

Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery

Master Plan 2022/23



Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery (FWC) is a non-profit interest group whose mission is to enhance the cemetery for aesthetic, historic, and educational purposes. Our accomplishments in the past two years have resulted in significant improvements in the function, appearance, and preservation of the cemetery. The improvements have been accomplished with the input and support of the Cemetery Trustees and Superintendent. The citizens of Wadsworth have also expressed gratitude and support for these positive changes.

Purpose of the Master Plan:

- ❖ Comply with the Cemetery Trustees' request to outline future endeavors by FWC and establish One-, Three-, Five-, and Ten- Year Goals.
- ❖ Identify the needs of the cemetery beyond routine maintenance and employee responsibilities.
- ❖ Make recommendations reflective of the identified needs.
- ❖ Establish a Budget and Priorities Schedule within the scope of the approved recommendations.
- ❖ Work cooperatively with the Trustees, Superintendent, and FWC members to carry out the goals within the established timelines.

Major Cemetery Improvements:

- ❖ Restoration and/or cleaning of over 150 headstones in the Old Grounds.
- ❖ Digitization of hand- written cemetery records.
- ❖ Restoration of early maps.
- ❖ Planted new trees and perennials.
- ❖ Rehabbed, established, and maintained all flower beds.
- ❖ Researched and developed a digital record of all veterans interred in the cemetery.
- ❖ Updated Find- A- Grave on-line entries.
- ❖ Researched and recorded sites of unknown burials.

As FWC continues to make improvements to Woodlawn Cemetery, we will seek additional partners to help achieve the goals of the Master Plan.

Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery Goals Committee 2022
Alicia Hall
Mark Watkins
Deb Holcomb



One Year Goals

1. Maintain Flower Beds and Old Grounds

Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery maintains the flower beds throughout the cemetery. These will be planted, weeded and watered on a regular basis to maintain the beauty of the grounds. The group also takes on the responsibility in the OG for weed-eating the headstones and removing weeds from the pathway.



Recommendations: Establish a regular schedule of maintenance under guidance of the Landscape Committee.

2. Restore 30 Headstones in Old Grounds Per Year

FWC restored 20 headstones in 2021 and 34 in 2022. After hosting a restoration workshop in 2021, we averaged five restorations per month.



Headstones of Amanda and Henry Hart, before and after restoration

Recommendations: Begin restorations in May or June; earlier if weather permits. Keeping on track to complete five restorations per month, we hope to restore 30 headstones per year.

3. Complete Cleaning of All Headstones in Old Grounds

Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery cleaned over 90 headstones in the Old Grounds in 2021 and 100 in 2022.

An inventory of headstones found approximately 110 still needing to be cleaned.



Before and after of Josiah Martin

Recommendations: Clean remaining headstones in Old Grounds in 2022.

Completed

4. McGregor Statue in Need of Cleaning



FWC is in the process of cleaning and restoring headstones and obelisks in the Old Grounds. The McGregor statue is located in the Old Grounds. It is covered in lichen and needs to be cleaned.

Recommendations: Spray statue with D-2 in early Spring, Summer, and Fall.

5. New Concrete Flag Marker Holders for Old Grounds

Veteran graves in the old grounds were furnished with concrete flag marker holders to keep flags/military markers upright and safe. Over the years these holders have deteriorated, been damaged by lawn mower strikes, or are otherwise in poor condition. These holders are no longer functional and they are unsightly. Roger Havens is in the process of making new concrete holders to replace them.



Recommendations: Finish constructing new concrete holders for the Old Grounds by Spring 2022. Replace concrete flag holders by the end of Summer 2022.

Completed

6. Veterans Project

The purpose of the Veterans Project is to document all service members buried in Woodlawn Cemetery, to ensure every veteran is honored with a flag on Memorial Day.

To achieve this goal, FWC has collected lists of veterans from multiple sources and is in the process of extracting and compiling that data into one master list that can be sorted by name, section, or service.

Flag markers are often moved or stolen which makes it difficult to locate every veteran. We have permission from the Cemetery and Board to apply a small yellow sticker to the headstones of veterans. Once the stickers are placed, we can easily identify headstones that are missing a flag.

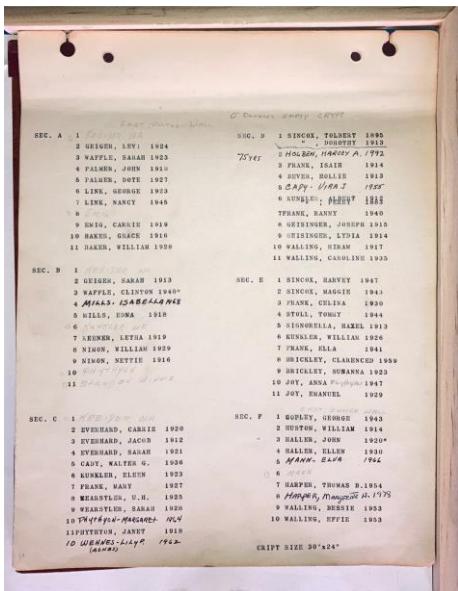


Recommendations: Complete the veteran database and update it annually (using updated lists from Woodlawn and the County Recorder) prior to Memorial Day.

Apply a yellow sticker to every veteran headstone.

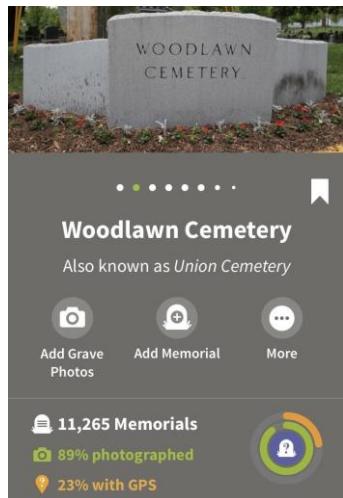
7. Mausoleum Map

Currently, the mausoleum interments are registered in written form by Sections and Spaces. However, there are no markers designating Sections in the mausoleum itself. It is difficult to quickly determine where an individual is interred.



Recommendations: Create a map of the mausoleum interments using the existing records, and mount Sections Letters (or Numbers) within the mausoleum.

8. 100% of Interments Entered into Find a Grave



Find a Grave is a website used to locate the final resting place of anyone in the world. The memorials and information are entered entirely by volunteers. Information available in a Find a Grave memorial can include exact burial location (using GPS), headstone or gravesite photo, family and individual photos, family trees, biographies and obituaries.

Woodlawn's Find a Grave webpage currently hosts approximately 11,300 memorials. With over 14,000 burials and counting, we have 3,000 remaining memorials to create. Over the past year, FVC has created over 700 memorials.

Recommendations: Ramp up efforts to enter memorials, to reach 100% entered by the end of year 2023. Use plot maps to find the burial locations of those without headstones.

9. Update Content on Website

Our website needs to be regularly updated with new content. Home page features will include current and finished projects that highlight the importance of the work being done in the cemetery. The home page will also promote our fundraisers with links to make donations.

A new blog section was added consisting of topics relevant to cemeteries, people, and restorations.

The interment indexing project gave us the opportunity to add a Burial Lookup. While it is a tremendous resource, there are errors and omissions that need to be addressed.



Recommendations: Aim to update the Burial Lookup annually with new/missing burials and corrections to existing entries. Update website regularly with new content.

10. Link to Friends of Woodlawn on Cemetery Website

The current Woodlawn Cemetery website is a basic webpage on Wadsworth City's website. The information available is limited to a brief history of the cemetery, current staff and contact information.

responsible for the daily operation of the cemetery, including assigning duties to the groundskeepers, dealing with the public in all matters pertaining to interments or lot sales, keeping the equipment in good condition and making sure that Woodlawn is well maintained at all times.

Info and link to FWC website:
www.friendsofwoodlawn cemetery.org

CONTACT US

Woodlawn Cemetery

330.336.4718
Email Woodlawn Cemetery

Physical Address
200 College Street
Wadsworth OH 44281

Recommendations: Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery would like a link to our website added to the Woodlawn Cemetery City webpage. Our website offers a burial lookup, a gallery of photos, blog posts and more.

11. Increase Publicity



Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery on WCTV

FWC has steadily increased public exposure over the past three years with presentations, news articles, radio and TV interviews, First Fridays and the History Fair. All have generated positive feedback from the community.

Additional opportunities to showcase our organization will increase interest in our mission and further promote FWC as an active and worthy cause to support.

Recommendations: Contact WCTV to set up programming specials and interviews, such as rehab and cleaning demonstrations and discussions of projects planned and completed.

Explore and identify more ways to feature FWC in multimedia and live presentations.

12. Overgrown Shrubs Covering Headstones



Headstone in Old Catholic Section

Multiple headstones throughout the cemetery are hidden behind or under overgrown shrubs. Families planted these to landscape the grave plot, but years of neglect have allowed them to take over headstones and adjacent plots. Removal of overgrown shrubs will beautify the grounds and allow headstones to be visible and accessible to all visitors.

Recommendations: Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery will document all overgrown shrubs in the cemetery and present results to the Trustees and Superintendent for approval for removal or trimming by the maintenance staff.

13. Install Bluebird Boxes



Woodlawn Cemetery provides an excellent habitat for the Eastern Bluebird. Nesting boxes will benefit the bluebird population and encourage birdwatching within the cemetery.

Recommendations: Bluebird boxes will be placed (150+ locations) in locations that will not interfere with cemetery operations. FWC will maintain, replace, remove boxes as needed.

14. Christmas Decorations in the Old Grounds and Mausoleum

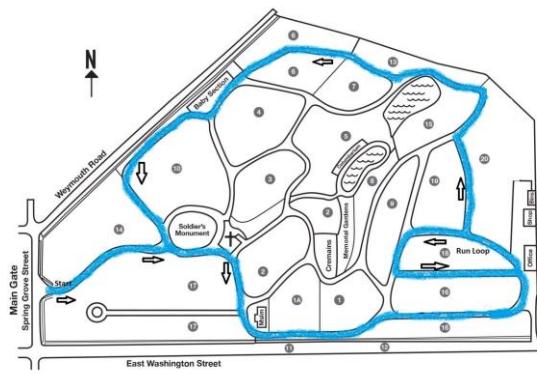
Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery would like to establish a tradition of remembering those interred in the Old Grounds and mausoleum during the holiday season.



Recommendations: Place evergreen boughs near Old Grounds headstones with a candle. Follow Norwegian tradition to remember loved ones on Christmas Eve day with boughs, wreaths, and candles. Candles can be battery operated. Decorate exterior of mausoleum with pine boughs, ribbons, and appropriate lights for the season.

15. Establish ½-Mile and 1-Mile Walking Map with Points of Interest

Woodlawn's park-like setting and winding roads attract many walkers, runners, and others seeking information about historical Wadsworth figures. Creating a map with mile markers and points of interest will enhance the experience of those enjoying the cemetery.

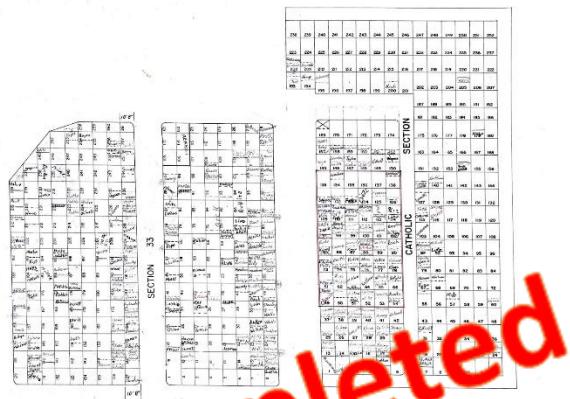


Walking route at Medina Spring Grove Cemetery

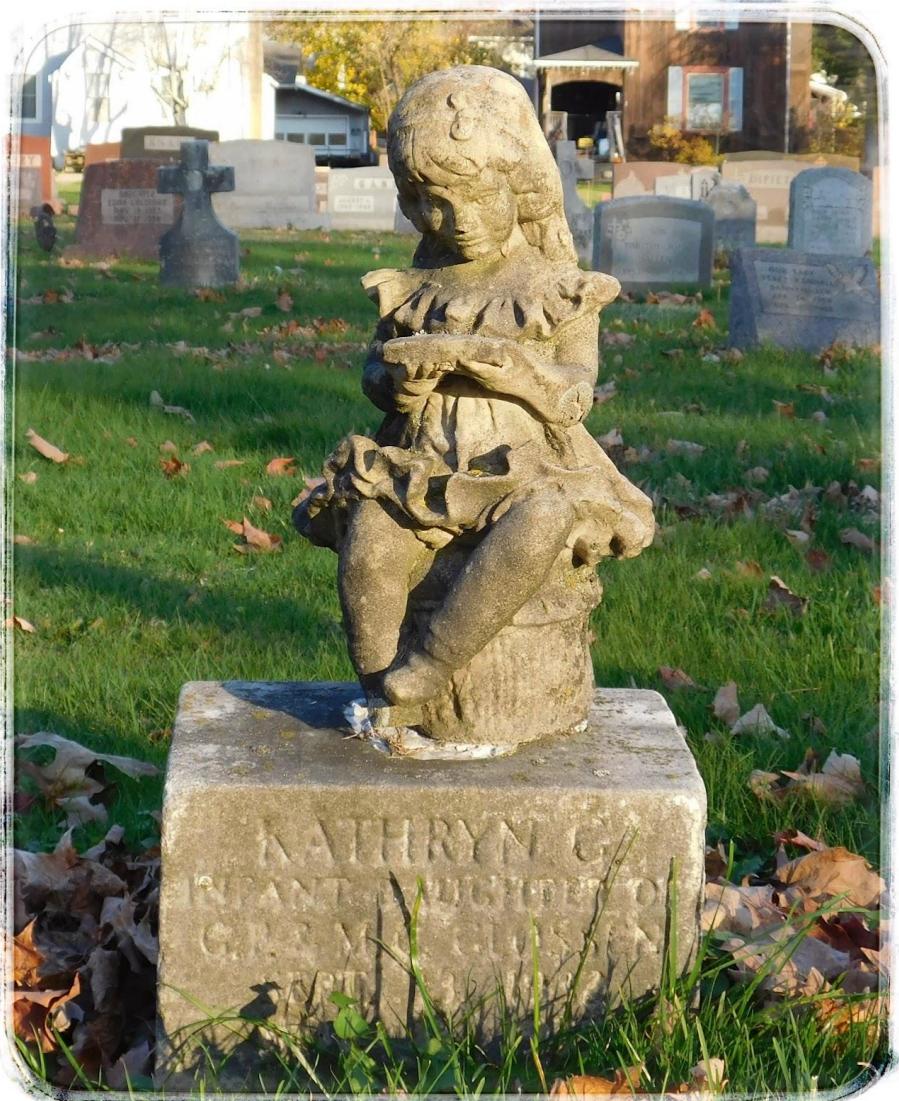
Recommendations: Create a map with 1 and ½ mile designations along with significant Points of Interest within the cemetery. Provide maps on our website, at the cemetery office, entrance displays, and during special events. Update the map every few years.

16. Section Map Scans

The cemetery office has allowed FWC access to their collection of section maps.



Recommendations: Scan section maps and determine best option to update.



Three Year Goals

1. Information Kiosks



Information kiosk at Memorial Park

Information kiosks at entrances will assist and enhance the visitor experience. The display could include a large map, small maps for individual use, cemetery regulations and announcements, and information about Friends of Woodlawn Cemetery.

Recommendations: Possible placements include West St. (South entrance), Beck St., and College St. entrances. Solicit Boy Scouts for Eagle Scout projects.

2. Restoration Outside Old Grounds

FWC will seek permission of the Trustees and Superintendent to start restoration outside the Old Grounds. Many older burial sections have headstones in need of cleaning and repair.



Broken Headstones in Section 12

Recommendations: Begin restoration outside the Old Grounds in 2023.

3. Memorials for Black Burials and Potter's Grounds

Wadsworth's foreign, indigent and Black residents were often required to be buried on the perimeter of the cemetery or in Potter's Grounds. Their exact burial location was never documented. Once considered acceptable, this is now recognized as disrespectful. To rectify this, Michelle Waugh has done extensive research to locate and map the unmarked burials in these sections of the cemetery.

While we may never know exactly where every person was buried, we can honor them and give them the respect they deserve.

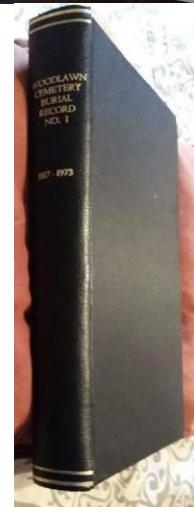
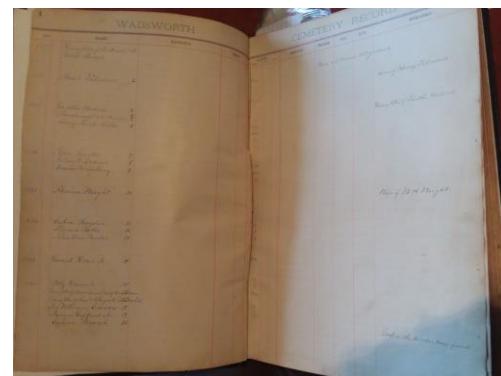


Julia Williams, one of the many former slaves buried in an unmarked grave in Woodlawn

Recommendations: Research and memorialize these burials with a stone, marker, or plaque in the appropriate area(s).

4. Ledger Restoration

The original cemetery ledger had been improperly rebound at an earlier, unknown date. Over the years, it has sustained damage and some information is unreadable.



Recommendations: Research the viability of digitally recording all ledger information. Provide the opportunity for the public to use the digital format. Obtain professional advice for long term storage of the original ledger.

5. Education

Address the need to enhance the education of the public regarding the history and lives of past Wadsworth citizens, monument symbolism, cemetery regulations, and proper care.



Recommendations: Provide the following:

- History Walks with reenactors telling stories of prominent and everyday Wadsworth citizens buried in Woodlawn.
- Distribute pamphlets and maps for self-guided tours that highlight sites of notable citizens interred in the cemetery. This may include distribution at the Wadsworth Library, Historical Society, and cemetery message boards.
- Provide information regarding cemetery care, protocol, and monument symbolism.

6. Trash Bins

Wadsworth Girl Scout Troop 30396 constructed several weather-proof boxes to hold trash cans. This has transformed the old trash receptacles into a decorative addition to the cemetery. This goal includes building additional boxes for all cemetery trash cans and/or replacing the current ones. Concrete platforms would add additional stabilization for receptacles.



Recommendations: Construct remaining boxes or help fund the purchase of new receptacles. Solicit help from service organizations to construct concrete platforms for each receptacle.

7. Utilize Green Space

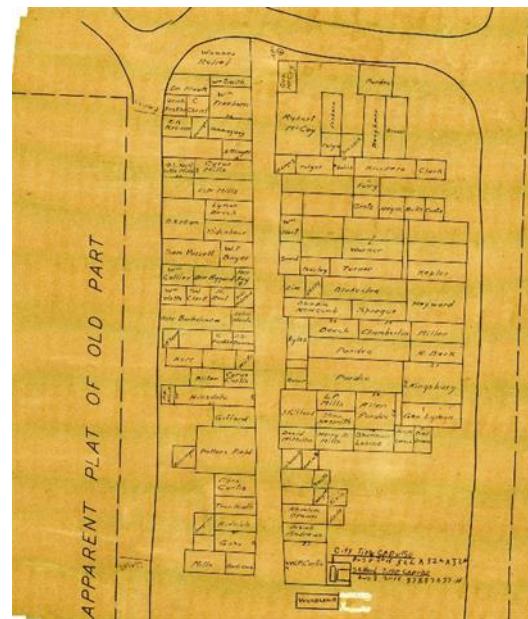
The green space between Sections 32 and 25 cannot be used for burials due to the creek drain. This space is unused. Education talks would appeal to birders, genealogists, environmentalists, and horticulturalists.

Due to the large size of available space, multiple uses such as a picnic area or group education talks/workshops could be accommodated.



8. Old Grounds Map

Individual burials in the Old Grounds were not mapped correctly. The only map that exists for the Old Grounds is a family plot map.



Recommendations: Use drone shots and cartography methods to more precisely map all burial plots in the Old Grounds.

Recommendations: Determine best uses of the green space, with permission of the Superintendent and Board.

9. Woodlawn Conservation Project- Dominion Energy Grant

In 2022, FWC received a grant from Dominion Energy to implement a project that supports the environment. The goals of the project include:

1. Evaluate the health and needed improvements of the stream that bisects the cemetery. This stream is part of the Muskingum Watershed in NE Ohio.
2. Address the maintenance issues concerning the stream area.
3. Improve the overall aesthetics of this area of the cemetery.
4. Plan for future cemetery use in the area.

Recommendations: Project Actions:

1. Work with Medina Soil and Water Conservancy District to evaluate the health of the creek before and after the completion of the project.
2. Hire a professional landscape architectural firm, with cemetery planning experience, to develop a blueprint for future use of the area with erosion control in mind. This will include Sections 25-A and 26. The Superintendent and Trustees will have major input towards the final design.
3. Use a professional arborist to evaluate the existing tree population and suggest appropriate species for planting within the guidelines of the blueprints.
4. Provide educational opportunities for the community.

The timeline for this project is from April 2023 to September 2024.



10. Improve Property Lines

Adjoining homeowner properties can cause eyesores and encroachment onto cemetery property.



A living fence at Wadsworth-Rittman Hospital

Recommendations: Work with landscape architect involved in Goal 9 (Woodlawn Conservation Project) to incorporate a living fence for the purpose of defining and aesthetically improving the cemetery property lines.

11. Columbarium Seating

There is no permanent seating in the columbarium for memorial services. Currently, folding chairs are stored in the mausoleum for this purpose and must be set up for each service.



Committal Shelter at Rittman Cemetery

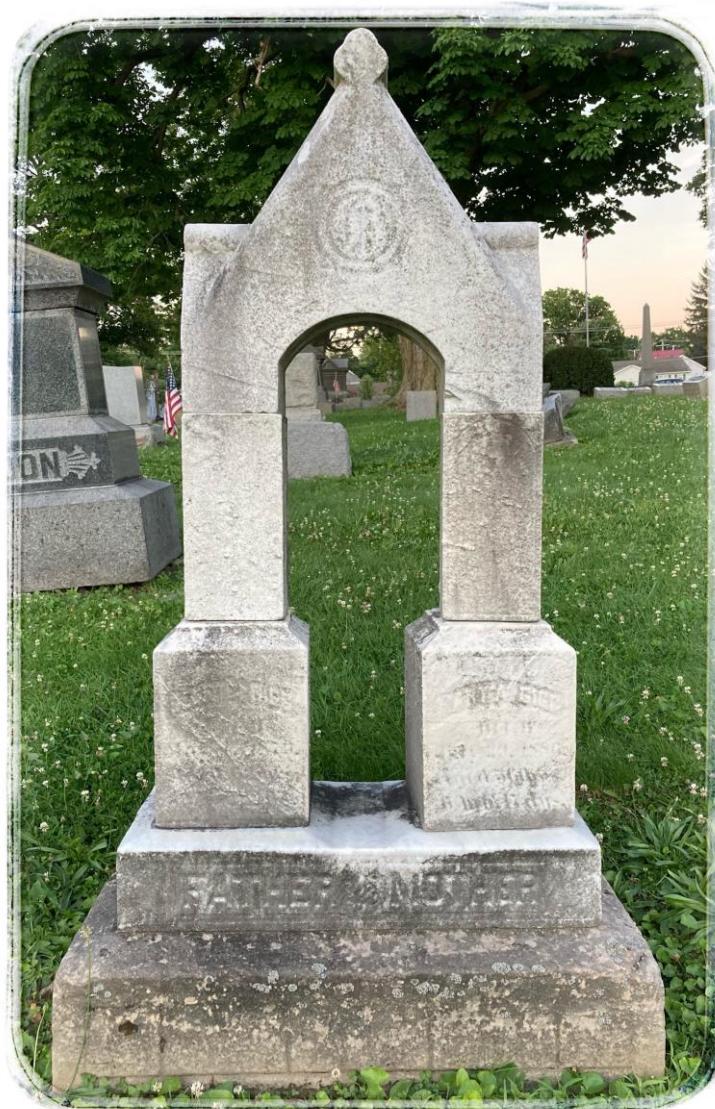
Recommendations: Install a minimum of two permanent metal benches in the columbarium. This will eliminate the need to set up and take down chairs for each service.

12. Markers for All Sections



Many of the sections are lacking section markers and several sections are not laid out in order. This makes navigation within the cemetery challenging. Even with the aid of a cemetery map, it is difficult to determine where one section ends and another begins. This undoubtedly results in frustration for visitors.

Recommendations: Install section markers for all sections; possibly all corners of sections.



Five Year Goals

1. Mausoleum Repairs and Upgrades

General disrepair and previous vandalism have left the mausoleum in need of renovating. The entry door needs to be replaced. The windows have broken plexiglass covers in the front and rusted screen covers in the back. Upgrades are needed for the inside floors and walls.

Recommendations: Hire structural engineer to inspect, prioritize, and estimate costs of needed repairs.

These repairs may include the following:

- Replace or repair roof
- Address water infiltration issues
- Address any foundation concerns
- Repair and/or clean interior and exterior surfaces
- Replace doors and all windows
- Paint interior
- Clean and reseal marble floor

Apply for grants (ex. Ohio Historical Society) to help fund necessary repairs.



2. Embankment Upgrades

Erosion of both the College St. and Pardee embankments has caused several headstones to come dangerously close to the edge. This has created a hazard to the public and maintenance concerns. The Pardee Wall is leaning and has major cracks allowing water to penetrate the fill behind the wall.



Recommendations: Widen the entrance to College St. and replace the embankment with an engineered wall. Use the same type of engineered wall to replace the Pardee Wall. Add a barrier at the top of the College St. wall for the safety of visitors.

3. Road Signs

The lanes of the rural section of Woodlawn were once named. Reinstating original road names will reclaim some of the history of the cemetery and help guide visitors to the correct sections.



Recommendations: Install street signs with original names of cemetery roads. Consider naming all roads in the cemetery.

4. New Lot Markers

Lot markers throughout the cemetery are broken or missing. These markers are vital for locating lot boundaries.



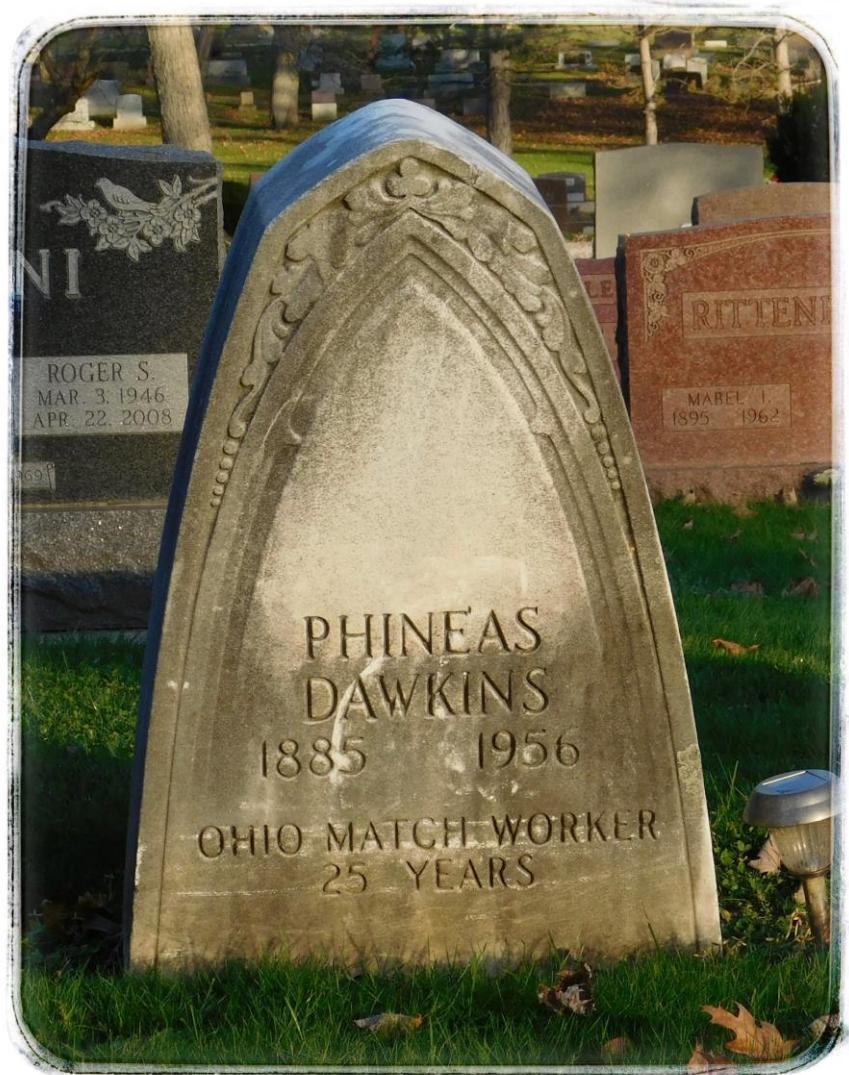
Recommendations: Purchase aluminum lot markers to replace broken and missing markers. The aluminum markers can be inserted below ground and located with a metal detector if needed. This will prevent theft and damage to the markers.

5. Old Grounds Pathway

The pathway through the Old Grounds presents a tripping hazard due to the uneven, broken sidewalk. The cracks are also home to weeds that need to be manually removed every summer. A permanent solution to both of these problems must be addressed.



Recommendations: Implement ways to address the problems with the sidewalk, such as filling in cracks, leveling the path, or possibly installing a new sidewalk.



Ten Year Goals

1. Establish Children's Memorial



Children's Memorial Statue at Meadow Green Memorial Park in Huron, Ohio

Over 750 infants and children are buried in Woodlawn Cemetery and many parents wish to leave tokens of remembrance at their child's gravesite. This can become a maintenance hazard. Old records do not have accurate burial records for infants and children.

Recommendations: Provide a plan for a dedicated Children and Infant Memorial to be placed in or near Sec. 25-A or Sec. 26. This can be included as part of the Dominion Energy Conservation Grant to develop these two sections as outlined in the Three-Year Goals (No. 9). The plan would include an easy to maintain cement pad with a bench, memorial statue, and niche wall for mementos.

A digital data base of burial locations is currently being produced for infants and children up to 11 years old. Date and cause of death, location of grave, and parents' names will be noted and updated as information is found and verified.

2. New Traffic Pattern

The cemetery is often used as a shortcut for motor vehicles from Prospect St. to West St., posing a danger to workers, volunteers, and visitors.



Recommendations: Support changes in cemetery routes being considered by the Superintendent and Trustees. FWC would like the opportunity to address the proposed changes in order to benefit the aesthetics of the cemetery.

3. Office on Cemetery Property

Currently, FWC does not have appropriate space on cemetery property to store equipment, files, maps, or to provide a workspace for projects and research.



Medina Spring Grove Cemetery office

Recommendations: Provide office and storage space for FWC when a new Superintendent's Office Building is constructed on cemetery property.

4. Entry Lamps (Old Grounds)

Entry lights at the top of the steps of the Old Grounds will enhance the aesthetics of the area and provide a measure of safety for those walking the cemetery at dawn and dusk.



Recommendations: Install two solar powered lights at the top of the steps of the Old Grounds.

5. Establish Story Record on Website

Few records exist of the past lives and contributions of everyday citizens of Wadsworth. A Story Record affords a way for family and friends to remember those who played a significant role in their personal lives. Through these records, genealogists will have another tool to research family histories.

Recommendations: Establish a Story Record link on the FWC website for the public to contribute stories of friends, relatives, and loved ones interred in Woodlawn Cemetery.