

The Voice of Vale Cemetery *Established 1857*

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Fall 2024

Schenectady, N.Y.

Vale Cemetery's Newest Notable-Frank Wickware **-by Paul Contarino:**

Frank Ellis Wickware is Vale's newest notable uncovered this year. Born March 18, 1888 in Girard, Kansas to Eldon and Mollie (Love) Wickware. The family then moved to Coffeyville in 1906. He earned the nickname of Zig Zag pitching for the Dallas Black Giants in 1908-09. Wickware was then hired by Rube Foster to pitch for the Chicago Leland Giants from 1910-11 and after that the Royal Giants until 1913. In May of that year, he joined the Schenectady Mohawk Giants a team created by businessman, Bill Wernecke. During that summer and fall, Wickware demonstrated his great ability as a pitcher drew sizable crowds. He defeated the legendry Walter Johnson of the Washington Senators October 5th in a pitching duel at Island Park. Following the disbandment of the Mohawk Giants (1914), he played for the Chicago American Giants and defeated the Cuban Stars (1916.) He registered for the draft during World War 1 and inducted into the army the following year. Wickware was stationed in Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois. After 1919, he bounced around from team to team before last playing for the Lincoln Giants in 1925. Wickware settled in Schenectady (1939) for the remainder of his life and was employed by the Army Depot. He died in Schenectady on November 2, 1967.

Sometime next year, Mark Schremmer, from Land Line Magazine is planning to stop by the Cemetery and visit his grave. He is writing a book about Mr. Wickware. Schremmer started working for newspapers and discovered the connection to Girard. It is his goal to make Wickware's story known to Kansas. Wickware is buried in Vale's American Legion Plot-grave II 8-15.*



Over a decade of partnership and community **-by Rev. Amaury Tañón-Santos, Executive** **Director, Sycamore Collaborative:**

For over a decade now, a partnership between the Vale Cemetery Association and neighbors who sought to address the mounting food insecurity in the city and provide a space for community resilience has developed into community-based effort for community empowerment and wellness. It's more than an effort to teach the community how to grow food. It is an effort to work with and alongside the community to grow (literally and metaphorically) opportunities that encourage well-being, resilience, and solidarity.

This sense of being with and for the community goes beyond those who frequent the urban farms at Vale Cemetery and off of Fehr Avenue. At the Vale Farm, community wisdom encouraged for the growing of vines along the fence of the farm. This provides passersby who use the Vale Park and Cemetery as a byway through the city to pick fruits while in season. Across from the driveway, a young orchard is being cared for by local faith communities and volunteers as a pledge and commitment to provide green and nourishing spaces for the community.

We are grateful for a decade of partnership and work for community. The final resting place of thousands in Schenectady is also a space of life.



farm coordinator Tatyanna Hall of Albany is seen pushing a wheelbarrow as she helps weed at Vale Farm on Monday, Aug. 26, 1024 in Schenectady, NY.

Jon Van Buren/Times Union



***Sources used for this article:**

Rice, Stephen. "Frank Wickware." Society for American Baseball Research. 2/9/2016

<https://sabr.org/bioproj/person/frank-wickware/>

Buell, Bill. "Marker to Honor Historic 1913 Game on the Mohawk" The Daily Gazette, The (Schenectady, NY) - July 22, 2024

https://www.dailygazette.com/news/baseball-schenectady-frank-wickware/article_76b9bbe8-4603-11ef-a022-9bbf550dbf81.html

Photo obtained from Wikipedia.org

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Wickware#/media/File:Frank_Wickware.jpg

The Grave Stone Cleaning Classes offered by-Melody Howarth:

A grave stone cleaning class is offered in partnership with SUNY Schenectady's Community Archaeology Program as an elective within their two-year certificate. It runs as a one-day seminar in both April and October. The next one is scheduled for April 5th, 2025 from 10:00am-2:30pm through the college.

The course covers gentle cleaning methods specifically designed to protect historically significant stones, such as marble, limestone, shale, and sandstone—many of which can be found at the Vale Cemetery. It also addresses cleaning granite, a denser material commonly used today, using a similar process.

By the end of the seminar, students gain the skills needed to safely clean family gravestones or participate in preservation projects, without causing further harm to compromised stones.

To register, please monitor the Workforce Development section of the SUNY Schenectady website or call 518-595-1101. Melody's contact info is below for any further questions.

MB Restorations LLC
Gravestone Care and Repair
Phone: 518-441-4068
Email: melzbellesrestorations@gmail.com

2024 Vale Cemetery Tour Season:

Vale had another successful run of its tours. It commenced with Scott Haefner's Schenectady's Dutch Settlers, Sue McLane's Victorian Lady in Mourning, George Steele's Bird Walk, Dr. Strosberg's WW1/Spanish Flu, Chris Hunter's Giants of Industry, Chris Leonard's Schenectady and the Civil War and concluded with McLane's Notable Women. A special thanks to all those who gave a tour; the time and effort spent is greatly appreciated. We also thank those who attended. If anyone has an idea for a tour or would like to conduct one, please email the Vale Cemetery account.



Vandalism at Vale-by Jeff Austin:

Vale has a vandalism problem which is unfortunately common to many cemeteries nationwide with no easy solution. It is an attack on the memory, the soul, of our community. Vale is especially vulnerable with its large acreage and rolling hills. Its shadows and foliage offer an undisturbed and convenient place for underage criminal activity.

The causes of cemetery vandalism have been closely studied. Some are more obvious than others. Cemeteries are attractive targets to mostly anti-social male juveniles, 15-20 years old. These crimes of opportunity are usually a group activity - an indicator of peer pressure to perform "defiance of death" acts. Most vandalism occurs on weekends and after dark, while drug and alcohol abuse is often cited in police reports (Trinkley, 2011).

Many older cemeteries have fallen into general decline as families age or move away. Veteran groups that used to tend to military stones are experiencing shrinking memberships as the major wars of the 20th century fade into history. Local civic groups struggle with similar problems of membership and time available to serve others.

Currently, it takes too long to repair a toppled stone. Some necessary delays include taking surveys of stones to save, filling out the ponderous State applications, and waiting for reimbursement. What can be done to speed up or streamline this process?

This appearance of abandonment attracts additional damage. It makes sense to repair damaged stones quickly to maintain an appearance of commitment and care. This produces a well-manicured "occupation proxy" that gives the appearance and impression that Vale is under constant surveillance. The most visibly damaged headstones on the main cemetery roads should have priority.

Here are some other proactive thoughts:

- increase law enforcement patrols at night and on weekends, the peak hours for illegal activity.
- expand and repair existing fencing as well as installing better lighting in dark areas.
- get involved in self-promotion and advertising of Vale events which will encourage better community involvement among shareholders.

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- organize local elementary student trips to educate and showcase our cemetery, instilling in future generations the love and respect we have for Vale.
- solicit ideas and best practices from other cemeteries going through similar issues.

Vale Cemetery is a special place where life meets death, nature meets city, and the present meets the past. We all have a responsibility to preserve its history and beauty for future generations to enjoy.



Photo taken by Jeff Austin front edge of the Christian Temple section, across from Section J

Sources used for this article:

Trinkley, Michael "Conservation Talk" in *The Association For Gravestone Studies* Vol. 35 No.1, Winter 2011

Elks Honor Simon Quinlan:

On October 26th the New York State Elks Association honored Simon Quinlan. Dr. Quinlan was born in England (1831) and came to the U.S. (1851) where he practiced medicine in New York City, Syracuse and then located to Chicago (1861). He married his wife Esther M. Carpenter and the couple had two homes between Chicago and East Palmyra called "Elk Heights." Quinlan labored for the Elks Order earning him the position of Grand Exalted Ruler (GER.) The Association is currently trying to ascertain how he ended up interred at Vale Cemetery. Research is actively underway to make this determination through the genealogy of his wife as a starting point.



Photo taken by Daniel Bradt
Source material used for this article,
retrieved from the New York State Elks
Association's Facebook page -10/30/24



Remembering Frank Taormina-by Paul Contarino:

On October 7th, a beloved history teacher and driving force in the Schenectady County Historical Society, Frank Taormina, died at age 95. A walking encyclopedia of Schenectady history, Mr. Taormina often gave well-attended tours of Vale Cemetery covering topics including the American Revolution, Civil War and Underground Railroad. Before beginning any of his tours, he always took a moment and praised Dr. McEvoy for all of his efforts in saving the Caretaker's house and promoting the cemetery's rich history. Taormina did quite extensive research on a lot of Vale notables. He will be sorely missed.

Suspension of Holiday Wreaths 2024:

Due to the departure of the McEvoy's, we are unable to full this year's orders of holiday wreaths. Vale is currently in the process of reorganizing to ensure there are sufficient numbers of volunteers to process orders, purchase the wreaths, locate the graves and place the wreaths on them and subsequently remove them following the conclusion of the holidays. It proves once more, the McEvoy's superstar dedication to the cemetery. Dr. McEvoy and Barbara are truly missed.

Return of the Sheep and Goats to Vale Cemetery:

The sheep and goats from SUNY Cobleskill returned to Vale in July and October to tend to the tall grass in the Dell, the Natural Burial section. The concept of a natural burial is to cause as little disturbance to the environment which includes no usage of herbicides or gas-powered equipment to keep the grounds maintained. Over the last few years, the burial plot itself has become very popular. The Dell is certified by the Green Burial Council.



See the original article, "**Goats visit Schenectady's Vale Cemetery to graze on grass,**" on the Daily Gazette website.





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**Please contact Vale Cemetery by phone or email
for the following:**

- To receive your newsletter via e-mail (Vale continues its efforts to go green)
- Had a change of address or e-mail?
- Know someone who would like to receive the newsletter?
- Unsubscribe to the newsletter
- Volunteer opportunities

