



# Cortland Rural Cemetery

[www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com](http://www.cortland-rural-cemetery.com)

110 TOMPKINS STREET • CORTLAND, NEW YORK 13045

Spring 2012

## GIBSON CHAPEL RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION

Thanks to grants and gifts received by the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation, work is continuing on repairs to the historic Gibson Chapel. Through the efforts of the Trustees' Buildings and Grounds Committee, George Grady, a gifted painting and plastering reconstructionist from Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, agreed to undertake the project. By the time you read this, the work will be nearing completion.

The chair of the Trustees' B&G Committee, Robert Morris, who located Mr. Grady, reported that he "comes with terrific recommendations." For example, Mr. Grady used a historical restoration mix of horse hair, pig hair, and putty to repair the bedrooms of the Dey Mansion in Wayne, New Jersey, a home which served as General George Washington's headquarters during much of the Revolutionary War.

Other sites Mr. Grady has worked on include: the Civil War-era West Kensington Ministry at Norris Square in Philadelphia, a project which included repairing stained glass windows from that time; the Burrows Mansion of Matawan, New Jersey, where he "rebuilt the floor areas in the tenants' quarters in such a manner that it is hard to tell where the work was performed"; and the Count Basie Theater, originally the Carlton Theater of Red Bank, New Jersey, built in 1926, for which he restored the original molding, with marbleization and woodgraining techniques.

This project culminates a two-year effort to repair the Gibson Chapel. Of course, this architecturally significant building underwent major renovation beginning in 1998 under the leadership of Charles Gibson, who was then chair of the Board of Trustees. However, weather and age resulted in a leaking roof and flaking masonry. Last year repairs were made on the Chapel roof (thanks to major gifts from the Wilkins Foundation and Charles Gibson's sister Margaret). The restroom was also updated using income from the Foundation's endowment following a fund-raising campaign in 2008. This year the ceiling and external masonry were repaired, funded by annual gifts to the Foundation received mostly in response to appeals in this newsletter, and a matching gift from Margaret Gibson.



# ART DECO IN THE CEMETERY

Among the 19,000 tombstones and monuments identifying graves in the Cortland Rural Cemetery are many which gloriously honor the lives of the beloved departed. They range from utterly simple headstones to beautifully decorated marble slabs and even imposing family mausoleums. Many display statues and ornamental urns. Often they reflect the tastes and styles of the eras when they were put in place.

Recently a stroller enjoying the Cemetery noted a number of monuments which bore the markings of the Art Deco style which surged around the globe in the worlds of art, architecture, film, design, and even fashion. Art Deco was an artistic design style which began in Paris sparked by a 1925 exposition on the industrial and decorative arts. It flourished until after World War II and, judging from what is seen in our Cemetery, influenced monument makers here. Note the linear symmetry and modernistic restraint of this sample of lovely grave markers.



The Groundskeeper could use a good used golf cart. Currently, staff go by tractor to all parts of the Cemetery. A golf cart would be adequate for every-day trips that do not require a large machine; in addition, it could be used to direct funerals to burial sites. Please call and leave a message at 756-6022 if you can help.

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

“Calling hours,” a custom of paying one’s respects to the deceased while sympathizing with family and friends, has evolved from visitations to a home for the same purposes over a period of three days. Referred to as “wakes,” a word derived from a loose translation of a word meaning “watch” or “alert,” a body prepared for burial would lay in state in the parlor, not to be left alone, day or night. The three days of the custom are assumed to relate to the death of Christ and his resurrection after three days. However, on the side of practicality, medicine known then did not provide complete confidence in a doctor’s pronouncement of death. A wake of three days insured that the corpse would not “awake” after interment. It also guaranteed that if it should wake up, it would not be alone.



*A late Spring snowstorm did this, exemplifying the need for constant (and expensive Cemetery maintenance). The Duell monument stands tall, rear.*

### HELPING THE CORTLAND RURAL CEMETERY AFTER YOU'RE GONE

Ordinarily people consider community assets such as schools, churches, museums, parks, cemeteries, and roadways as givens, common institutions inherited from the past and likely to continue into the indefinite future. But actually they all need continuing support, whether from the public purse or private pocket.

The Cortland Rural Cemetery is one of these assets with an historic past and a promising if fragile future. It is a non-profit (and non-sectarian) service institution which depends on revenue from burial fees and gifts from friends. It also receives, through its Foundation, bequests from public-spirited citizens who may or may not have forebears and relatives buried there. It is not municipally supported.

Consider naming the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation as a beneficiary in your will or estate plan. It would help the Cemetery to retain its traditional role as a local institution that properly honors its history and standing in our community.

To include the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation in your estate plan through a will or trust, you should contact an attorney. He or she will help you decide on the proper legal instrument, perhaps by establishing a new will or trust or by amending a document you already have in place.

Wording such as the following might be considered:

*“I hereby give to the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation, Federal tax I.D. number 16-1516368, 110 Tompkins Street (or P. O. Box 288), Cortland, New York, 13045, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% of the residual sum of my estate or property herein described, to be placed in the Endowment Fund for the benefit of the Cortland Rural Cemetery.”*

Of course, the Foundation can also be named as a full or partial beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement account.

## Cortland Rural Cemetery Trustees

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Spaces in the Gibson Chapel are available in its public mausoleum and its columbaria for cremation remains. The Chapel may also be used for memorial and other services. Please call the Cemetery office at (607) 756-6022 for costs and other information.

**Tax-deductible gifts to preserve and enhance the Cemetery may be made to the Foundation. Checks should be made out to the Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation.**



## Cortland Rural Cemetery Foundation

Post Office Box 288  
Cortland, NY 13045-0288  
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The winter weather, especially the wind, has taken a toll on parts of the cemetery. We could use the community's help: picking up winter debris including branches, twigs, and leaves as well as raking and trimming some bushes. We would be happy to supply the proper bags for collection of the debris. Please bring your own garden gloves, rakes, trimmers and whatever else you think you might need. Does your service group need some volunteer hours? Families or individuals, we can use all volunteers. Call our office at 756-6022 and leave a message.