

= Oakwood Cemetery (Troy , New York) =

Oakwood Cemetery is a nonsectarian rural cemetery in northeastern Troy , New York , United States . It operates under the direction of the Troy Cemetery Association , a non @-@ profit board of directors that deals strictly with the operation of the cemetery . It was established in 1848 in response to the growing rural cemetery movement in New England and went into service in 1850 . The cemetery was designed by architect John C. Sidney and underwent its greatest development in the late 19th century under superintendent John Boetcher , who incorporated rare foliage and a clear landscape design strategy . Oakwood was the fourth rural cemetery opened in New York and its governing body was the first rural cemetery association created in the state .

It features four man @-@ made lakes , two residential structures , a chapel , a crematorium , 24 mausolea , and about 60 @,@ 000 graves , and has about 29 miles (47 km) of roads . It is known both for its dense foliage and rolling lawns , and has historically been used as a public park by Lansingburgh and Troy residents . Oakwood was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 .

Prominent Americans such as Uncle Sam Wilson , Russell Sage , and Emma Willard , at least fourteen members of the United States House of Representatives , and the founders of both Troy and Lansingburgh are buried at Oakwood . The cemetery has been said to be " one of New York State 's most distinguished and well @-@ preserved nineteenth @-@ century rural cemeteries . " It also offers a famous panoramic view of the Hudson River Valley that is said to be the " most concentrated and complete overview of American history anywhere in America " .

= = History = =

The first rural cemetery in the United States ? Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge , Massachusetts ? was developed in the 1830s . Rural cemeteries are burial grounds typically located on the fringe of a city that offer a natural setting for interment of the dead . The development of rural cemeteries followed closely with the English garden movement of the early 19th century .

The Troy Cemetery Association was formed on September 9 , 1848 ; John Paine , D. Thomas Vail , Isaac McConihe , George M. Tibbits , John B. Gale , and Stephen E. Warren were elected its trustees . It was the first rural cemetery association incorporated under an 1847 law authorizing the incorporation of such associations . The trustees appointed a committee to report on an eligible location for a cemetery and on September 5 , 1849 , the first parcel of land was purchased . On October 16 , 1850 , the land of the cemetery was consecrated and Oakwood became the fourth rural cemetery founded in New York . The Association is made up of lot owners who are elected by fellow lot owners ; the position is voluntary and receives no pay .

Oakwood was designed by John C. Sidney , a Philadelphia engineer familiar with cemetery design , with the help of Garnet Douglass Baltimore , the first African American to earn a degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute . The plan consisted of roads , man @-@ made lakes , dense vegetation , and rolling hills , covering about 300 acres (120 ha) , including the modern sections A through Q. Sidney also designed the original superintendent 's house and receiving tomb , neither of which exist today . For all Sidney 's extensive planning , the first plots were laid out in a seemingly haphazard manner by the first superintendent , Robert Fergusson .

Although Sidney was the architect of the cemetery , it was superintendent John Boetcher that gave Oakwood its charm . Boetcher became superintendent in 1871 and continued in the position until 1898 . At the beginning of his tenure , Oakwood was said to be quite crude . During Boetcher 's tenure Oakwood 's most important icons were built : the Earl Chapel and Crematorium , the Warren Chapel Mortuary , the keeper 's house , the office lodge , numerous mausolea , and both the 101st Street and 114th Street entrances (including a bridge over the Troy and Boston Railroad on Oakwood 's western border to the 101st Street entrance) . Boetcher incorporated exceptional landscape design techniques during his tenure ; Oakwood developed shifting landscape scenery : some areas are dominated by flowing lawns while others comprise dense foliage . Boetcher brought in rare and foreign plants to help beautify the cemetery , including umbrella pines and Colorado blue

spruce .

In 1869 , the City of Troy bought the property of the Third Street Burying Ground for the site of a new city hall . This was the burial site for many of Troy 's earliest inhabitants ; the City had bought lot number 102 in Section N for re @-@ interment of 146 graves . The Vanderheyden family and Jacob Lansing , founders of Troy and Lansingburgh respectively , were re @-@ interred in Oakwood from private , family cemeteries . With these re @-@ interments , the graves within Oakwood span the entire the history of Troy . Although it was a cemetery by definition , Oakwood quickly became a place for recreation and was used in its early days as a public park . In response to its popularity , many memorials include benches in their design , aimed to invite visitors to rest while enjoying their visit . So popular was Oakwood that in 1908 the Association began a stage service between the Oakwood Avenue and 114th Street entrances .

A 325 @-@ acre (132 ha) section of Oakwood was nominated for the National Register of Historic Places in August 1984 and was added to the Register on October 10 , 1984 . The cemetery originally owned about 110 acres (45 ha) on the east side of Oakwood Avenue , but sold the land in two transactions in the 2000s (decade) . The land deals were made to increase the Association 's operating income . As of 2009 , the cemetery contained roughly 60 @,@ 000 graves and its numbers continue to grow . The Association expects to be able to accept interments until at least the early 23rd century .

= = Geography = =

Oakwood is built on an escarpment that rises east of the fluvial plain surrounding the Hudson River , opposite the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk . It is in eastern Lansingburgh , within the northeast section of the city of Troy . Its western edge is dominated by a steep , densely vegetated hill that descends to the city below while the central and eastern portions of the cemetery comprise rolling hills graced with trees and vegetation that include four man @-@ made ponds created by damming local streams . The property is generally long and thin , running approximately north @-@ south along Oakwood Avenue (New York Route 40) .

The cemetery covers 352 acres (142 ha) of which 325 acres (132 ha) contribute to the listing on the National Register of Historic Places . In the east @-@ west direction , the cemetery extends from Gurley Avenue and the bed of the old Troy and Boston Railroad on the west , to Oakwood Avenue on the east . The northern boundary is Farrell Road Extension and the southern boundary is a line that extends due east from a point just south of 101st Street , to Oakwood Avenue .

The cemetery is split into sections for ease of finding graves which , for the most part , follow an alphabetic (e.g. Section K) or alphanumeric (e.g. Section D @-@ 3) naming system , though there are some that follow a numeric scheme . The sections are split by paved and gravel roads and pedestrian paths that total 29 miles (47 km) .

There are three operating entrances to the cemetery . The main entrance is on Oakwood Avenue at the southern tip of the property ; it is flanked by the keeper 's house . The 114th Street entrance is marked only by a gate and connects to Gurley Avenue . The 101st Street entrance passes the office lodge .

= = Landmarks = =

The large amount of space in rural cemeteries permits the use of sculpture in a way that the crowded churchyard has never allowed . Many rural cemeteries , including Oakwood , subsequently became virtual outdoor sculpture museums , displaying the works of well @-@ known contemporary sculptors as memorials to the deceased . Oakwood is home to thousands of individual statues and sculptures as well as 24 private mausolea . Because of its popularity as a public park , many memorials included benches to invite visitors to rest while investigating the large , hilly property .

Many historically important sculptors are represented on the grounds of Oakwood . Robert E. Launitz , creator of the memorial urn for A. J. Downing on the National Mall in Washington , D. C. , sculpted the memorial for Major General George H. Thomas , which incorporates a white marble

sarcophagus topped with a bald eagle . William Rinehart 's final work , a life @-@ size sculpture of Julia Taylor Paine , resides in Oakwood . J. Massey Rhind , known for his statue of Crawford W. Long in the National Statuary Hall Collection , is the artist behind the Robert Ross Monument . The Ross Monument shows Ross defending a ballot box , honoring his martyrdom , which resulted from his active work against election corruption in Troy . Joseph Fuller 's grave is marked by an elaborately carved Celtic Cross ? one of the first in the cemetery ? and is based on another monument that Fuller saw while visiting Ireland .

One of the most significant monuments is that to Major General John E. Wool . The 75 @.@ 5 @-@ foot (23 @.@ 0 m) monolithic obelisk which was a technological marvel in its day is constructed from granite quarried and shaped by the Bodwell Granite Company of Vinalhaven , Maine , and at 650 tons was believed to be the largest shaft quarried in the United States up to that time . It was transported to Troy by boat and brought to the cemetery on rollers . This and the many other obelisks in the cemetery exhibit the sentiment and taste of the Victorian and Edwardian eras .

In 1862 the Troy Cemetery Association set aside an area in Section P , called the Soldiers ' Plot , for deceased Army and Navy officers and soldiers from Rensselaer County .

= = = Gardner Earl Memorial Chapel and Crematorium = = =

The most significant building on the property is the Gardner Earl Memorial Chapel and Crematorium , a Richardsonian Romanesque structure built between 1887 and 1889 , which sits near the edge of the escarpment about 300 feet (91 m) above the Hudson . The building was financed by William S. Earl , a successful Troy manufacturer , as a memorial to his son who became ill and died on a trip to Europe in March 1887 . The deceased son was an early promoter of cremation and was himself cremated in Buffalo .

The building consists of a 90 @-@ foot (27 m) bell tower with an 18 @-@ foot (5 @.@ 5 m) square base on the south side , connected by a triple @-@ arched loggia to a chapel and crematorium on the north side . The floor plan of the entire building measures 136 by 70 feet (41 by 21 m) . The exterior is covered by a pink @-@ tinted Westerly granite and the foundation sits completely on bedrock .

The interior is noted for its sumptuous and intricate design . The original furnace room was transformed into an elaborately designed reception room in 1889 , the furnaces having been moved into a separate room . This features significant use of marble , from Siena , Japan , and Africa , on its walls , floors , and molding . The Troy Daily Times stated on November 7 , 1889 , that , " the chapel is a model of architectural and mechanical skill , " and that the chapel 's reception room " is certainly the equal , and possibly in respect to artistic detail and elaborateness of execution , the superior of any church interior in the land . "

The interior of the chapel is marked by quartered oak ceilings , bluestone floors , and five original Tiffany stained glass windows . The chancel contains an onyx altar and mosaic floor made of more than twenty colors of marble .

The Earl Crematorium was listed in its own right on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 and was designated a National Historic Landmark on March 5 , 2012 .

= = = Warren Family Mortuary Chapel = = =

The Warren Family Mortuary Chapel is a stone chapel built on a knoll near the center of the cemetery . It was designed by Henry Dudley of New York City and built in 1860 in the English country Gothic style , complete with a nave and transept floor plan . A tower was added in 1883 , with great care placed on finding building material that matched the earlier structure . The Chapel contains stained glass windows above the altar designed by artist Robert Walter Weir . Former member of the United States House of Representatives Joseph Mabbett Warren (1813 ? 1896) is interred in the chapel .

= = = Vanderheyden Bell = = =

The Vanderheyden Bell , a memorial itself , is located northeast of the Earl Crematorium . It is a bronze , cast bell weighing more than 3 @,@ 000 pounds (1 @,@ 400 kg) . Its original home was under a log shelter on the premises . At some point , it was placed into storage . In 1971 it was resurrected and hung among four redwood posts , becoming an additional " tower " on the property .

= = = Mausolea = = =

Oakwood is home to 24 mausolea and burial vaults exhibiting a wide range of architectural styles including Greek Revival , Egyptian Revival , Roman Revival , Gothic Revival , Romanesque , and Palladian . These structures are scattered throughout the grounds , some clustered , some not . They house the remains of some of Troy 's wealthier and more important historical figures .

The Cannon Mausoleum is mainly Greek Revival to look at , but also has Romanesque aspects , such as a cruciform floor plan and a domed roof . The Strobe Mausoleum is a simplified Greek Revival structure , with a bronze door in the Art Nouveau style displaying an angel surrounded by lilies . The Tracy Mausoleum , incorporating the most eclectic mix of design influences on the property , has a rock @-@ faced stone exterior covered with foliate carvings . It displays a combination of Romanesque , Moorish , and Baroque elements , and is topped with a " beehive " roof ? one of its more recognizable design features . The Tibbits Mausoleum , Vail Vault , and Gale Mausoleum are all done in the Gothic Revival style . The Kemp Mausoleum is the Palladian representative on site and the Paine Mausoleum is another eclectic design , octagonal in shape , and flanked by benches .

The Sage Mausoleum , built of Westerly granite , exhibits obvious Greek influences and is intentionally not marked . Russell Sage , the wealthy financier and member of the United States House of Representatives from Troy , is interred alone ; his second wife Margaret decided to be buried with her parents in Syracuse . To the left of the memorial is a bench that contains a relief of Medusa on the center of the back , complete with snakes as hair .

= = = The Panorama = = =

The Panorama is an 84 @-@ inch (210 cm) panoramic photograph created by local photographer Tom Wall and set in acrylic on a steel stand in the cemetery 's northwestern section . It sits at the edge of a bluff directly overlooking the grounds of Lansingburgh High School and Knickerbacker Middle School . The photograph spans a 100 @-@ mile (160 km) view and contains labels and notes ? referred to by the Troy Cemetery Association as " cliff notes " ? about the history of objects shown in the photograph . From this point , one can view Albany and the Empire State Plaza (most notably the Corning Tower and Alfred E. Smith Building) , the Helderberg Escarpment , South Troy , downtown Troy , Lansingburgh , Watervliet , Green Island , Cohoes , the Cohoes Falls , Waterford , the Hudson River , the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers , and the eastern terminus of the Erie Canal . The Troy Cemetery Association claims that the view offers the " most concentrated and complete overview of American history anywhere in America " . It shows evidence of paleolithic rocks , Native Americans , the Dutch , the British , the French and Indian Wars , the American Revolution , the Industrial Revolution , and the " Way West " movement resulting in the creation of the Erie Canal and Champlain Canal .

= = = Notable interments = = =

There are a number of historically prominent figures buried at Oakwood . At least fourteen members of the United States House of Representatives (all from New York) are buried there , including E. Harold Cluett , John Paine Cushman , John Dean Dickinson , William Henry Draper , Edward Whitford Greenman , Job Pierson , Russell Sage , Dean Park Taylor , John Richardson Thurman , George Tibbits , Martin Ingham Townsend , Henry Vail , Joseph Mabbett Warren (also the mayor of

Troy) , and Eliphalet Wickes . The cemetery also has its fair share of military men , such as J. B. Carr , a general during the Civil War ; John Augustus Griswold , a promoter of ironclad ships and manufacturer of iron panels for the USS Monitor ; Commodore Cicero Price (1805 @-@ 1888) , who served in the American Civil War and commanded the East India Squadron ; George Henry Thomas , a general during the American Civil War , nicknamed the " Rock of Chickamauga " ; and John E. Wool , commander @-@ in @-@ chief of the American forces during the Mexican @-@ American War .

As previously mentioned , the founders of Troy and Lansingburgh , Jacob D. Vanderheyden and Abraham Jacob Lansing respectively , were both re @-@ interred at Oakwood , having been moved there from downtown in 1869 . Some of education 's finest teachers are also buried there , including Amos Eaton , a well @-@ known botanist and geologist and founder of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute ; Mary Warren , founder of America 's first educational institution for " problem children " ; and Emma Willard , pioneer of women 's education and founder of the Troy Female Seminary , which was later renamed Emma Willard School in her honor . Finally , Oakwood is also the final resting place of Samuel Wilson , the progenitor of America 's national symbol , Uncle Sam .