TWO MAJOR NEW EXHIBITS AT MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY GATE-HOUSE

by Richard O. Reisem

Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery trustees Jean Czerkas and Marilyn Nolte have prepared two major exhibits now on display in the north gatehouse of the cemetery. One is called “Men of Color! To Arms!” The other is “Within the Sacred Inclosure,” which is about Frederick Douglass and his family, who are buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. The exhibits can be seen on Sunday afternoons from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. through the last Sunday in October. It will also be part of a special program on Saturday, May 10, at 1:30 p.m. when a reenactment of Frederick Douglass’ funeral service will be performed by a group of costumed actors and singers.

Czerkas and Nolte have worked steadily on these exhibits since last September. They obtained historical information and visual materials from 25 historians, Civil War collectors, university libraries, historical societies, and other individuals. Friends trustee Frank Gillespie prepared photographs of related cemetery monuments and historical artifacts.

“Within the Sacred Inclosure.”

On May 10, 1882, Frederick Douglass wrote the following about Mount Hope Cemetery: “We call attention to the fact that within the sacred inclosure (sic) of Mt. Hope, a place well named and well suited to the solemn purpose to which it is devoted, is ground hallowed by affection, adorned by art, beautified by wealth, skill and industry, coupled with holiest memories, where strong men go to meditate and widows and orphans go to weep. We have met to strew choice flowers, with lavish, loyal, loving hands, upon the green graves of our brave young men, who, in the hour of national peril, went forth and nobly gave their lives, all that men can give, to save their country from dismemberment and ruin.”

Jean Czerkas selected the quotation, “Within the Sacred Inclosure,” from Douglass’ tribute to Rochester’s Civil War dead as her theme for the exhibit about the Douglass family. Besides the remains of Frederick Douglass himself, the Douglass plot in Mount Hope contains the bodies of his first wife Anna Murray Douglass, his second wife Helen Pitts Douglass, and his daughter Annie Douglass. In the exhibit, photographs and biographical information are presented on all four of these individuals. There are several documents on view that have never been seen by the public.

“Men of Color! To Arms!”

Marilyn Nolte, who leads a Civil War tour in Mount Hope each season, prepared the “Men of Color! To Arms!” exhibit. It is filled with photographs and historical material about the black regiments that were recruited and trained, and who fought in the Civil War. The exhibit emphasis is on black soldiers and their white officers buried in Mount Hope.

At the beginning of the Civil War in 1861, the Union Army consisted of white troops only. As casualties increased and available white men diminished, it was decided to increase the ranks with all able-bodied men, regardless of color. Black troops, however, did not fight alongside white buddies; they were formed into separate regiments. The United States Colored Troops (U.S.C.T.) was created with white commissioned officers to lead them. Many black men in Monroe County enlisted because of the recruiting efforts of Frederick Douglass. Altogether, 178,985 U.S.C.T. troops fought in the Civil War. They fought in 449 engagements, 34 of which were major Civil War battles. Among the 37,300 black men who died in the war, there were 21 Medal of Honor recipients.

If you have questions or comments about these exhibits, call Jean Czerkas at 585-342-1516 or Marilyn Nolte at 585-621-3529.

Frederick Douglass Commemoration Service.

On Saturday, May 10, 1:30 p.m., the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery will stage a commemoration service for Frederick Douglass. It will be a reenactment of the funeral service given him in Rochester after his death in 1895.
There were funeral services for Frederick Douglass in Washington, D.C., on February 24, 1895, and in Rochester, New York, on February 26, when his body arrived by train. In Rochester, flags were at half-mast, schools were closed, and throngs of people filed by his casket in City Hall and lined the streets as the hearse slowly led the funeral procession to Central Presbyterian Church (now Hochstein Music School).

Five hundred seats in the church were reserved for family, friends, bearers, officials, and special organizations. The public overflowed the remaining seats in the large sanctuary. The service included speeches by Rochester Mayor Merton Lewis, Mary Anthony, two ministers, and hymns sung by a male chorus. It is this service that will be reenacted at the old chapel in the north entrance area on May 10. Please join us for this event which will include male singers from Third Presbyterian Church. There will be a reception at the gatehouse after the service, and you can view the new exhibits on display there.

DEATH AT SEA: THE McCRAKEN FAMILY AND THEIR LOSSES ABOARD STEAMSHIP ARCTIC

by Al Robinson

On a small hill in Section W of Mount Hope Cemetery sits a modest stone obelisk. Two sides of this monument record the names of five children of Gardner and Eunice McCraken. Only two of these children, however, are actually buried in Mount Hope. One is buried in Milwaukee, and two, Lavinia and Carlisle, lie at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean among the remains of the steamship Arctic. The events that led to those deaths on the Arctic shocked our nation.

The McCraken Family

Gardner McCraken was involved in local Rochester politics throughout his life. In 1829, he was a delegate to the Anti-Masonic County Convention. The Anti-Masonic party was a political party founded in Rochester in 1828 as part of an anti-Masonic movement that was growing due to suspicion and dislike of secret societies, including the Freemasons. The party grew rapidly and managed to hold a number of seats in the U.S. Congress until 1834 when many of its members broke away and founded the Whig party. Gardner continued his association with the Whigs, and local newspapers reported his attendance at Whig
every single stone in that whole section is facing east. Christians were often buried with their heads to the east so that they could rise facing in that direction when the day of Resurrection came. The west-facing headstones are probably meant to symbolize the journey west to Wisconsin of the two brothers.

The other three siblings all died in 1854. Tracy died on May 21, at age 42. He is listed on the western face of the family monument but does not have a headstone in the family plot. Lavinia and Carlisle, the last surviving members of their immediate family, died months later on the steamship *Arctic*.

**The First Titanic**

It is hard to overemphasize the importance to the pride of American people in the first few transatlantic steamships. The 1800s saw a growing competition between Britain and America to build bigger, faster, and more luxurious ships with which to cross the ocean. By the late 1840s, Britain had begun to produce consistently better boats, so it was with great acclaim that America welcomed the launching by the Collins Line of four new ocean-lining steamships.

The largest and most luxurious of these ships was the *Arctic*, a ship 284 feet long and 2,856 tons in weight. She was built to accommodate over 200 passengers, and the massive 35-foot paddle wheels that flanked her on either side were capable of getting her from New York to Liverpool in a record-breaking nine days. Her launching was such an important event that over six percent of the population of New York City turned out to watch it.
Carlisle McCraken and his sister Lavinia had, like their siblings, moved from Rochester to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Lavinia was now a widow of Colonel Martin Scott, a military hero who died in the Mexican War in 1847, and in 1854, she was traveling with her brother in Europe. When the two boarded the Arctic in Liverpool, on September 19, to return home, the ship had been in the water for almost four years.

The captain of the Arctic since its launch had been Captain James C. Luce. Luce was well respected for being an unusually kind and effective captain, and his reputation had earned him one of the most sought-after jobs in the shipping industry. On this particular trip, Luce had traveling with him his son Willie, age eleven, a crippled boy who normally spent much of his time confined to their house in New York City.

The trip across the Atlantic was smooth. Lavinia Scott was socially prominent, so she and her brother were no doubt enjoying first-class accommodations and passing their time socializing and drinking with other wealthy passengers. Captain Luce later recalled interacting with her on the voyage.

On the morning of September 27, the Arctic approached the Grand Banks area off the coast of Newfoundland and entered a thick fog. Despite the dangers such a situation presented, Luce and his crew were under strict orders from management to continue at full speed regardless of weather conditions, so they didn’t slow down despite the poor visibility.

Suddenly, at 12:15 p.m., a ship popped out of the fog a few hundred yards ahead, steaming on a straight collision course toward the Arctic. That vessel was the Vesta, a propeller-driven steamer much smaller than the Arctic. A ship’s officer immediately ordered a hard left turn to attempt to get out of the way before a collision, but the effort was in vain; the two ships collided head on.

The damage to the Arctic at first appeared to be slight: a small hole near the bow. The bow of the Vesta, however, was completely crushed and water began pouring in as boxes and debris spilled out into the ocean. Captain Luce, horrified and certain that the Vesta would soon sink, immediately got some of his crew together and sent them on a lifeboat to the Vesta to try to rescue people. While those men were gone, further assessment was made of the damage to the Arctic, and its crew realized that the damage was much more threatening than they had initially assumed. There was a five-foot hole in the front of the ship that was slowly flooding the hull.

Fully aware that there were not enough lifeboats on his ship to accommodate every person, and fearing first for the safety of his passengers, Captain Luce made the difficult decision to abandon the Vesta to steam for shore, 50 miles away, as quickly as possible. The men on the lifeboat, seeing their ship abandoning them, began rowing frantically toward it to try to save themselves. Suddenly, a surging wave grabbed their boat and drove it directly under the massive spinning paddle wheel of the Arctic. The passengers on board watched in shock as the wheel tore apart the small boat and dismembered the people aboard it.

Ironically, the decision to head for shore would ultimately doom not the Arctic’s crew but its passengers. The Vesta, of a slightly more modern design than the Arctic, had separate watertight compartments making up its hull, so the damage to the bow only flooded the front part of the ship. The Arctic, on the other hand, had a completely open hull, and so the entire ship was slowly filling up with water.

The weight of this water began forcing the ship deeper and deeper into the ocean, reducing the efficiency of its paddle wheels and slowing it down. It was clear that land would never be reached, and the mood among the passengers and crew, already heightened by the tragedy aboard the lifeboat, escalated from fear to panic as they realized the gravity of their situation.

Captain Luce also understood what was happening and knew that the flooding would soon extinguish the boiler fires and halt the ship’s slow progress. He began organizing an effort with the officers to move passengers onto lifeboats. Though there were only five remaining boats, he calculated that there was more than enough space to save all the women and children aboard the ship.

These efforts quickly proved to be in vain. Luce had little experience interacting with the rough engine crew of his ship; that job was normally left to an officer who was killed in the lifeboat accident hours earlier. The crew soon began defying orders openly, and fighting broke out on deck among the crew and male passengers over access to the lifeboats.

In the end, only one boat actually made it out with women and children aboard. One other boat was flooded and destroyed during the fighting, and the other three were taken by force by members of the crew and a few male passengers. The ship was left with almost all of its passengers and a small fraction of its crew standing on deck, waiting for the prolonged sinking of the ship into the ocean to end their lives.
Frantic efforts began to construct a raft out of pieces of the ship, but it was clear to Captain Luce (as he would later tell newspapers) that the attempt would probably be futile. A large number of male passengers were greedily eyeing the raft-building process, biding their time until they could overpower everyone else and steal it for themselves. And that is exactly what happened; once the raft was lowered into the water, a surging mass of bodies piled onto it as quickly as possible, fighting to stay aboard. Almost everyone was eventually pushed off into the water to freeze and be eaten by sharks. The panicked struggle for survival outweighed any sense of honor or duty that these men might normally have had.

It should be noted that not everybody on board acted in this way. Luce would later give numerous examples of families, particularly among the first-class passengers, that stoically resigned themselves to death aboard the ship and maintained dignity until the last moments. It is likely that the McCrakens were among this group, given that Carlisle was traveling with his widowed older sister. His obligation to protect her probably would have outweighed any selfish motivations to fight for his own position aboard a boat.

So, when the ship finally sank into the water late on the night of September 27, it was with many of its passengers aboard. Captain Luce ended up separated from his child by a wave, and as he was swimming forward to reach him, the airtight paddle-wheel box broke free from the sinking ship and shot up into the air. The box landed directly on the head of Luce's son, killing him instantly. In a strange twist of fate, the box stayed afloat in the water, and Luce managed to crawl into it — frozen, injured, and despairing over the loss of his boy. Over the next two days, he drifted around trying to bring as many people on board the box as possible, but one by one they almost all passed out from cold, fatigue, and hunger and dropped off into the ocean. When, a few days later, a passing ship finally noticed the wreckage and stopped by to pick up any survivors, Luce was one of the last people left alive.

It was not until late on the night of October 10 that the first ship carrying survivors — 31 crewmen and a single cabin passenger, rescued from their lifeboat — pulled into port in New York City. Reporters were quick to pick up the story, and the front page of the next day's issue of the New York Daily Times was dominated by the startling news of the ship's sinking. The city was stunned by the news, and for well over a week the entire front page of the Times was devoted to printing recounts of the survivors. The first group to arrive told the media a number of lies about their experience in an attempt to cover up the extent of their cowardly behavior. It was only later when more survivors (and in particular, Captain Luce) were found alive that the truth came out about what had happened after the collision.

In the end, there were 87 survivors of the wreck, and only 22 of them were passengers. Every woman and child aboard the boat died.

The October 14 issue of the Times printed a number of short notice commemorating those thought dead, and first among these was a reprint from the Rochester Union: “Among the lost were two persons who formerly resided in this city, and were well known: the wife of Col. Martin Scott, daughter of the late Gardner McCracken. Also her brother Carlisle McCraken. It will be remembered that Col. Scott was killed in the Mexican war. His widow, in company with her brother, had been in Europe on a tour of pleasure, and embarked on the ill-fated Arctic on the homeward passage. As no mention is made of their being saved, we are forced in the melancholy conclusion that they have perished. They had latterly resided at Milwaukee.”

It is not clear who paid to have a memorial message engraved on the McCraken monument in honor of Lavinia, who was 40, and Carlisle, who was 30, but their loss was clearly felt by Rochester society.

(Al Robinson is a University of Rochester student who prepared this essay for the course, Religion 167: Speaking Stones, taught by Prof. Emil Homerin, a Friends of Mount Hope trustee.)
cleared in Section A; the Smith family Celtic cross monument was stabilized, and the Medina sandstone cross in Section C was removed to Brigden Monument for rebuilding.

74 sites were adopted and maintained during the past year.

GARDENING.
Under the chair of Pat Corcoran, the committee continued to plant and maintain historic plots, numerous planters, and gardens around cemetery buildings.

New projects in 2002 included:
- The repair of erosion damage near the Susan B. Anthony grave
- The triangle garden in Section MM
- A new oval garden in Section C
- Three small circle gardens in Sections K and G
- Plantings at the Johnson wall in Section C
- Development of a system for watering Section C

TOURS.
Under the coordination of Dennis Carr, our regularly Sunday tours continued to be the popular background of our educational mission. Theme tours were offered monthly, and in collaboration with the Rochester Museum and Science Center, a new actors’ tour, “Visionaries and Inventors,” was added. Total tour attendance for 2002 was 2442 visitors.

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH/OTHER FRANK GILLESPIE PROJECTS.
Frank responded to 232 requests for genealogical data with information on 1,116 interments; completed 11 new lot location maps, bringing the total to 72, and revised 9 existing maps; oversaw and coordinated microfilming and digitizing of 5000 pages of interment records and burning them to CDs.

Photographed and researched data for all 81 mausoleums (with assistance of R. Reisem).

LIBRARY.
John Pearsall purchased three new bookcases to replace old shelving and to accommodate all our books including bound volumes of serials and cemetery records. Most of the books have been cataloged with Dewey Decimal numbers and arranged on shelves in numerical order.

PUBLICITY.
Nancy Uffindell successfully managed publicity for tours and publications. Multiple articles appeared in the Democrat & Chronicle. We also received coverage in City Newspaper, the Messenger Post and Freetime. TV and radio spots provided publicity on the “Visionaries and Inventors” tours and on the Buried Treasures publication.

SECURITY.
Arrangements were made with Northeastern Security Services to provide security during tours. There were no auto break-ins during our 2002 season, and we were very pleased with the services provided by Northeastern.

OTHER.
Sadly, a long-term member, former trustee, and tour guide, Paul Malczewski, passed away suddenly in November. His remains have been interred in Section G.

As we look forward to the 2003 season, some of our plans include: Participation in the celebration of the 140th anniversary of Frederick Douglass’ “Call to Arms to Men of Color.”

Continuation of our association with RMSC with a full schedule of actors’ tours.

Co-sponsorship with the Rochester Cemeteries Heritage Foundation in “Descendant’s Day”—an event planned for September.

Respectfully submitted, Joan M. Hunt, president

ENGRAVED MEMORY
by Kristi Lynn Martin

The funerary architecture of Mount Hope Cemetery attests to the changing relationships between the living and the dead. Each monument and marker has a narrative to be read — some more clearly than others. Stone figures and engraved inscriptions invite interpretation, and stand memorial to the lives and beliefs of the dead and those they left behind.

On February 3, 1857, George “Clare” Klar purchased lot 78-C in Mount Hope Cemetery. He was 32 years old. According to the City Directory for the census year 1861, George Klar owned a meat market and house at 78 North Clinton Street. A few years later, in July of 1862, the cemetery plot that he had purchased in foresight would be used. There is no stone to mark the grave of the child buried in lot 78-C on July 18, 1862. The cemetery interment records, however, document the inhumation of Ann Klar, aged two years and eight months, resident of Clinton Street, having perished of a “sore throat.”

The absence of a marker may testify to a need to forget the painful loss of the child’s life, this — given the Victorians’ sentiment and attachment to the promises of childhood — is, however, unlikely. It is more probable that George Klar did not have the opportunity to commission a memorial for his deceased child, before his life, too, ended. Less than a year later, on May 25, 1863, he would, likewise, be interred in lot 78-C, victim of a diseased heart.

In the center of the cemetery lot, there stands today, a monument, notable for its original character. Elevated by a pedestal is the figure of a seated woman, clothed in an abundant substance of classical garment, rendered in sumptuous folds. The dense, plentiful fabric puddles around her waist, and drapes down the sides of the cairn she is seated upon. Her feet, revealed beneath the hem of her robes, are bare. The short sleeves of her gown are fastened with three buttons, the collar embroidered with a simple zigzag stitch, and a cord is tied around her waist. The figure’s abundant, wavy hair is fastened
in a knot and, then, let to trail down her back. The expression of her down-turned face is poised and gentle; her mouth is upturned into a subtle smile, and her eyes welcome the gaze of the living visitor, greeting them with cheerful sympathy. Positioned in the figure's right hand is a quill pen, the tip resting against her knee. With her other hand, she holds a tablet. She grasps it at the top, tilting it toward her lap.

The date of the monument's erection is ambiguous, apparently not in accordance with any date of burial within the lot. A marker at the front right corner of the lot is inscribed with the date "1876," evidently indicating the year in which the lot was fenced; it may, likewise, be cautiously assumed that the monument was also erected at this date. However, it should be noted that the central fence marker bears the name "G J Klar," while the base of the monument is additionally inscribed with the names: "Cassebeer" and "F Murr." It is possible that these names, engraved on the right and left sides of the base, flanking "G J Klar" on the front, may have been added at a later date, yet this can not be absolutely assumed. The monument's date is, however, arbitrary to its essential function: to symbolically reconnect the living with the dead, and to provide solace to the bereaved.

The classical representation of a female figure is common to 19th-century funerary architecture. Alternately, she may represent sorrow or hope; consistently, she is a protective and nurturing presence. The pen, implement for inscribing knowledge, is symbolic of learning and the creation of destinies. Significantly, the pen is a feather, associated with wind, air, birds, and flight, indicative of the soul. The tablet, the ancestor of bound books, represents material incarnation of knowledge and wisdom or the book of life. The tablet is elevated above the viewer's perceptible eye-level, retaining the enigmatic nature of life's meaning. The figure — functioning, perhaps, as spirit guide — possesses the knowledge of life, but she does not share it. Notably, the pen is at rest on her knee and the tablet is inclined, indicating that the narrative has finished; life has ended.

Moving from left to right, the stones read as follows:

- Husband Herman Casseebeer 1848-1924
- Wife Elizabeth F. Klar Wife of Herman Casseebeer 1861-1947
- Father George J. Klar 1825-1863
- Mother Elizabeth Murr 1822-1896
- Fredrick Murr 1832-1917

The inclusion of familial relationship roles on each of the stones emphasizes biological connectivity, an immortality or continued life, achieved through kinship, by relationships that exist beyond temporal existence. The particular usage — Husband/Wife and Father/Mother — suggests that Elizabeth F. Klar Casseebeer commissioned these stones.

Elizabeth Murr died on October 6, 1896. Her will was admitted to probate, leaving the larger part of her estate, "$10,000 real and $2,500 personal property," to her daughter, Elizabeth Casseebeer. Elizabeth Casseebeer, Elizabeth F. Casseebeer is thus biologically linked to George Klar, not only by the inclusion of her maiden name on her own gravestone, but the inscription of "Mother" and "Father" on Elizabeth Murr's and George Klar's headstones.

Fredrick Murr was the husband of Elizabeth Murr, Elizabeth Klar Casseebeer's mother, at the time of her death. Fredrick Murr, like George Klar, was a butcher and owner of a market in the Clinton Street neighborhood. Although the date of marriage between the Murrs has not yet been identified, it is reasonable to assume that George Klar and Fredrick Murr would have known each other, and that Fredrick Murr then married George Klar's widow.

Herman Casseebeer also owned a business on Clinton Street from 1884 to 1894. Advertisements for his hardware store...
appear in the City Directory in 1884 and 1885, and the Rochester Union and Advertiser reported on August 9, 1887, that it had been broken into the night before, "two dozen revolvers and a quantity of knives" stolen. In 1894, he apparently sold his hardware business and took a position as treasurer of the American Brewing Company on Hudson Avenue, a position he retained for the next four years during which time he took up residence at 28 Clinton Place where Fredrick Murr also resided. From this date on, the two men would continually live at the same residences, variously on Clinton Street or Avenue, Cumberland Street, and Seneca Parkway, until Fredrick Murr moved permanently to Mount Hope Cemetery in 1917.

Following his treasury position at the Brewery, Herman Cassebeer worked as a bookkeeper at City Hall from 1899 to 1906, when he became a clerk at the Old German Insurance Company, in the Insurance Building. He, himself, died on March 24, 1924. His widow, Elizabeth Klar Cassebeer, would remain in the family home at 190 Seneca Parkway for at least another year, through 1925. At the time of her death, however, she was living with one of her married daughters on Culver Road. She was aged 86 years, 5 months, and 9 days, when she suffered cerebral thrombosis, or a blood clot in her head, and died on December 31, 1948.

Herman and Elizabeth Cassebeer had five children. One of them, Edmund Herman Cassebeer, is also buried in lot 78-C at Mount Hope, having died at the age of 4 years after being taken by diphtheria.

Elizabeth Frederika Klar Cassebeer lived her entire life in Rochester, New York, where she was born on July 22, 1861, and married on December 6, 1882. Her five children were born in Rochester, and when she buried one of those children, he was memorialized, as were her husband, her parents, and herself, with imagery that acknowledged death, but emphasized continued life in the hereafter. The funerary architecture of lot 78-C in Mount Hope Cemetery stands as a monument, still connecting the living world and those persons who chose to contemplate it, with the dead, which it remembers.

(Krisci Lynn Martin is a student at the University of Rochester and prepared this essay as a course requirement for Religion 167: Speaking Stones.)