

# OCA JOURNAL

PROVIDING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT TO ALL OHIO CEMETERIES

APRIL 2013  
VOLUME 3  
ISSUE 1

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(DAN APPLIGATE)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**ANNUAL CONVENTION  
and FIELD DAY**  
AUGUST 12-13-14, 2013  
EMBASSY SUITES  
DUBLIN, OH

AUGUST 14, 2013  
FIELD DAY  
ST. JOSEPH'S CEMETERY  
LOCKBOURNE, OH

**CREMATION  
CERTIFICATION  
PROGRAM**  
AUGUST 15, 2013  
EMBASSY SUITES  
DUBLIN, OH  
(Visit OCA website  
([ohiocemeteryassociation.com](http://ohiocemeteryassociation.com))  
for agenda and registration  
information

**FALL  
MAINTENANCE  
SEMINARS**  
OCTOBER 01, 2013  
NORTH LOCATION:  
ASHLAND COUNTY  
MEMORIAL PARK  
ASHLAND, OH

OCTOBER 03, 2013  
SOUTH LOCATION:  
DAYTON MEMORIAL PARK  
DAYTON, OH

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We are trying something new with our OCA Journal. The Newsletter/Advertising Committee is teaming up to bring the Journal to us electronically. I'm not exactly sure I understand all that I know about it, but they are all excited and seem to be having fun. Let us know what you think. We look forward to your feedback.

While our Winter Conference took place in February at the Embassy Suites in Dublin, Ohio, we were somewhat disappointed with the turn out for this event. Some extraordinary speakers brought both fun and serious topics to light. It appears that perhaps the weather may have influenced our attendance along with the OTA Convention & Trade Show which was held just prior to our event. Your OCA Board of Directors are going to review and undoubtedly make some changes in our scheduling of events going forward. We will keep you well informed as we endeavor to make it easier for both our suppliers and membership to participate in future functions.

I must acknowledge a "Hat's Off to You" occurrence, which took place in Northeastern Ohio during the past week or so. You may have heard the news about an automobile accident in which eight young people in an SUV flipped over and plunged into a pond in Warren, Ohio. All but two of the passengers died. The Roberts family of Wooster, Ohio who own Pineview Cemetery in Warren, offered free graves spaces plus opening and closing fees to the families of those six who died. It is my understanding that the families have accepted their offer. The Roberts family is to be applauded for their community outreach. Their reaction was swift and they were certainly leading from the front, ahead of most other death care professionals.

Therefore, to Greg, Jeff, Kirk and Alex, we publicly thank you and your staff for representing us well.

Bob Moses, OCA President

# MCGILL SMITH PUNSHON, INC.

## Cemetery Design and the Landscape Lawn Concept

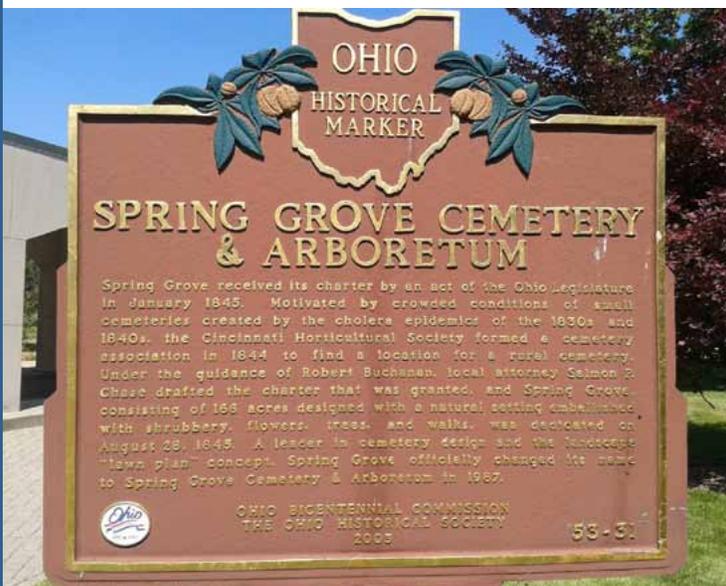
Joseph Earnshaw (1831-1906) was a prominent Cincinnati surveyor, civil engineer, and landscape engineer who worked alongside Adolph Strauch on the development of Spring Grove Cemetery starting in 1857. Together they brought the “landscape lawn” concept to Spring Grove’s grounds. Earnshaw often employed Thomas B. Punshon (1855-1932) as a junior assistant and in 1890 he made Punshon his partner. Together they would start an amazing journey across the United States designing new cemeteries.

In the late 1800s, the United States witnessed the migration of its growing population westward from the eastern seaboard. This shifting population created a need for more of the amenities of the time, which included cemeteries. Capitalizing on their experience with Spring Grove Cemetery, Earnshaw and Punshon began to acquire numerous commissions to design new cemeteries. Their designs were based upon the “landscape lawn” concept in which the landscape and plantings took precedence over the monuments and headstones.



Joseph Earnshaw spent a great deal of time in the Erie County, New York area during the period of 1850-1874. His peer group included Fredrick Law Olmstead, often credited as the “Father of Landscape Architecture”, renowned architect Samuel Hannaford, and other members of a local guild of craftsman. Earnshaw earned a commission to design the grounds of The Forest Lawn Cemetery in Erie County, New York.

Records indicate that Earnshaw and Punshon embarked on their westward journey shortly after the completion of the Forest Lawn Cemetery design and construction. In 1884, Earnshaw and Punshon designed the Highland Lawn Cemetery on 139 acres in Terra Haute, Indiana. Once again they used the “landscape lawn” concept to create an environment focused on the natural lay of the land



and accentuated with a strategic planting plan. Highland Lawn Cemetery was placed on the National Register and State Registry of Historic Places in 1991.

In 1886, some 500 miles to the west, Earnshaw found himself under contract to design the Forest Lawn Memorial Park located in Omaha, Nebraska. The curvilinear street pattern bears a strong resemblance to Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati as well as some of Earnshaw's other projects.

By this time Earnshaw and Punshon had achieved some notoriety for their designs and continued their westward journey designing new cemeteries along the way. A listing of those cemeteries and other projects identified as being designed by Earnshaw and Punshon includes:

- Prospect Park, Toronto, Canada (1889)
- Subdivision of South San Francisco, San Francisco, California (1890)
- Columbian Park, Lafayette, Indiana (1892)
- Consultations with City of Indianapolis, Indiana (1894)
- Crapo Park, Burlington, Iowa (1895)
- Fairview Cemetery, Halifax, Nova Scotia (1896)
- Broadacres, Los Angeles, California (1897)
- East Redondo, Los Angeles, California (1897)
- The Hollywood Cemetery, Hollywood, California (1905)

Articles written in local papers often referred to Joseph Earnshaw as “one of the best landscape gardeners on the continent” and “the foremost landscape engineer of the day” and all were impressed with his very simple straightforward marketing approach –

*“Should you at any time require such services, we should be pleased to hear from you, and as we charge only travelling expenses for the inspection of any grounds in the United States, we suggest the probable advantage of allowing us to make you a visit and give such advice as a personal view of the property would enable us to furnish.”*

Earnshaw's consistent application of the “landscape lawn” concepts and his “customer first” approach helped solidify a future for his growing firm. Those same concepts remain on the forefront at McGill Smith Punshon, Inc., the 156 year old, Cincinnati, Ohio based firm founded by Joseph Earnshaw. Today, MSP continues to provide landscape architecture, surveying, civil engineering, and architecture services to clients in the private and public service sectors and is proud to note that several cemetery organizations who list Earnshaw and Punshon as the designer of record continue to be MSP clients.

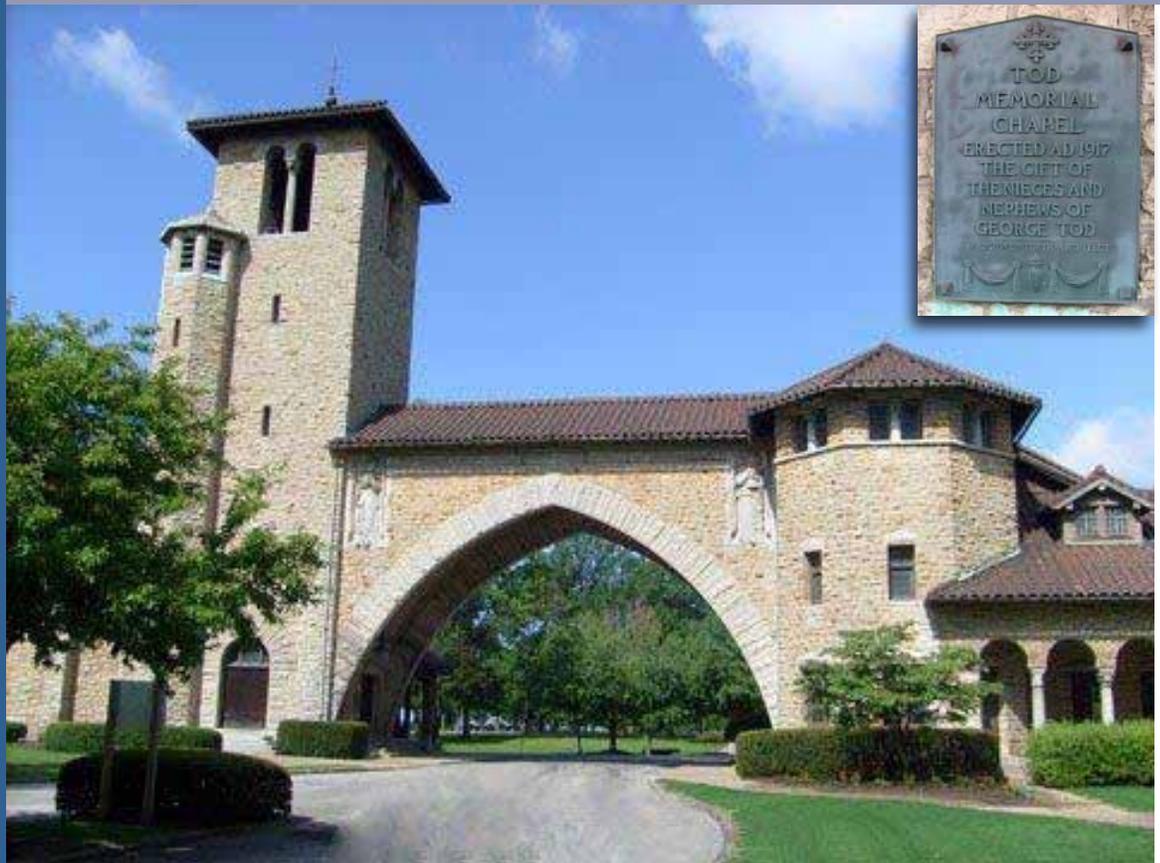


**George Tod died in 1908.** His will left endowment and land for a cemetery on 256 acres of the family farm, Brier Hill Farm, Youngstown Township, Mahoning County, Ohio.

**1909,** Tod Homestead Cemetery Association elected first trustees including Youngstown attorney Volney Rogers, a member of the Youngstown Township Park Commission and the man who recommended (April 1891) and supervised Charles Elito & HWS Cleveland to be the original designers of Mill Creek Park, Youngstown. Rogers was chosen chairman of the Executive Committee of the cemetery association, paid \$1500 a year to supervise and manage development of the Cemetery.

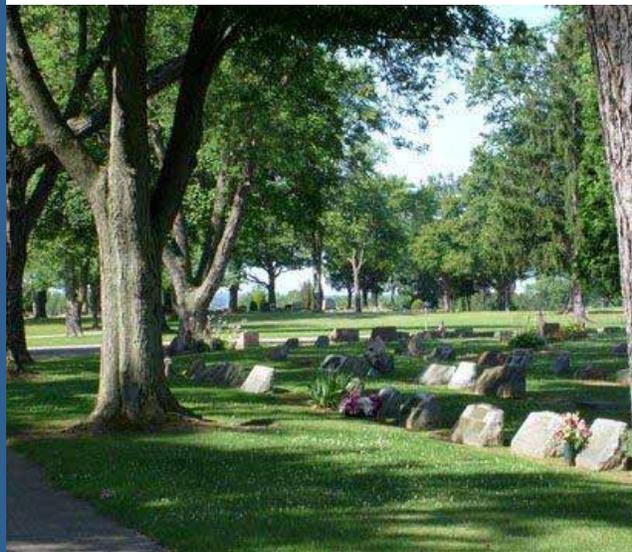
**December 31, 1909,** Rogers reported in the Executive Committee summary that he had “made a personal study of the plans for the Cemetery. Had consulted SC Simons & Co. of Chicago, Landscape Architects, and Warren H. Manning, Landscape Architect of Boston with reference to Cemetery Plans.” (Trustee minutes, 10). At the same trustees meeting, Rogers was authorized to employ Manning to assist Rogers in the preparation of Cemetery plans. Manning’s compensation was to be \$1000 plus expenses.

**March 17, 1911** dated Manning drawing “Plan for Easterly Section” Dwg. 833-20, with Smith & Turner, engineers.



## The Tod Homestead Cemetery Youngstown, Ohio

The Tod Homestead Cemetery is 256 acres at the crest of the east bank of the Mahoning River. The Cemetery land used for grave sites is relatively flat, the soil clayey with drainage underlayment. The original Brier Hill Farm (1805) had its main entry from Youngstown-Warren Road on the east bank of the Mahoning. The farm was about 900 acres in both Youngstown and Liberty Townships, in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. The Federal Style farmhouse (early 1820s) was sited at the crest of the river bank. The steep slope



of the bank was known for coal veins (1840s-1870s), sandstone and limestone quarries. In the 1860s, the Tod family opened Brier Hill iron furnaces between the Youngstown-Warren Road and the river. The slope of the riverbank was unsuitable for grave sites because of shallow soil and stone outcroppings; the land above the river bank, with drainage, was able to be used for graves.

The Manning plan abandoned the drive from Youngstown-Warren Road; changing the entry to the west side of Belmont Avenue (SR 193). The Cemetery entry drive is on access with Tod Lane, an east-west residential street on the north side of Youngstown. The significant feature of the Cemetery is the massive Arts and Crafts entry gate with the Chapel on the south and Cemetery offices on the north. The western entry gate is seen as the terminus of residential Tod Lane. This building was a central component of the Manning landscape design. Boston architect Julius A. Schweinfurth was the architect for the Chapel/office. No records of payment to Schweinfurth survive, suggesting he was Manning's choice and, perhaps, paid through Manning's office.

The rough, course sandstone Chapel and office is two-stories with a tile roof, center pointed archway of massive rough voussoir stones. A one-story arcade on the north office is complemented by a two-story round campanile tower and flat wall buttresses on the south Chapel.

The west elevation of the building has a one-story open porch with stone and wooden piers across the north office and south Chapel facades. Following the selection of the Tod plot, an ellipse directly west of the entry drive, the 1911 Manning plan was redrawn, modifying the diagonal lot layout to accommodate the Tod plot. Instead, the Tod plot was superimposed on the earlier drawing with the drive on the south edge of the burial grounds moved farther south so that the Tod plot would not be on the edge of the design. A large "sunken garden" circle, on axis with the Tod plot and entry drive was added between the burial plot grid and the office/Chapel. In the 1911 plan, the "sunken garden" area had been left blank. The undated and unsigned linen drawing of the grave layout plan appears to date after 1914, when George Tod's remains were moved to the Cemetery, and before the working drawings for the office/Chapel were complete. A rendering of the office/Chapel, signed by Schweinfurth and dated 1916, shows an obelisk as the monument in the Tod plot and



an alley of columnar poplars leading to the monument.

The 1911 Manning's plan of cemetery lots was to be diagonal squares with northeast-southeast drives that led to east-west drives at the back (west) side of the Cemetery. The original plan called for the center drive of the Cemetery to be an extension of Tod Lane and the south edge of the burial land. The modification moved the burial land farther south, placing the Tod plot towards the center of the Cemetery, on access with the entry, the office/Chapel arch and the sunken garden. Likely the design that included the Tod plot was made by Manning and Smith & Turner. This change appears to have been made before the completion of the entry gate in 1919.

A signed Schweinfurth rendering of a mausoleum, dated 1916, was not constructed. The mausoleum, richly Arts and Crafts Style, is square, rough course sandstone with a tile roof and angel caryatids flanking the doorway. The Tod monument that was constructed is a square granite plinth.

Later, post-Manning changes were the addition of the Mausoleum and the maintenance building, burial plots south of the main drive, the burial plots north of the sunken garden circle. Rodef Sholom Cemetery was moved to Tod Cemetery in 1912, the Youngstown Township Cemetery; a potter's field was moved and added in 1914 south of the mapped burial plots. Neither was part of the Manning designs.

**September 17, 1911** Volney Rogers was instructed to have Manning prepare detailed maps showing location of graves, tombstones, etc.

Dispersal to Manning through **1912** is \$1888.43.

[**1914-1916** Trustee & Executive Committee minutes missing from the minute book]

**1914**, George Tod remains moved from Oak Hill Cemetery to Tod Homestead Cemetery, suggesting the Tod [family] plot has been chosen and configured.

**1915** Large purchases of plant materials from Storrs & Harrison & W.B. Cole, both important Lake County, Ohio nurseries and from James Walker, a nursery source with unknown location.

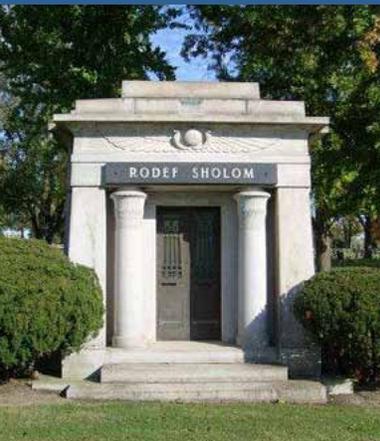
**1916** Rogers was gone from being chair of the Executive Committee. Renderings of the Chapel and office and of a Tod Mausoleum survive, signed 1916, by Julius A. Schweinfurth, Boston architect.

**1917** The Cemetery offices and Chapel building cornerstone placed.

**November, 1919** office and Chapel complete, among disbursement is listed "Architect's fees \$3,264.95", likely payment to Schweinfurth.



## The Tod Homestead Cemetery

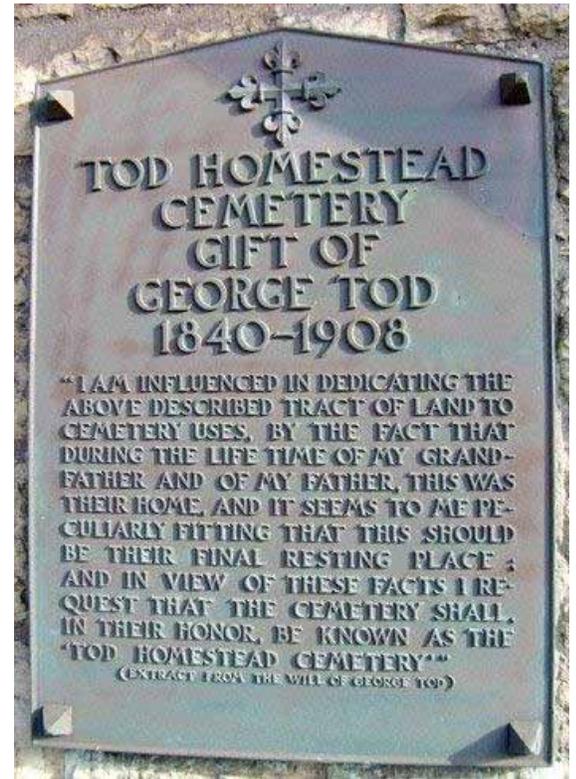


The Tod Homestead Cemetery Association has maintained the basic burial plot plan provided by Manning, but has consolidated some burial lots from smaller square plots to larger rectangles. Expansion has been to the south of the main drive and to the north of the “sunken garden” circle, not affecting most of the Manning plan. The office and Chapel have been maintained, without exterior alteration except for a handicap ramp to the office and another to the Chapel. The office ceiling, skylights, interior woodwork, windows, etc. were restored in 2005. The Chapel retains its historic interior walls, windows, pews and all spaces. The Chapel has been painted several times, with carpet and art work added. Restoration has not been done.

After the completion of the office and Chapel, Michael Horvath, a Cleveland landscape architect and nurseryman was engaged in 1919 to give advice on landscape materials tolerant of iron mill effluent. He was paid \$30, so his input likely was modest, probably the row of ginkgo trees on both sides of the north-south drive, just east of the Rodef Sholom Cemetery, at the western end of the Manning design. The completion photographs of the Chapel and office and Tod plot show and east-west vista line with rose beds that no longer survive either as color or as shrub beds.

Landscape renovations in the 1980s removed a ring of trees at the edge of the “sunken garden”, a privet hedge at the west edge of the Tod plot and large weeping willows on the west side of the Tod plot.

**This Cemetery job is locally significant because it shows the involvement of prominent local attorney Volney Rogers in getting Manning to come to Youngstown. Rogers likely recommended Manning when Rogers was using Julius Schweinfurth in the**



**design of Slippery Rock Pavilion (design payment in 1909) and Parapet Bridge (1913), two prominent Arts and Crafts elements of Mill Creek Park. Schweinfurth later tried to gain the commission for the Mill Creek Park Office (1922). Rogers utilized Manning’s trained eyes and judgment to reconnoiter open land in and around Youngstown Township for both city and township parkland. When Manning returned to work at Mill Creek Park in 1920, a year after Roger’s death, he had drawings and a clear understanding of sites adjacent to Mill Creek Park for expansion. Manning acknowledged that he and Volney Rogers had discussed, participated in, and approved the notes that Manning brought back to Youngstown.**

**This Cemetery is notable for its Arts and Crafts office and Chapel (NR 1976), for its axial plan and generalize appearance of symmetry.**

—Rebecca M. Rogers



# From the Mill Creek National Register nomination, 2005

## WARREN H. MANNING

Born in Reading, Massachusetts, in 1860, Warren Manning was the son of a nurseryman and a watercolorist. He credited his mother with instilling the desire to make America more beautiful. Young Manning worked for his father, often traveling to see other nurseries and collecting plants. In 1884, he went to work for Frederick Law Olmsted specializing in horticulture. He worked for the firm eight years, supervising over one hundred projects including many park projects and the design of new industrial towns. He was a close friend and worked with Charles Eliot on urban and regional planning and the Boston Metro Park System. In 1896, he set up his own design firm. He was particularly involved in designing new towns, among them Pinehurst, North Carolina, where he likely worked with Donald Ross, golf course designer. In Ohio, he designed the gardens and landscape for Stan Hywet hall, the F.A. Seiberling estate in Akron. He worked extensively for William Gwinn Mather of Cleveland, designing mining towns, a summer residence, and Mather's estate house, Gwinn. He also prepared landscape designs for many Cleveland area residents. Manning was deeply involved in the establishment of the Akron Metropolitan Parks. In Youngstown, he designed Tod Homestead Cemetery in 1910, where he worked with Julius Schweinfurth and Volney Rogers. By 1920, he had his brother relocate to Cleveland to make certain his Ohio and Midwest work had a close associate from his firm (MVHS letter, 9-4-20). He was a founder of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1899 (Birbaum, Carson). Manning's work in Mill Creek Park and adjoining areas was large. Prior to the death of Volney Rogers, Manning carefully walked and discussed the design of Mill Creek Park with Rogers, including the Bears Den area and the land south of the Lanterman's Mill. Manning recommended the extension of the park west along Calvary Run, the purchase of land from the Lanterman's Mill south to Boardman-Canfield Road and the streets for housing allotments east and west of that park extension. He sent sketches and walked the sites of the newly acquired Bears Den area, Volney Rogers Field, and the Falls Avenue entrance. He suggested the park office landscaping, the location and layout of the service yard on Bears Den Road, and the new subdivision streets and main

arteries adjacent to Lake Newport. He was involved in the design of Sheban Drive and Truesdale Road, East and West Golf Drives, the location of the golf courses, and design of the clubhouse. He was the consulting landscape architect from 1920 through 1929, returning to work in 1931-32. He usually used Park Superintendent and landscape architect Hugh Imlay as on-site landscape designer, Luther T. Fawcett (Associate Mahoning County Engineer) as design engineer, Park Engineer Ralph Ingram as construction engineer, and Barton E. Brooks as architect for work from 1920-1929.

## VOLNEY ROGERS

Volney Rogers (1846-1919), a Youngstown lawyer, conceived the idea of Mill Creek Park, wrote state enabling legislation (The Township Park Improvement Act), helped purchase the land that created the Youngstown Township Park District, engaged nationally prominent landscape architects, and helped supervise the construction of the many park features. He died after the original acreage of the park, some 460 acres, of hemlock gorge was designed and landscaped. Rogers was born near East Palestine, Columbiana County, Ohio in 1846. He was the third child of a farmer and a part time educator. He read law in Mount Gilead, the County Seat of Morrow County, Ohio. After joining the bar, he returned to northeastern Ohio in 1872 where he was joined by his older brother, Disney Rogers, in the practice of law. The brothers had a successful law practice with Volney acting as Youngstown City Solicitor for two terms and brother Disney eventually becoming Mahoning County Common Pleas Judge in 1901 (Melnick, 33) In 1880, Rogers joined the American Civic Association (ACA), a staunch proponent of urban beautification. He traveled to those growing American cities that were contemplating or involved in the urban parks movement. He participated in the conservation effort to preserve Niagara Falls, which became the first state park in New York State in 1885. He became legal counsel to the ACA by the late 1880s (Williams 32-33).

Rogers worked tirelessly for the care and enhancement of the Mill Creek valley as a park. He brought his knowledge of botany and natural history to this task. He carefully studied landscape design through professional journals, attendance at conferences, and travels to America and European parks. As his knowledge expanded, he was able to assist in design, supervising the cutting of vistas, design of bridge details and placement of roads. When Tod Homestead Cemetery was founded in 1907, Rogers assisted in the layout, helped hire

Julius Schweinfurth to design the entry arch, and helped contact Warren Manning for the final design of the layout of the burying grounds (Williams 103-5). Beginning in 1905, Rogers helped Ashtabula Township to select a park site; working with a civil engineer, Rogers laid out the road for Lake Shore Park in 1914. (Pallutch and Aho).

In early 1919, Rogers left on a tour to the American west, while still a park commissioner, knowing that he would be replaced at the expiration of his term. He died during this journey in December 1919, from pneumonia at the age of 73 (Melnick 43).

Volney Rogers was inducted into the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Hall of Fame in December, 2000. The citation reads, in part: "visionary spirit and perseverance with the central role in establishing one of Ohio's modern day great treasures... [Youngstown's] local and metropolitan park district."

## JULIUS A. SCHWEINFURTH

Julius Adolphe, his older brother Charles F. and a younger brother Albert C. came from Auburn New York. All were successful architects, Julius largely working Boston, Charles in Cleveland and Albert in San Francisco. Julius, born in 1858, and his brother Albert learned architecture in the Boston offices of Peabody and Stearns. Julius and Charles joined together in a firm in Cleveland, C.F. & J. A.

Schweinfurth, in 1883. Charles had been in architectural practice in New York for eight years prior to establishing their firm in Cleveland, (Leading Manufacturers etc.). By 1886, the firm was well known in Cleveland with many commissions, two draftsmen, residential contracts for houses on Euclid Avenue. In the renovation of First Presbyterian Church (Old Stone Church) after a fire in 1884, Charles was in charge of the interior, brother Julius painted the Romanesque Revival frescos, and Louis Comfort Tiffany and John LaFarge supplied the stained glass windows. In 1886, Julius traveled in Europe, then returned to Boston to be a draftsman (eventually chief designer and teacher of architecture) in the Peabody and Stearns firm. He published frequently in architectural journals. In 1895, he established his own firm where he designed residences, estate houses, public buildings and schools. He was particularly successful in his school work, designing many buildings for Wellesley College and for cities near Boston (Neitz). For a time, Julius worked for McKim Mead and White, supplying the formal garden designs for the William Gwinn Mather residence on Euclid Avenue in Cleveland. In Youngstown, Julius designed the entrance gates, office and chapel for the Tod Homestead Cemetery (NR 1976), completed in 1919, the Slippery Rock Pavilion (1910) and Parapet Bridge (1912). He was considered as a landscape designer for the Falls Avenue entrance in 1920, about the time Warren H. Manning was hired.



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## Matthews Cemetery Products

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Matthews Launches The Remembrance Process<sup>SM</sup> Pre-Need Sales Tools

PITTSBURGH – (February 13, 2013) – In keeping with the mission of The Remembrance Process<sup>SM</sup> to educate consumers about the value of memorialization, Matthews recently introduced two new powerful tools to help cemeteries sell their products and services advance of need.

**The Remembrance Process<sup>SM</sup> Personal Planning Guide** is a valuable, full color premium that can be given to families as an incentive for making pre-need arrangements. This is the most up-to-date document of its kind in the industry. The guide allows couples to store all their vital information in one place to help loved ones locate information at the time of need. It also helps couples define and express their final wishes concerning memorialization. The guide is also effective in obtaining critical sales leads.

**The Remembrance Process<sup>SM</sup> Presentation** is a flipbook with easel stand used for in-home selling. This poignant presentation complete with engaging, full color photographs, has a comprehensive, easy-to-follow script on the back of each page. The script ensures that your sales force will deliver a meaningful, consistent message designed to educate consumers about their choices and increase your sales closure rate.

The Personal Planning Guide is priced at \$1.50 apiece and the Presentation is \$10 apiece. You must be an Authorized Remembrance Provider<sup>SM</sup> to order. For more information on these sales tools and about becoming an Authorized Remembrance Provider<sup>SM</sup>, contact your Customer Service Representative at 888-838-8890.

#### About Matthews International Corporation

Matthews International Corporation, headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pa, is a designer, manufacturer and marketer principally of memorialization products and brand solutions. Memorialization products consist primarily of bronze memorials and other memorialization products, caskets and cremation equipment for the cemetery and funeral home industries. Brand solutions include graphics imaging products and services, marking products and merchandising solutions. The company's products and services include cast bronze memorials and other memorialization products; caskets; cast and etched architectural products; cremation equipment and cremation-related products; mausoleums; brand management, printing plates, pre-press services and imaging services for the primary packaging and corrugated industries; marking and coding equipment and consumables, and industrial automation products for identifying, tracking and conveying various consumer and industrial products, components and packaging containers; and merchandising display systems and marketing and design services.

# # #

**Matthews**  
INTERNATIONAL



## Weathering Mother Nature

By

David Gressley, Horticulturist

Everyone is talking about the weather! Strange. Outlandish. Cold when it should be warm. Warm when it should be cold. And dry, Dry, DRY! So from a management point of view, how we weather these mood swings of Mother Nature is not an easy task. This wonderful horticultural Cleveland Landmark was originally planned in 1869 as an English Garden-style Cemetery and our 285 acres of natural beauty are filled with mature native and exotic plant varieties. Therefore, as you can imagine, our mission can often be daunting.

Last year's drought rekindled memories of the drought that occurred in 1988. Fortunately, several thunderstorms swept through areas of northern Ohio sparing our established trees and shrubs the worst effects of stress. Unfortunately, The Lake View Cemetery lost several older specimen trees weakened by years of cumulative stress and low energy reserves. We also noticed a higher incidence of "Sudden Branch Failure" which may have been related to drought conditions, but can occur with many deciduous trees.

During that time, most trees and shrubs displayed shortened growth or twig extension. Although the soil held adequate moisture for normal bud break, it was too dry at the critical time when plants force their first flush of growth, producing fewer nodes or leaves. Subsequent growth was stunted or nonexistent - depending on the amount of moisture available and energy reserves in the plant.

If you planted trees or shrubs last year you might also have experienced a high mortality rate due to the drought. Bare root trees and container plants suffered greatly because their roots never developed into the surrounding soil. However, we found that new ball and burlap plants generally fared better because root balls hold moisture longer than the disturbed fill-soil surrounding it.

This latest drought actually began when many Clevelanders rejoiced over the lack of snow in the winter of 2011. Seeing inadequate spring rain, the cemetery ceased all plant installations by mid-May. In June, our usually glorious emerald lawn areas began to brown. When our normal summer dry period arrived, all soil was parched. One morning in August, we witnessed a grave excavation in Section 41 in clay soil where there was no detectable moisture along the entire depth of the soil profile. This created concern, as clay soil retains moisture longer than the sandy and loamy soils on the lower lake plain of The Lake View Cemetery.

To meet the challenge, all annual flowerbeds received supplemental watering from the moment they were planted, thereby confining plant loss mainly to impatiens - which were also affected by downy mildew. In an effort to dodge sunny afternoon watering that can scorch tender young foliage, sun-exposed flowerbeds were watered daily and often twice daily.

Over this past year, moisture desiccated soil forced plants into a lockdown mode to conserve their internal moisture. Well-established, healthy, mature plants and those adaptable to dry environments can withstand these periodic extreme drought conditions, but it is the marginal and compromised plants that will show drought damage such as dieback and death in the 2013 season.

**For your information:** Throughout our grounds you'll find 800 trees and shrubs labeled with their common and scientific names for ease of identification. In our office, we have for you three seasonal sheets that list what is "in leaf" or "in bloom" during spring, summer and autumn. However, please remember that Mother Nature can be temperamental, and prime timing is subject to her whims.

**And... please consider:** We count on your donations to help keep our glorious landmark alive and well. Your generous gifts not only fund the removal of sick or downed plantings, but also support the planting of the beautiful young trees, shrubs and flowers that will grow and enhance the renowned horticultural legacy of The Lake View Cemetery.

*The Lake View Cemetery Heritage Review, Spring 2013*

**DEADLINE TO JOIN  
IS APRIL 19TH!**

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## ALKALINE PARALYSIS

### Old New vs. New New

By Dan Applegate

President, Arlington Memorial Gardens, Cincinnati

Forever immortalized. Pretty heady stuff, that.

But that's how Jeff Edwards was characterized at a 2011 International Cemetery, Cremation & Funeral Association conference. Edwards is the plucky Columbus, Ohio funeral director who in January, 2011 pushed – hard, against convention and introduced the controversial process called, among many other things, Alkaline Hydrolysis.

Edwards was on dais at the recent Ohio Cemetery Association Winter Conference, held in Columbus on February 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>. He gave a presentation on both Friday and Saturday, sharing the podium with Joe Wilson, CEO of Bio-Response Systems, the company that manufactures the stainless steel cylinder that is part of the alkaline hydrolysis device. During their presentation titled, “Alkaline Hydrolysis: Is This the New Cremation?” Edwards candidly described just how it feels to be immortal. As it turns out, at least in this case, it's not unlike being a pioneer. Or a pawn in a cultural/political chess match. At any rate, it's a bruising experience full of pitfalls.

By now, you may be wondering, what is alkaline hydrolysis? Well, one thing you should know is that it's a new process generally considered as an alternative to cremation, only rather than using fire, it uses water. But here's something else: it's highly controversial. That's because when it's discussed, the conversation becomes equal parts fact and hyperbole with both stirring emotions. The mainstream media has of course played a role in this by sensationalizing its reporting, using inflammatory headlines with descriptive phrases like “dissolving bodies” or “liquefying bodies,” terms fraught with such powerful negative undertones that they instantaneously provoke visceral opposition. That's bad enough; yet even worse, at least for those who promote alkaline hydrolysis, is that while the headlines may be shamelessly inflated, they convey more than a shred of truth.

According to the website [www.Resomation.com](http://www.Resomation.com) (British company Resomation Ltd.), “*Alkaline hydrolysis is a water-based chemical resolving process using strong alkali in water at temperatures of up to 350 F to rapidly yet sympathetically reduce the body to ash.*” So, yes, the body dissolves and, yes, it liquefies. But, so what? Is that really more disagreeable than incinerating a body in a modern cremation chamber? Clearly, that's hardly the case yet the road to that rational truth is paved with subtleties and nuances that are too often conveniently overlooked in favor of hype. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, alkaline hydrolysis is currently under the microscope as the “newest” thing. It's odd, different, and unfamiliar. And it is precisely this fact that underscores just how it has unseated cremation, which until recently was the “new” thing and frequently called-out as the whipping boy of death care. Now, however, because there's something even newer, cremation seems more fuzzy and cuddly than before.

## The Old New Thing

While cremation now seems to have gained a foothold as the favored alternative form of final disposition, it obscures the fact that not everyone has been equally amenable to the concept of anything that rivaled traditional ground burial. In fact, cremation is growing, not because of some broad consensus of acceptance, but in spite of a deep-seated opposition that has been powerful in its denial.

Broadly speaking, these cremation deniers have fallen into one of three subsets. Leading the charge was the funeral professional traditionalists, the ones who would resist because, well, just because. Cremation was different and unfamiliar representing a change in the norm. We've all known people of this ilk; fortunately in today's death care environment they have mostly gone the way of dinosaurs, even though it is still possible to run across a few still earnestly engaged in a rearguard action that is so clearly a lost cause and hardly worth mentioning.

The deniers belonging to the second subset were the funeral directors who may have been ambivalent in their concern over tradition but were decisively alarmed by cremation's economic threats to their business model. Despite the steadily rising cremation rate, many funeral directors were either unable or unwilling to adapt to the new realities opting instead to hope that somehow cremation would just go away. In her March 24, 2011 Family Plot Blog, Gail Rubin quotes Ed Gazvoda, the founder of CycledLife, a manufacturer of alkaline hydrolysis units, speaking at an ICCFA convention. Gazvoda was blunt in his criticism of funeral directors and put it this way, *"Forty years ago who would have believed that cremation would have such a large market share? Funeral directors believed cremation would not catch on. They buried their heads in the sand. They considered it a fad. Labeled it as immoral. Wrongly predicted that the public would not pay to be burned. Derided it as was being undignified and a desecration of human remains. Were those that resisted change eventually proved right? The facts speak for themselves."* Gazvoda's observations seem to be right on point and in fact, after 30 years of self-immolation, many of the funeral directors who engaged in that mythical thinking are either gone or barely holding on.

The third and final subset includes those opposed due to religious beliefs. While it is too sweeping of a statement to say that most opposition comes from Christianity, it is fair to say that much of it does. Judaism, particularly the Orthodox variety, and the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches also strongly disapprove or prohibit cremation altogether. But most other religions, including Protestantism and the Church of England have been more accepting and generally condone it as an approved practice. And then there is Roman Catholicism.

Catholic doctrine has had a rocky relationship with cremation. There are far too numerous doctrinal reservations to discuss here, but perhaps paramount among them are these two concerns: cremation could constitute a denial of the resurrection of the body; or, it might interfere with the resurrection of the body. And so, throughout its history, Catholicism banned

the practice of cremation unless there were extraordinary circumstances, a plague or disaster for example. But, the reforms of the Second Vatican Council modified the Church's position declaring cremation an acceptable practice conditioned by certain liturgical guidelines and the assurance that the cremation was not an expression refuting the resurrection of the body. Even so, it is worth noting that ground burial (or entombment) is still clearly preferred by the Church. Therefore, while large blocks of faithful Catholics now select cremation (or their survivors select it for them), there remains for other Catholics a vague residuary ambivalence.

### **The New New Thing**

It is in the context of this interesting moment, when the public's preference for cremation is pushing cultural orthodoxy to the point that ground burial is barely the default choice for final disposition, that alkaline hydrolysis happens upon the scene. Lost in all of the uproar surrounding the technicalities of the alkaline hydrolysis process is the inevitability that new forms of final disposition are bound to be, excuse the pun, "unearthed." There are simply too many forces at work: technology, the green movement, land usage and overpopulation concerns – just to name the most obvious, that are coming together to think otherwise. Alkaline hydrolysis, which touts its technical superiority and numerous environmental advantages, may merely be the first of more alternatives to come. Still, as the first of its kind it has caused concern wherever it has been contemplated; and, Ohio is no exception.

Enter Jeff Edwards, who advised the Ohio Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors in September, 2010 that he was considering installing an alkaline hydrolysis device in his Columbus funeral home. There is some discrepancy regarding how the State Board reacted but a spokesperson, according to aolnews.com, said "the state warned Edwards that the process wasn't approved under the law." Yet Edwards claims that the State Board never "explicitly told him to stop using the process" (the Minutes seem to support Edwards' claim) and beginning in January, 2011, he began offering the service using the device a total of 19 times before the Ohio Department of Health, prompted by the State Board, stepped in with permit restrictions to shut down Edwards' operation.

Responding to what he claimed was an over-reach of administrative authority, Edwards sued both the Ohio Department of Health and the State Board arguing that Ohio's statutory language refers to disposition as "burial, cremation or other final disposition" which, when extrapolated, grants the use of alkaline hydrolysis. He also argued that since the Department of Health had previously issued 19 death certificates, it was legally obligated to continue doing so. In March, 2012 a Franklin County judge disagreed and on direct verdict dismissed both claims.

Following up on the dismissed claims, The Ohio Funeral Directors Association, an interested bystander during Edwards' legal challenge, introduced House Bill 481, a "clean-up bill" which primarily addressed several procedural and substantive revisions to laws related to funeral homes and funeral directors. However, the OFDA also included provisions that would have recognized alkaline hydrolysis as a separate legal, regulated form of final disposition. But, according to the OFDA's legislative update of January 11, 2013, while most of the provisions

were enacted “the Catholic Conference of Ohio formally opposed the inclusion of alkaline hydrolysis in H.B. 481 in a letter which included the following inflammatory statement: ‘Dissolving bodies in a vat of chemicals and pouring the resultant liquid down the drain is not a respectful way to dispose of human remains.’ Their opposition resulted in legislative leaders determining that there needed to be further evaluation of this issue.”

Game over.

This is going nowhere – at least for now.

### **Déjà vu All Over Again**

The “inflammatory statement” in the letter from the Catholic Conference is Exhibit A of the type of emotional intensity that alkaline hydrolysis can stir. It may also take a prize for oversimplification. But it is clearly a recurring Catholic criticism regarding the reverence of the human body. In a 2008 USA Today article, Patrick McGee, a spokesman for the Diocese of Manchester, NH commented that, “We believe this process, which enables a portion of human remains to be flushed down a drain, to be undignified.” And the March 26, 2012 issue of *cathnewsusa.com* carried this statement by the New York Catholic Conference, “The Church’s reverence for the sacredness of the human body and its dignity arises out of concern for both the body’s natural and supernatural properties... It is therefore essential that the body of a deceased person be treated with respect and reverence. Processes involving chemical digestion of human remains do not sufficiently respect this dignity.” But as sincere as they are, these criticisms raise this question: How is alkaline hydrolysis materially different than cremation?

Demonstrating that Catholic opposition is anything but monolithic, Sister Renee Mirkes writes in her 2008 article published by the National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly:

*“A careful examination of the human body’s natural decomposition process after burial and the bodily decomposition involved in cremation reveals that the flashpoint of indignity with alkaline hydrolysis—specifically, pouring the liquid remains down a drain—is found in a similar form in the seepage after burial and in cremation through rain. Also, in the embalming process that precedes traditional burial, the blood and body fluids that are drained from the body are flushed into the sewer.”* In conclusion, Mirkes writes, *“The process of alkaline hydrolysis is, in and of itself, a morally neutral action.”*

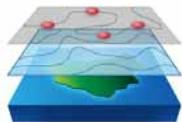
As the new new thing, alkaline hydrolysis is bound to attract a certain degree of opposition. Given what it is and what it does, some of that opposition will be natural and instinctual, in much the same way that cremation was once found to be repugnant and unacceptable. It will take thoughtful analysts like Sister Mirkes to guide the conversation away from raw emotion and into the realm of reason.

If that can be accomplished, perhaps alkaline paralysis will only be a temporary condition. And, Jeff Edwards may become immortal after all. Or least a legend.



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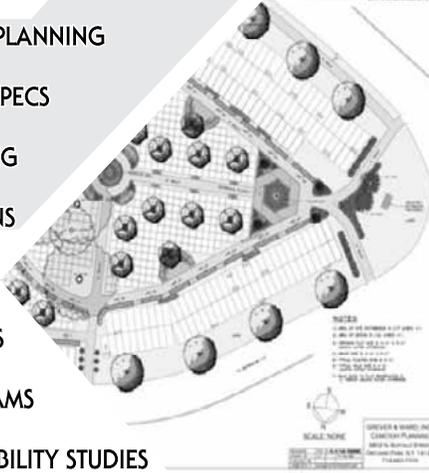
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