



Oak Hill Cemetery Association

1705 Mt. Vernon Rd. S. E.
Cedar Rapids Iowa

*Oak Hill Cemetery is non-profit lot owner association
dedicated to preserving the heritage of
Linn County, Iowa.*

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Veteran's Area

In a meeting between Fred Poyneer (who was also instrumental in the establishment of the Boy Scout Camp at Waubeek) and John M. Ely in April of 1929, it was proposed that the Hanford Legion Post would develop a veteran's area. Because the local post wanted to acquire a proper burial plot for the Veterans of World War I, as a patriotic gesture, the trustees of the Cemetery Association waived the cost of the lots, and conveyed title of the lots to the organization for a very minimal Perpetual Care fee. This area consists of about 1503 square feet. Clifford Hodge was the first burial April 14, 1929.

William Boyd Block 95 Lot 86

Brother of Jane Boyd, he was, Editor of the Cedar Rapids Republican, president of Perpetual Savings and Loan, and for 40 years was the Chairman of the State Board of Education Finance Committee, a committee set up by the State Legislature in 1909.

Jane Boyd Block 95 Lot 86

The contribution to the community made by Jane Boyd reached farther than the community center named after her. Miss Boyd entered the Tyler school district as a first grade teacher in 1894. When school was out, she would start on her mission of mercy through the district, and everyone regardless of race or income came to experience her goodness. In 1918, the board of education realizing that the value of Miss Boyd's service extended beyond the walls of her schoolroom, released her from her teaching duties and allowed her to give full time to her social welfare work, still retaining connections with the schools in the health department she maintained in Tyler school. *(A Dream of Miss Boyd's was realized in 1921 when the house of Dr. W. Ruml was moved to the site of the first Community House.)*

Abbie Abbott Block 95 Lot 86

Miss Abbott's heritage was of New England origin. Her half century of teaching in Iowa began as a grade school teacher in Mechanicsville in the 1870's. After serving as a mathematics and history teacher in Marion between 1879 and 1881, and a principal of the Marshalltown high school from 1881 to 1886 she came to Cedar Rapids as the Washington high school principal.

J. G. Cherry Family Block 95 Lot 60

The J. G. Cherry Company was established in 1880 when John George Cherry invented and began producing a jacketed cream can for use in the dairy industry. In 1917, when Block 95 in the "new section" was being staked out, Mary A. Cherry made arrangements for a family lot and the reinterment of her husband John. G. Cherry, who had died in 1899.

Sam & Anna Cooper Armstrong Block 95 Lot 130

Sam was founder of Armstrong Clothing Store, Anna daughter of the pioneer miller who established Coopers Mill, was the second woman to graduate from Coe College.

Conger Metcalf Block 95 Lot 126

A nationally recognized painter with his roots in Iowa, he studied with Grant Wood and Marvin Cone at the Stone City Art Colony. His work was exhibited widely on the east coast, as his career took him to the Boston University of Fine Arts. Cyrus Metcalf was associated with Metcalf Plumbing and was a Gospel Singer and Preacher

As Oak Hill Cemetery begins it's 155th Year, we invite you to explore your place in history

Lots are still available

Block 95 opened for burials about 1917 and is a melting pot of nationalities and professions.

Reichart mausoleum located on Block 95 Lots 142 & 143, was built in 1929

Renhold Reichart was a German immigrant, who came to this country in his youth. In 1893, he married Mary Nyere in Marion Iowa, was a realtor and spent the last 65 years of his life in the Chicago area. The rest of the spaces in the crypt were reserved for the sisters of Mrs. Reichart.

George T. Hedges Block 95 Lot 65

A name that has been associated with Realty and Commercial Development of Cedar Rapids. He played a prominent role in bringing Chandler Pump and Penick and Ford to Cedar Rapids.



John B. Turner II, Block 95 Lot 3

The son of David Turner carried on the family traditions. The Turner Funeral home had a close working relationship with the Oak Hill Cemetery. The Turner family was a patron of Grant Wood.

The Dunshee and Chandler Families Block 95 Lot 2

Involved in manufacturing through the Chandler Pump Company. Pumps, Furnaces, plumbing and heating supplies.

John Gray Block 95 Lot 58

One of our signature stones, John Gray was born in Dearborn Michigan and the family had ties to Henry Ford.

John R Weber, Block 95 Lot 43

Born in Springfield Illinois, his father was Editor of the Springfield Newspaper and a friend and supporter of Abraham Lincoln and may possibly have been the first to propose the name Lincoln for President. As a boy of eight, John Weber accompanied his father to a meeting with Lincoln where it is said that Lincoln pulled him onto his knee and recited a campaign poem.

Marvin Cone Block 95 Lot 42

Marvin Cone was born and raised in Cedar Rapids, where in 1906 he began a lifelong friendship with Grant Wood. He graduated from Coe College in 1914 and then studied for several years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. World War I interrupted his studies. Cone left for France in 1917, where he served for several years as an interpreter. When he returned to Cedar Rapids in 1919, he continued to pursue his interest in art. He considered commercial art, but chose instead to accept a position teaching French at Coe College for the 1919-1920 academic year. Cone quickly renewed his friendship with Grant Wood and resumed his active involvement with the local Art Association (now the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art). In the summers of 1932 and 1933 Marvin Cone and Grant Wood were an active force in the Stone City Art Colony, which brought together a group of regionalist painters. Unfortunately, the Depression caused the colony to close after only two summers. Cone was then appointed professor of painting at Coe College, where he continued to teach until 1960. The father of Marvin Cone, a Pioneer Jeweler is also on this lot.

Byron H. McKeeby Block 95 Lot 40

The dentist & friend immortalized by the Grant Wood painting American Gothic with Nan Wood Graham. Dr. Byron McKeeby practiced dentistry in Cedar Rapids for 45 years, yet he is best known as the model for the lean astute farmer in the Grant Wood Painting American Gothic. For many years Dr. McKeeby, would not admit he had posed for the well known work of his late friend. His dentistry practice was located at 1508 1/2 First avenue N.E. Born in Birchardville PA in 1867 his family came to Iowa when he was a boy. Dr. McKeeby graduated from the University of Iowa Dentistry class of 1894. He practiced dentistry in Winthrop Iowa before starting his practice in Cedar Rapids in 1901. His first wife, Belle Metcalf McKeeby preceded him in death in 1917. He is buried next to her. He was survived by second wife Martha McKeeby. Son Byron McKeeby, owner and operator of the Globe grocery store and his wife Miriam Douglas McKeeby are also buried on the family lot.

Dr. George E. Crawford Block 95 Lot 19

Born in Ohio, he came to Iowa in 1853 with 4 other Ohio families. His father bought government land at the edge of Jordan's Grove 10 miles northeast of Marion, and was one of the founders of Jordan's Grove Baptist Church. Dr. Crawford set up his practice in Waubeek, experiencing a deadly epidemic of typhoid and another of diphtheria, before setting up a practice in Cedar Rapids in 1881. At that time the west side had a large peat bog area and malaria was the problem. In the fall of 1876 while a student at Bellevue Hospital, Dr. Crawford saw Sir Joseph Lister do the first antiseptic operation ever performed in America under the carbolic acid spray.

Belden Hill Block 95 Lot 20

In addition to being the owner of the Belden Hill Cigar Store, Belden Hill was the former president and organizer of the old Mississippi Valley baseball league and one of the most widely known men in Eastern Iowa through his connection with organized baseball in Cedar Rapids. His first fling in organized baseball started with the Washington Club of what would be the American Circuit, followed by Baltimore, Texas, and in Lincoln Nebraska in 1897. That year James Blake of Cedar Rapids became interested in Hill and brought him to Cedar Rapids to manage the club and play third base. He continued to manage the club. The Mississippi Valley League was organized in 1922 with Hill as president of the of the local club. He became president of the league in 1924 and held the post for eight years. During the off season Hill was a telegraph operator and railroad conductor before entering the cigar store business.



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Block 96 opened about 1929

W. F. Severa – Block 96 Lot 93

Born in Czechoslovakia in 1853, he came to the US in 1868 as a penniless immigrant, working his way from Racine Wisconsin to Cedar Rapids Iowa, and then to Belle Plaine in 1876 where he prepared himself practically for the Pharmaceutical profession. In 1880 as a registered pharmacist he returned to Cedar Rapids and bought a drug store. The business was a success from the start, largely because Mr. Severa was engaged in the manufacture of certain proprietary medicines based on tested prescriptions. Over time demand for the products he was manufacturing grew and after disposing of the retail drug business, in 1903 he founded the W. F. Severa Company. Distribution of preparations known as the Severa Family remedies went worldwide and at one time the Severa Almanacs advertising the products were printed in eleven languages. In 1930 nearly 3/4 of a million copies of the almanac were distributed worldwide. (See display at the History Center for more details. One of his first philanthropic movements was the support of Damska Matice Skolska, a group of Czech women fostering the education of children of Czech decent in the Czech language. He encouraged this activity and promoted the idea of building a school at Tenth Avenue and Second Street SE.

Block 96 Lot 58

The Herbert T Cherry Family. Son of J. G. Cherry of the Cherry Cream Can / Cherry Burrell / Evergreen Packaging Company family. He was the manager of the Cherry Fiber Products division located at Tama Iowa.

Block 96 Lot 60

Joseph Wardle earned his degree after enrolling at Cornell College, Mt Vernon to study civil engineering in the late 1800's. On coming to Cedar Rapids, he became the civil engineer and construction foreman for S. L. Dows who was constructing the railroad connecting Manchester with Cedar Rapids. His association with Col Dows, lead to the organization of the Iowa Railway and Light Corporation.

96

Thomas Gray Bromwell, Block 96 Lot 9, was born on a farm east of Marion in 1852 to James E. and Catherine Gray Bromwell, who were said to have obtained the first marriage license issued in Linn County.

J. F. Rall Block 96 Lot 47

Mayor of Cedar Rapids for 8 years. During his term of office, the 1st Avenue Bridge was completed. State laws were changed paving the way for needed storm sewer projects. He was instrumental in establishing a voter registration system. The Memorial Building-City Hall was built.

James W. Good – Block 96 Lot 12

It is believed the origin of the stone for the fieldstone pavilion is from the ancestral home of the Good family. It is impossible to describe the funeral of Secretary of War James Good and we invite you to read more about it via the newspapers and other resources at the Library and History Center. Herbert Hoover used Bruce more as headquarters for his western campaign for president, but it was James Good who made the introductions. Mr. Good died suddenly while serving as Secretary of War in the Hoover Cabinet. His body was returned to Cedar Rapids by funeral train with a full military escort. The squadron of the Fourteenth Cavalry and the Coe College Military band was part of the procession which started at First Presbyterian Church on Third Avenue and continued turning south on 10th street at Immaculate Conception Church. The caisson was drawn by 6 horses. His funeral included military honors of the cavalry company firing a salute of three volleys, (a 19 gun salute), and taps.

Percy Smith – Block 96 Lot 41

As the city made the switch to commission form of government, he was appointed as city engineer for the term 1908-1910. It was at this time that he began working on plans for the development of Municipal Island which was acquired by the city under the term of Mayor Carmody. He drew plans for the permanent shape of the Island, and directed the construction of the Island wall from 2nd to 4th Avenue. As Commissioner of Public Improvements, he had much to do with the building of the 3rd Avenue Bridge. At the time he was city engineer he refused to accept for the city, brick pavement laid on A, B, C, and D avenues between 16th and 17th streets because it could not stand up to the "rattle" test. Although the property owners who would pay for the pavement agreed to take a discount, he refused and forced the contractor to put in a better grade of brick.

John MacDonald Rider – Block 96 Lot 17

Another gentleman who received the honor of the title 33rd Degree Mason and was buried with the Rose Croix service. He was born in Pennsylvania, arriving in Iowa with his parents after a wagon journey of 5 weeks. He attended the old Western College, and later attended school in Mt. Vernon. After several successful business ventures in the Tipton and Wilton Junction area, he came to Cedar Rapids as manager of the Cedar Rapids and Marion Telephone Company. **Samuel Clyde Williams, son in law of John Rider** was a former University of Iowa football star, playing on the same gridiron team as Moray Eby of Coe College fame, and later the Iowa State coach and athletic director. Williams was part of the team that went undefeated in the 1899 and 1900 season. Apparently there were only 2 or 3 substitutes, and the first eleven carried the team. Mr. Williams was a four sport star from 1898 to 1901, during which time he won 10 awards. (The article did not say what those awards were)

Captain Frank N. Fitch Block 96, Lot 36

Captain Fitch, a reserve officer entered the service in 1942, serving in Africa and the invasion of Sicily, before taking part in the European invasion, was killed in action on D-day. His father, Frank N. Fitch Sr., died on May 31 and word of his death was cabled to Captain Fitch on June 7th.

Bessie Boyson – Block 96, Lot 37

Another member of St. Paul's Methodist church, when she died in 1988, at the age of 105, Bessie Boyson was the oldest member. She was the bookkeeper of the Boyson Drug Company.

Edward Winslow – Block 96 Lot 24

Edward Winslow was general traffic manager of the BCR&N railroad, which his father George Winslow, helped to design and build. He was the nephew of General Edward Winslow of the Union Army during the Civil War, and the family could trace the lineage as a direct descendent of Gov. Edward Winslow of the Plymouth Colony Mass.

Mary Isabelle Boyd Knapp Block 96 Lot 32

was born in 1884 in Ohio and arrived in Linn County with her parents in 1896. She attended Marion High School and was a student of the Drake Conservatory of Music in 1903. On her death at age 106, she was the oldest member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. She was one of the founders of Camp Fire in Cedar Rapids, and served as chairman of the development committee of Camp Hitaga.

John McCulloch, Block 96 Lot 91 born in Glasgow Scotland, came to America with his parents at the age of 12. As a member of the National Guard during the Spanish America War, he was superintendent of the Miraflores Locks Panama during the construction, and was stationed there from 1907 to 1914.

Eleanor Clements Tisdale Block 96 Lot 82 was employed by local dentist Dr. Byron McKeeby, may have been the first dental x-ray technician in Cedar Rapids.

The Collins Family – Block 96 Lot 62

Most are familiar with the Arthur Collins, Collins Radio story, but parents Merle H. and Faith (Andrews) Collins parents of Arthur Collins played a huge role in the development of the company. Their pioneer mother and grandmother Mary Jane Collins, who exercised influence in educational and business affairs is buried here as well.

James Blake Block 96 Lot 116 was born in Cedar Rapids, the son of pioneer residents U. C. Blake an attorney, and Ellen Bever Blake. After attending Phillips Academy in N. H. he entered the soap manufacturing business with Fred Shaver and married Henrietta Dows daughter of Col. And Mrs. S. L. Dows who died in 1915. After Mr. Blake discontinued the manufacture of soap, he became identified with the National Biscuit as divisional sales manager in Chicago, and eventually went to Albany NY to take charge of the Quaker Oats sales in that state. In 1913 he returned to Cedar Rapids to join the Iowa Electric Light and Power Company serving as traffic manager for the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway.

Stamats and Hedges Families

Block 96 Lots 111 & 112

The Stamats family is well known for its publishing business and communications industry. From the beginning in the mid 1920's it was built into one of the leading publishing houses in the Midwest. It was the largest user of postal service in Cedar Rapids, with the publication and circulation of 9 magazines including Buildings and Perfect Home. The marriage of Horace "Fed" Hedges Jr. son of Horace Hedges realtor and civic worker, and the grandson of George T. Hedges founder of the Hedges Real Estate firm to Sally Stamats, brought these 2 families together.

Block 96 Lot 70 The Frank and Weaver Witwer families.

A name recognized by most, for the Witwer Family Charitable Trust, they were also known for their Grocery Chain. As individuals they maintained a low profile in the community. Weaver and Hettiebel were owners of Hilltop Farm. With the exception of the Amana Society Farms, the Witwer farm complex may have been the largest farming enterprise

in Iowa under single management, totaling 32 farms and 7000 acres.

Esther Louise Eicherly Block 96 Lot 81 SG 6 was named the winner of a contest to name the new school football stadium. Her Choice? Kingston Stadium.

