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## Record in stone: Cemetery quickly became final resting place for Civil War heroes

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*Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles printed in the Sewickley Herald to acquaint the community with the treasure in its midst and to prepare for a gala celebration Memorial Day weekend, May 29 and 30, as Sewickley Cemetery marks its 150th anniversary.*

In 1860, 150 years ago, when the citizens of Sewickleyville upgraded their village graveyards and built a new hilltop cemetery, they had no idea that it would almost immediately find a compelling use.

Sewickley Cemetery was dedicated with appropriate ceremony on a surprisingly warm Nov. 1, 1860, Abraham Lincoln carried the Republican and abolitionist banner to victory in the nation's 16th presidential election with momentous consequences. By the next spring the North and the South would be at each others' throats.

As was the case everywhere, the Sewickley Valley mobilized and sent their sons off to war. The local militia, the Sewickley Rifles, each clutching a New Testament presented to them by Judge J. W. F. White, left on the train to become Company G of the 28th Pennsylvania Volunteers.

Soon fallen soldiers from Sewickley were coming home or, left on some distant battlefield, were mourned. The first from Company G returned home for burial in Sewickley Cemetery was Private Andrew J. Gray, who died of disease at Point of Rocks, Md., Jan. 6, 1862.

Some did not come home. Lt. William C. Shields, William Painter and Thomas Smith were killed at Chancellorsville, Va., May 3, 1863, and their bodies were left on the field, never to be recovered. There were 28 local boys lost in the conflict.

When the bloodletting finally concluded in 1865, David Nye White, the superintendent of Sewickley Cemetery, who had sacrificed his own son, Albert, upon the altar of freedom in August of 1861, joined with Theodore Hugh Nevin, who also lost a son, and Judge White on a committee to create an "enduring memorial of the remarkable rebellion, and of those who perished in the defense of union and liberty."

Some \$5,800 was collected in the town and contributed by the committee, and a heroic Statue of

Fame carved of marble was raised, carrying the names of the 28.

At the dedication of the Statue of Fame in summer 1866, the three men--White, Nevin and White--shared these sentiments.

"You come to visit their graves and plant beautiful flowers and drop upon them tears of love and admiration--but some are not here.

"They sleep where they fell in the heat and rush of battle. Diligent hands could never find them. Some of them have no record anywhere save in bruised hearts, which will also soon pass away, except on yonder monumental pile. And oh, if they can look down today upon this touching scene and witness that you their friends and neighbors have not forgotten their names and their deeds, they will realize the truth of the noble sentiment, as we trust you do today, that:

Whether on the tented field,  
Or in the battle van,  
The grandest place for man to die,  
Is where he dies for man."

That Statue of Fame still stands to this day honoring those killed.

It was replaced in imperishable granite in the year 2005, and now in a much enlarged cemetery, it presides over the burial sites of more than 100 Civil War veterans.

The lofty and the lowly both are represented and even the foe. Within a hundred yards of the Statue of Fame lie a General, a drummer and a Confederate.

General Andrew Jackson Mackay (1827-1901), appointed captain in the Quartermaster Department of the U. S. Army, Oct. 7, 1861, promoted to Lt. Col. and Colonel, then to the honorary rank of Brevet Brigadier General for his war service, was ultimately Chief Quartermaster of the Army of the Cumberland.

The general rests among the Adair family. Not far from him is the grave of a drummer with the 63rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, Private William T. Priest (1839-1928). The 63rd was raised in Western Pennsylvania by Col. Alexander Hays and saw extensive combat.

Right across the road can be found the only Confederate soldier in Sewickley Cemetery, Maj. John F. Gray (1836-1904), who served with the 45th Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers, called "Voorhies Regiment" after its Colonel. They saw action at Fort Donelson and later in the Atlanta Campaign. Gray was the father of Mrs. Severn P. Ker and lies in the Ker plot, his grave unmarked.

Why you should visit Sewickley Cemetery and see these records in stone of our valley's history and most particularly come to the cemetery this Memorial Day Weekend will be the subject of the next article.

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