and perhaps we can find a model within their lives when we learn more about those who lived before us.

A survey of many of the more than 325,000 burials at Mt. Hope suggests the richness of the lives these people once led, the times in which they lived, and the challenges they once met.

Susan B. Anthony lies in the family plot near the sister with whom she lived until her death in 1906 at the age of eighty-six. She

devoted her life to universal suffrage. First speaking out for temperance, she soon began giving speeches against slavery in a time when most women were not accepted as public speakers. When the Civil War ended and black men were granted the right to vote, she continued the struggle to win suffrage for women. She died twelve years before the movement she long headed succeeded, but not before convincing the president of the University of Rochester to accept women as students.

Frederick Douglass, with whom Anthony campaigned for abolition and suffrage, lies not far from her. He became an internationally known speaker, edited the *North Star, later called Frederick Douglass' Paper*, and served as American minister to Haiti. A statue of him now stands at the Highland Park bowl not far from his former home on South Avenue. Amy and Isaac Post and Samuel D. Porter, fellow abolitionists, all close friends of Douglass, now lie in the cemetery.

John J. Bausch and Henry Lomb, who together founded Bausch & Lomb Company, lie in Mt. Hope. James Cutler, architect and inventor of the Cutler mail chute that was used in skyscrapers all over the country, is buried here. Cutler served as Rochester's mayor from 1904 to 1908. Other architects are buried here too, people like Gordon Kaelber and Leonard Waasdorp, who built the Rochester Public Library and A.J. & J. Foster Warner, both of whom designed buildings at Mr. Hope.

There are building contractors like Josiah Bissell, Jr., who built the Erie Canal aqueduct, Hiram Edgerton and George W. Aldrich both of whom served as mayors; and bridge builders like Frank McKibben and John Ferris Alden. Gideon Cobb started the first brick factory in Rochester at Cobb's Hill. Many of the buildings in the village were built with bricks made in his factory.

James Cunningham and Michael Filon manufactured carriages; George Selden experimented with the internal combustion engine for automobiles. Just as cars were becoming commonplace on our roads, aviation pioneers like Ray Hylan, Russell Holderman, Fred Eells, Charles Niles and Blanche Scott were introducing Rochester to a new form of transportation with daring flights in area fields and improvements on engines and body design.

George Ellwanger is here. He and Patrick Barry (buried at Holy Sepulchre) developed the largest nursery in the country. Called Mt. Hope Nursery, it was across Mt. Hope Avenue from the cemetery. These men ran the first horse-drawn street car to enable visitors to Mt. Hope to visit their nursery. In 1847 they donated 150 young

Soldiers fire a salute at G.A.R. (Grand Army of t
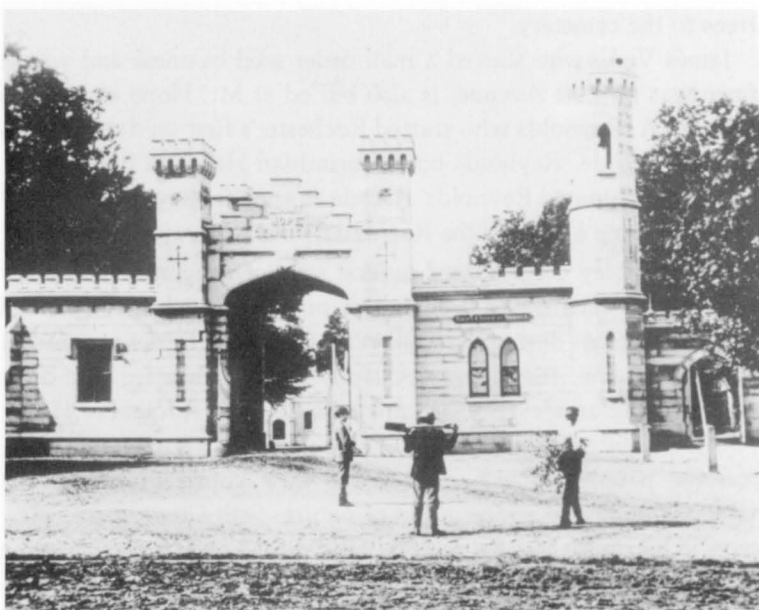*Mt. Hope Cemetery. Photograph from S*

*the Republic) funeral ceremony near the chapel at
St. John Fisher College, Lavery Library.*

Proposed landscape of Mt. Hope Cemetery in 1838. Photograph from History of Monroe County *by W.H. McIntosh.*

The first entrance to Mt. Hope Cemetery. From Ballou's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion, December 15, 1855

The second cemetery gate used from 1859 to 1874.

The gate and gatehouse office built by A.J. Warner, architect, in 1874. Photograph from History of Monroe County by W.H. McIntosh.

trees to the cemetery.

James Vick, who started a mail order seed business and whose farm was on East Avenue, is also buried at Mt. Hope along with William A. Reynolds who started Rochester's first seed store in his father's Arcade. Reynolds built Corinthian Hall and his brother, Mortimer, donated Reynolds' Arcade to support Reynolds Library which became a part of the Rochester Public Library.

Hiram Sibley consolidated several smaller telegraph companies into the Western Union Telegraph Company which greatly aided communications during the Civil War. George B. Selden invented a gasoline engine, tested it successfully and made a fortune on it before losing an eleven year patent battle with automaker Henry Ford.

Some people are remembered for their contributions to our understanding and appreciation of nature. Seth Green spent many days in his youth playing with Indians at the Lower Falls. There he observed the behavior of salmon. His observations developed into the scientific study and propagation of fish. He restored shad to the Connecticut River and served as superintendent of the the New York Fisheries. The fish were used for stocking ponds. Henry A. Ward traveled all over the world collecting specimens of plants and animals that were used in laboratories and classes and sold from Ward's Natural Science Establishment. He stuffed Jumbo, the famous 12-foot elephant exhibited by P.T. Barnum's circus in the late 1800s. But one who contributed more to our understanding of early man than any other at Mt. Hope is Lewis Henry Morgan, the father of anthropology. His books, *League of the Iroquois* and *Systems of Consanguinity* were classics in the 1850s and 1870s when they were published.

Alexander Millener served as General George Washington's drummer boy in the Revolutionary Army. For years in later life he marched in Fourth of July parades through the streets of Rochester beating his drum as he had in battle. His drum is now preserved by the Daughters of the American Revolution. One hundred- and five-year-old Millener died in 1865, the year the country learned that it would survive as the nation he had helped to create. James Hard, who fought in the Civil War, lived to be 111 years old. He paraded with soldiers in World War II and reminded people of an earlier period in our nation's history.

Many pioneer burials were relocated to Mt. Hope at various times. Editorials and letters to the editor aired the opinions of residents, some of whom thought the dead should be among the liv-

ing where they would be reminders to friends and relatives; but others thought cemeteries should be in serene locations, away from the bustle of city life and the temptation of vandals. This was certainly foremost in the minds of those who made the decision to locate the city cemetery at Mt. Hope. Among those pioneers reburied at Mt. Hope are Col. Nathaniel Rochester, founder of the city of Rochester, who was buried in 1831 at the West Burying Ground on the Portland Avenue grounds of Rochester General Hospital and relocated to Mt. Hope in the 1850s. Matthew Brown, too, who with his brother, Francis, founded Frankfort and the powerful Brown's Race, is buried there. Frankfort was annexed by Rochester in 1817, making Rochester a powerful industrial village by the addition of Brown's Race.

Some of Rocheter's early bankers, Levi Ward, Freeman Clarke, Daniel Powers, Elisha Strong and Charles Upton lie there. Artists Grove Gilbert and Paul Hinds and authors Henry O'Reilly, Jane Marsh Parker and Adelaide Crapsey represent the creative arts.

The dormant talents of a population nearly equal to the city, now challenge the living to greater accomplishments.

Developing Mt. Hope

William Carter was buried at Mt. Hope two months before it officially opened on October 2, 1838 and by the cemetery's dedication date, Common Council had already published an ordinance called, "To regulate the Burial of the Dead and the Protection of Public Cemeteries." The ordinance forbade the interment of human beings anywhere in the city except within city cemeteries. It further provided for the cemetery sexton to oversee the maintenance of the burial grounds and the adherence to ordinances. Sextons kept records of the burial lots, names of the lot owners and dates of purchase. Only the sexton could authorize the digging of graves and the erection of markers and stones. Jane Marsh Parker wrote that church sextons began to dig the graves of members of their own congregation, which sometimes resulted in the appropriation of a grave lot without payment. The disorder ended, she said, when the funeral directors arrived.

In January of 1837, John McConnell was authorized by the Common Council's cemetery committee to develop a preliminary plan for development. The committee was composed of Elias Pond, Joseph Strong, Isaac F. Mack, Mayor Elisha Johnson and city

surveyor Silas Cornell. Already there was a strong public interest in the development of the city's cemetery. A small association of future lot owners interested in improvements that would add to the cemetery's attractiveness formed when the early plans were being made. The association was made up of Henry O'Reilly, Micah Brooks, John Allen, Luther Tucker, John Hawks, Lewis Selye and Amon Bronson. O'Reilly, appointed leader by the association, chose the nortern Delta Tract for development (now called Section G), because it was bordered on the southern edge by the Indian Trail and therefore accessible. O'Reilly became one of the cemetery's strongest advocates, mentioning its model, Mount Auburn, five times in his 1838 book, *Sketches of Rochester.*

But creating and maintaining a secluded cemetery for the reverent and reflective was not without difficulty in the early years.

Controversy developed over cemetery management and landscaping. In 1865, the Mt. Hope Cemetery committee protested the "utilitarian" management of the cemetery under superintendent George D. Stillson. The *Union and Advertiser* reported April 8 that the superintendent cut wood from the hillsides and graded hills in order to make more room for burial. "Judging by his work, he has not the least idea of the beautiful and the romantic in the ...cemetery," the paper said.

But in time, Superintendent Stillson's management was appreciated. After sixteen years as superintendent, Jane Marsh Parker wrote in *Rochester: A Story Historical:*

> *He gave to Mt. Hope the benefit of his eminent skill as a civil engineer and his experience in landscape gardening. The demands upon the genuine heroism of the keeper of Mt. Hope are not infrequent, and there are few places where nerve, decision and a clear eye are more indispensible, whether in hunting down the alleged ghost that occasionally terrifies the workmen, ejecting a troublesome trespasser, anticipating grave robbers, or in doing what Mr. Stillson is known to have done for those fearing their dead might be buried alive, visiting the coffin during the night in the warm chapel where it was permitted to remain. He was equal to every emergency..."*

Over the years, numerous groups sponsored sections of the cemetery: Home of the Friendless, Rochester German Benevolent Society, Rochester Orphan Society, New Scottish Burial Plot, Western House of Refuge, State Industrial School, Independent

Order of Odd Fellows, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, United Sons of Rochester (recorded as a Colored Association), Rochester Fire Department, University of Rochester, Western New York Institute for Deaf Mutes, Society of Friends, five Jewish congregations, an Episcopal plot, the Meggido Band, and veterans of the Spanish-American War and World War One.

Even in its early years, the natural beauty of Mt. Hope gained wide attention. Horace Greeley, then a young journalist from New York City, wrote in a New York City magazine:

Another 'lion' of Rochester which I have not room to describe as it deserves, is the new cemetery or field of burial belonging to the city and christened Mt. Hope! It is situated on an eminence a mile and a half south of the city, commanding a full view of it, and nearly covered with a natural growth of young wood. The enclosure contains about fifty acres of hill, valley, copse and glade, agreeably diversified, and presenting many situations of natural and quiet beauty... good carriage roads have been formed over a great part of it. Families have selected and purchased their places of burial and commenced with the work of adorning and beautifying them even when they have not been called to use them... On the whole, the cemetery reflects credit on the taste and feeling of the authorities and citizens of Rochester.

The beauty was enhanced by the addition of buildings and landscaping. In 1839, the city built a decorative entrance. In 1863, a Gothic chapel was added to the cemetery entrance. A crematorium designed by J. Foster Warner, son of A.J. Warner, was added to the chapel in 1912. In 1874 the original gatehouse was replaced by the present neo-Romanesque gatehouse designed by A.J. Warner. In 1875 an ornamental fountain centered in the circular drive was cast from iron and a white Moorish Revival gazebo was built near the entrance.

Obelisks, mausoleums and monuments added through the last century and a half make Mt. Hope one of the most beautiful cemeteries in the country. Particularly remarkable are the Carver Monument to celebrate the Transcontinental Railroad, the Firemen's monument, the Weary Pilgrim, the Likly monument and the T.S. Johnston mausoleum.
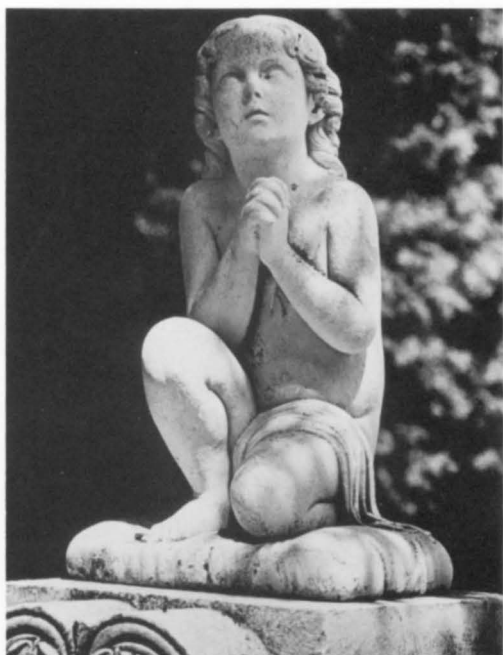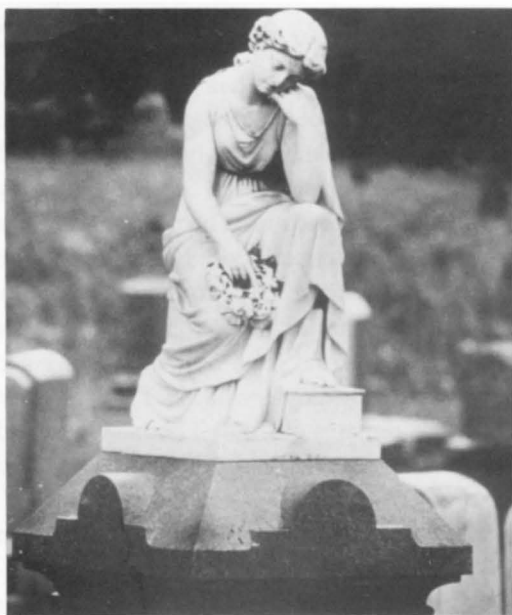
Statue of a praying child marks the grave of Charles A. Jones (1806-1859). Photograph from City Photo Lab.

The Weary Pilgrim monument at the grave of Aaron Ericsson. Photograph from the City Photo Lab.

Statue over the grave of Levi S. Fulton (1819-1895). Photograph from the City Photo Lab.

Monument to the Likly family. Photograph from the City Photo Lab.

A Place in History

Mt. Hope Cemetery has grown with the city and many times it has been the site of the recognition of historical people or historical events. The funerals of Myron Holley and Frederick Douglass, famous abolitionists and of Susan B. Anthony brought hundreds of people to the cemetery. The placing of the monument of G. Hartwell Carver was supervised by Carver himself and serves as a reminder of Carver's role in the historic transcontinental railroad.

In the summer of 1841, the remains of the Revolutionary War soldiers in General John Sullivan's army expedition of 1779 were relocated from Cuylerville, N.Y. to Rochester amidst much fanfare. The remains of Capt. Thomas Boyd and Sgt. Michael Parker, who were captured and tortured, were among them. Thousands witnessed the ceremony and the placement of the small urn, all that was left of the soldiers. An ornate wooden marker was placed on Patriot's Hill over the burial.

A more disturbing event occurred on August 14, 1884, when the remains of Lt. Frederick Kislingbury were secretly disinterred by *Post Express* reporter William Butler who had obtained the family's permission to prove that Kislingbury had been cannibalized while on an Arctic expedition.

Mt. Hope Cemetery Today

Over the last century and a half, the cemetery has grown beyond the present population of the city in the space of 200 acres. Residential neighborhoods, parkland and a university surround the once rural land. Today skiers, bicyclists, joggers and hikers use the winding cemetery roads winter and summer. But the cemetery remains wooded and many varieties of trees, flowers and mushrooms continue to attract naturalists. Songbirds continue to soothe the weary who seek solitude in the privacy of the glacial ravines. Large enough to insulate itself from the intrusion of outside activity, Mt. Hope encourages the living to commune spiritually with the dead and today it remains as its founders intended it to be, a source of comfort and peace to the citizens of Rochester.
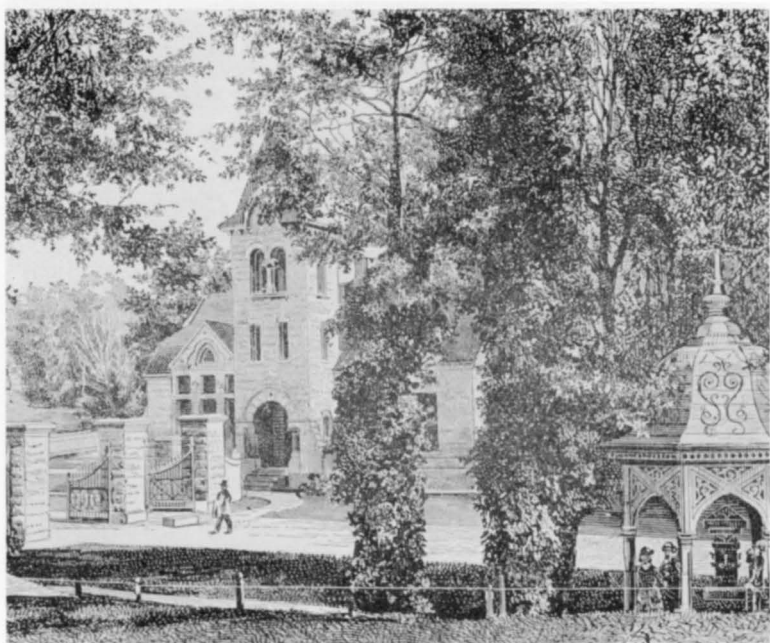
The entrance gate, gatehouse and gazebo from inside Mt. Hope Cemetery.

W. Stephen Thomas is director emeritus of the Rochester Museum and Science Center. He is a trustee of the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery. He frequently guides tours of the cemetery and other points of interest.

Back Cover: Rarely seen illustration of the first gate at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Engraved by V.R. Jackson. From Raymond Scrapbook, 1840s. Photograph from the Office of the City Historian.