

# PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

## Sewickley cemetery 'centerpiece' of town's history

By Rick Wills

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The Sewickley Cemetery opened on Nov. 1, 1860 -- five days before Abraham Lincoln was elected president.

"I am not sure the people who built the cemetery anticipated it filling up as soon as it did," said Harton Semple, executive director of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society and a board member of the cemetery.

Now the burial site of more than 12,000 people, the cemetery that is indelibly linked to the Civil War celebrated its 150th anniversary last weekend. Several hundred people attended the ceremonies, which doubled as a Memorial Day observance.

The anniversary commemoration included salutes performed by the 63rd Pennsylvania Infantry's Company C, a Beaver County group of Civil War re-enactors. The company set up a small encampment near the cemetery's Civil War statue, titled "Fame."

A new version of that 20-foot-tall monument commemorating local Civil War veterans was dedicated in 2005.

The original marble statue was installed in 1866 and honors 28 Civil War veterans from Sewickley. Over the years, harsh weather wore away features of an angel on bended knee. The new monument is made of Vermont granite and is designed to last.

Many of those honored by the statue were in the Sewickley Rifles Company, formed at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. That group later became Company G of the 28th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers. Those named on the statue include soldiers killed in such famous Civil War battles as Antietam, Gettysburg, Chancellorsville and Cold Harbor.

More than 100 Civil War soldiers are buried in Sewickley Cemetery, as are hundreds of veterans of subsequent wars.

More than anything else, says Semple, the cemetery tells the story of Sewickley, which was founded in 1853.

"The cemetery is the centerpiece of our town. It embodies our history," said

Semple, who wrote and last year published *History of The Sewickley Valley* Found in Sewickley Cemetery.

The cemetery is set on 80 acres of land and overlooks the Ohio River from a 400-foot hilltop.

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