



The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery 2019 Annual Report

As we wave farewell to 2019 and welcome a new decade, FOMH is pleased to celebrate our 2019 accomplishments while looking forward to additional progress in 2020.

This 2019 Annual Report provides a brief description of FOMH's numerous activities. We hosted a historic number of guests at our tours and programs, planted more trees, reset hundreds of headstones and cleaned many more. As an all-volunteer organization, these milestones are a testament to the power and support of our members. We thank each of them.

Care for Monuments, Gravestones and Statuary

Grants totaling \$28,500 were received in 2019 from the Farash, Ames Amzalak, and Bausch Foundations, along with a grant from Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF); \$9,500 was expended, with the balance to be used for cemetery improvements in 2020, especially around the Anthony family plot (2020 is the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment and her 200th 'birthday'). Our major achievement was to repair and reset of over 340 gravestones. With FOMH operating monies and these grants, work was completed on the repair and restoration of gravestones in Sections D (Sibley section) and C (SBA section). Work in Section G, begun in 2018, was completed. Iconic graves, such as the Bausch monument and Laura Knapp, were professionally cleaned. A volunteer crew cleaned hundreds more.

Care for Gardens and Trees

FOMH volunteers maintained eleven garden plots and four planters in the cemetery. FOMH provided funds for the professional treatment of five iconic trees, done annually. FOMH volunteers also maintained the Douglass and Anthony Family plots. A new cradle grave program began, and 25 volunteer gardeners installed and maintain beautiful cradle grave plantings. A volunteer-created website focusing on the trees in Mount Hope Cemetery (<https://www.plantsmap.com/organizations/fomh>) expanded and a three-year tree tagging initiative entered Year 2; 71 additional trees were tagged in 2019. Five new trees were purchased, planted, and maintained (watered!).

Tours for the Public

In 2019, FOMH scheduled 72 tours, including 44 tours designed to provide an overview of the cemetery and its residents, and 28 Theme Tours focused on specific aspects of Mount Hope's interesting history. These walking tours, averaging 1.5 hours, had 1,975 participants. In 2019, FOMH also conducted its major fundraiser, Torch Light Tours, with multiple tours over two evenings that attracted 550 participants.

Educational Tours, Charter Tours, and Lectures

FOMH tour guides conducted 15 tours, free of charge, for area school children, students and accompanying parents – each correlated to their classroom's curriculum. Free tours were also provided scouting and other youth groups. FOMH volunteer tour guides also conducted twenty-one walking and van tours for civic, university, senior citizen, and business groups. Our speakers' bureau offered ten programs for civic and educational organizations, with 425 people attending. A newly established collaboration with the Genesee Country Museum provided two free tours for GCV docents. The Highland Conservancy collaboration, started in 2018, continued and FOMH volunteers were invited to a special tour of Highland Park.

Publications

Throughout 2019, FOMH continued to sell its previously published books about the cemetery. FOMH also printed and distributed to all members four issues of its acclaimed *Epitaph* newsletter. At year end, 20,000 copies of the Mount Hope Cemetery Pocket Guide were reprinted. FOMH and Cemetery staff will use this popular brochure for years to come to introduce the public to our historic cemetery.

Genealogical Services

As a free, volunteer service to the public, FOMH responded to inquiries for burial and other information, typically from family members and descendants of persons buried in the cemetery. During 2019, two FOMH genealogists assisted 70 people from all over the United States as well as Europe and the Middle East.

Trust Funds

FOMH now administers seven trust accounts that provide monies to support the ongoing care of specific mausoleums and family plots in Mount Hope Cemetery.

Public Relations

FOMH maintains an active up-to-date website and Facebook page. Throughout 2019, FOMH communicated with the public via outreach to local newspapers, radio, and TV outlets and reached its members via email alerts (via Constant Contact). FOMH is a member of Visit Rochester and Trip Advisor.

Membership and Volunteers

FOMH significantly increased its membership in 2019, ending the year with 682 members, including 305 new members. Throughout the year, an emphasis was placed on recruiting new members at our tours and events, while an effort was made to encourage lapsed members to renew. For 2019, three hundred fifty volunteers helped support FOMH and worked to improve Mount Hope Cemetery, including new volunteers recruited as tour guides, receptionists, gardeners, and one-time workers.

2019's Finances

2019 was a good year for FOMH. Memberships, donations, sales, tours and events generated over \$72,000 and grants of \$28,500 were received from the Rochester Area Community Foundation (RACF) and the Ames Amzalak, Bausch, and Farash foundations. As a result, FOMH was able to expend over \$55,000 for cemetery improvements, while retaining grant funds of \$19,000 for cemetery projects in 2020. FOMH also reprinted the popular Mount Hope Pocket Guide, published the Epitaph and served thousands of people in 2019, with thousands more benefiting for an enhanced cemetery. As usual, FOMH's overhead expenses were low, less than 10% of expenditures, as the result of being an all-volunteer organization with a building (the 1874 Gatehouse) provided by the Cemetery. Thus, FOMH ended 2019 with a small surplus, even without counting 2019's exceptional investment gains (FOMH's investment assets are with RACF).