

SPOTLIGHT

A Page in History

'Fame' keeps memory of sacrifice during Civil War

"A Page in History" will chronicle some of the most distinguished and interesting former citizens who are now at rest in Sewickley Cemetery, and each essay will be collected to make a walking tour of the cemetery.

This article will explore the impact of the Civil War on the cemetery.

On Nov. 1, 1860, as President G. E. Warner and the board of managers dedicated the new Sewickley Cemetery, they could hardly have imagined that occasion would be followed shortly by a national bloodletting, the Civil War.

Soon fallen soldiers from Sewickley were coming home or were left on some distant battlefield. Many were from a company formed at the outbreak of the war called the Sewickley Rifles, which drilled in the stone Presbyterian Church then nearing completion. Carried off to battle by rail on July 6, 1861, they became Company G of the 28th Regiment of Pa. Volunteers.

Company G suffered from fatal wounds or disease.

Andrew J. Gray, who died at Point of Rocks, Md., Jan. 6, 1862, was the first from this regiment to be brought home and buried in Sewickley Cemetery.

James Moore died at Frederick, Md., March 14, 1862, and was buried there.

John D. Tracy, William C. Richey and John D. Travelli were killed at Antietam, Sept. 17, 1862. Their remains were brought to Sewickley Cemetery.

Moses Sherman, also was killed at Antietam, and was buried there.

Lieutenant William C. Shields, William Painter and Thomas Smith were killed at Chancellorsville, May 3, 1863. Their burial sites are unknown.

Robert Johnson was killed at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863, and buried there.

William Wharton and Patrick Malone were killed at Wauhatchie, Tenn., Nov. 3, 1863, and buried there.

James L. Grady and Henry M. Rhodes were killed at Ringgold, Ga., December 1863. Grady's body was

brought to Sewickley Cemetery; Rhodes, to Allegheny Cemetery.

James Grimes was wounded at Ringgold, died and was buried there.

Thomas A. Hill returned home and died of disease, June 20, 1865. He was buried in Sewickley Cemetery.

There were also men with a Sewickley connection in other units who died of wounds or disease:

Albert J. White of the 9th Pa. Reserves died April 25, 1861, and was buried in Sewickley Cemetery.

W. I. Nevin of Hampton's Battery died of disease in Washington, D. C., Sept. 9, 1862, and was buried here.

William Banks of the 61st Pa. Regiment and Theodore Webb of the 188th Pa. Regiment were killed at Drury's Bluff, May 6, 1864, and buried there.

George W. Forester and Robert White of the 188th Pa. were killed at Cold Harbor, July 1, 1864, and buried there.

W. H. Forester of the 188th died at Johnson's Island, Ohio, of disease and was buried at Sewickley Cemetery.

James Scott, also from the 188th, died of disease in Sewickley, Sept. 10, 1865, and was buried here.

John Park died of disease in Washington, D.C., Dec. 25, 1863, and was buried at Sewickley Cemetery.

Harry Black, of the Signal Corps, died Feb. 1, 1864, and Alexander Black of the 74th Pa. died of disease, Jan. 13, 1865. Both are buried in Allegheny Cemetery.

Lewis B. C. Armer of the 139th Pa. died of wounds Nov. 25, 1864, and was buried in Butler County.

Capt. Alexander McKinney of the 1st Nebraska died of disease in Sewickley and was buried in Sewickley Cemetery.

With such a cost paid for peace, it was natural that the board of managers of the Sewickley Cemetery approved the suggestion by Superintendent D. N. White in June of 1865 that an "enduring memorial of the remarkable rebellion, and of those who perished in the defense of union and liberty" should be constructed.



'FAME' LOOKS out over the stones marking Sewickley's Civil War dead. The statue was dedicated in 1866; the cannons, added in 1905. (The photo is from the 1908 Sewickley Cemetery Handbook.)

Funds were solicited during the village festival on the 4th of July.

There was a hearty response. Contributing most generously, \$300, were trustees of the Economy Society, but there were many contributors at the \$10 level. Almost \$5,000 was raised, a substantial amount in those days, and sufficient to construct a memorial.

The committee determined the memorial would be "a true work of art charming the eye and educating the taste, while promoting the loyalty and patriotism of coming generations."

Much time was spent in selecting a suitable material, ideally an American material, for the monument.

A fateful decision was made.

Granite could withstand the severities of the climate, but the hardness of granite made it difficult to carve with any detail, and so Italian marble that could not tolerate the industrial environment in Pittsburgh was selected and ultimately proved to be the wrong material.

Obelisks and columns and eagles and figures of soldiers were all the rage, so it was decided to do something different.

Issac Brome, Esq., a classically trained sculptor with cultivated taste, was retained, and he created a life-sized, heroic statue of Fame, who seeking a site from which to sound her trumpet in praise of noble sacrifice found a congenial place on a small Grecian temple with Ionic columns.

In one hand she holds her trumpet,

in the other a laurel wreath for bestowal upon the heroes. The monument was dedicated with appropriate ceremony in the summer of 1866. It carries all the 28 names mentioned and the inscription:

"Erected by the Citizens Of Sewickley to the memory of their Volunteer Soldiers, Who Sacrificed Their Lives for the Unity Of The Republic in the war of the Great Rebellion 1861 to 1865"

In 1905 four siege cannon, 8-inch Rodmans, were added to the plaza surrounding the statue. (See photo on next page.)

Later, they were donated by the board of managers during a scrap collection drive in World War II to the Sewickley Salvage Committee headed by the formidable Mrs. Margaret Morgan.

Fame is still with us after 137 years, reminding us of commitment and courage.

Although she was treated with chemicals in 1989, her marble meant to be imperishable is furrowed by time. She needs to come inside, or she will just fade away.

There are "space age" resins available that are being used in other cemeteries to replace endangered outdoor sculpture.

The cemetery board is considering this option as a way to keep Fame on her pedestal, continuing to dominate the skyline above Sewickley, honoring the memories of the tumultuous era that she represents.