



The News Journal/JENNIFER CORBETT

Mark Baranowski seals the century-old Stoeckle mausoleum in Riverview Cemetery. Over the years, vandals have stolen decorative pieces and vandalized caskets. After a recent desecration, the family decided to seal the crypt and preserve what is left.

# FAMILY SEEKS DECENT BURIAL FOR ANCESTORS

## Vandals recently crushed casket, stole a skull

By **TERRI SANGINITI**  
Staff reporter

The century-old Stoeckle family mausoleum on Riverview Cemetery's west side once boasted a black wrought-iron door opposite an ornate half-moon, stained-glass window.

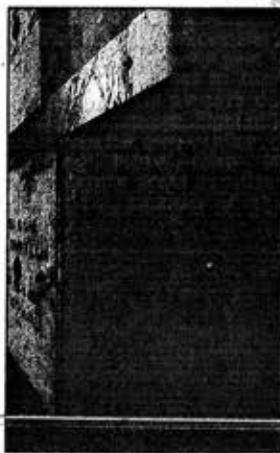
Long ago, vandals plundered the doors of the crypt built by Diamond State Brewery founder Joseph Stoeckle, who died in 1893.

Four months ago, thieves broke through the white-marble door of a ground vault holding the remains of 29-year-old Hannah Graham, crushed the casket and stole the skull.

Graham was married, bore a son and divorced, before dying May 16, 1907, after a long illness, according to Thomas Graham Russell, who has researched his family's genealogy.

Police still have no suspects and no new leads in the Nov. 9 desecration at the cemetery at 33rd and Market streets and have not recovered the missing skull, Senior Cpl. Stephen Martelli, police spokesman, said.

Ann Louise Graham, Han-

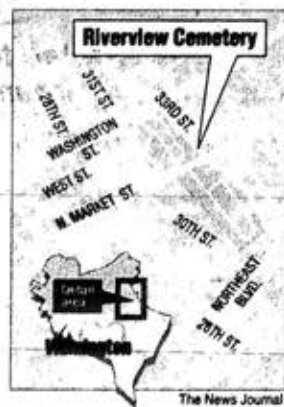


**Instead of restoring the mausoleum that holds a relative's desecrated remains, the Graham family had it sealed.**

nah Graham's second cousin and Russell's mother, said the act of desecration has left the family feeling violated.

"It's a shame that they had to do this," Graham said. "You go to all that trouble to build something to keep your loved one safe. It's ridiculous."

The 130-year-old cemetery has a checkered recent past. It was forced to close in June 2001, when its owners declared bankruptcy. State officials sued the owners after receiving more than 85 complaints from families about the upkeep of the



The News Journal

**delawareonline.com**

Previous articles.

grounds, mismanagement of cemetery records and the state of the cemetery's perpetual-care fund.

In late January, the 87-acre property was turned over to the Rev. Tom C. Davis of Restoration Christian Fellowship Church, who said he hopes to restore its reputation.

Graham's descendants, though, are acting on their own.

Earlier this week, workers sealed the marble and granite building at the request of Graham's relatives.

Mark Baranowski, of B&B Custom Masonry Inc. in New Castle, measured and mortared blocks for the front door, while his brother Stanley worked on scaffolding behind the building, bricking up the half-moon window.

Surveying the brothers' progress was Greg Gates, of Gates Brothers Contractors in Newport, who provided the masons with 110 blocks, cement and sand at no cost to complete the task. The Baranowski brothers supplied free labor.

"[The family] elected to do this, because no one else is going to be buried here," Mark Baranowski said.

The mausoleum has 26 crypts, four of them still empty.

Funeral director Jim Keith of Mealey Funeral Home reinterred Graham's remains at no cost to the family in mid-December. Plans to seal the building were put on hold at the time because of the cold weather.

"We were going to do something decorative to match the granite, but [Thomas Russell] said he wanted it to look like a deterrent."

Russell said the family has taken photographs of the mausoleum's interior to pass down to future generations.

"Let them rest in peace," he said.

► Reach Terri Sanginiti at 324-2771 or tsangiti@delawareonline.com.