

NOTABLE CITIZENS BURIED IN ERIE CEMETERY

I-a

ALEXANDER W. BREWSTER (1796-1851)

Brewster was one of the original incorporators and was the first person buried in Erie Cemetery. In his early years he taught at the log house at 7th and Holland, and later at the Erie Academy. A prominent merchant and manufacturer, he was elected sheriff in 1828 and Burgess of Erie in 1849. The old Brewster Home built in 1823 and refurbished by Erie Insurance in 1984, stands beautifully today on East 5th between Holland and French.

I-b

WILLIAM HIMROD, SR. (1791-1870)

Himrod came to Erie in 1810 and worked as a carpenter and joiner until 1840. At that time, he became involved in the establishment of the stove, agricultural implement and engine manufacturing works of Johnson, Himrod & Co., a business which ultimately developed into the Chicago and Erie Stove Works, and the Erie City Iron Works. He was one of the city fire wardens in 1853; a member of the common council in 1856-7; a director in the branch U.S. bank; and one of the incorporators of the Erie Cemetery. He provided a shelter for fugitive slaves and founded, at his own expense, The Himrod Mission Sunday School, to provide Bible education to African Americans. He served as its supervisor until he died. The first monument in Erie Cemetery was erected at Himrod's grave.

I-c

THOMAS FORSTER (1762-1836)

Born near Harrisburg, he served in the Revolution and was a colonel of volunteers during the Whiskey Rebellion, and also served as captain in the War of 1812. Forster was a collector for the Port of Erie (1799-1836), and was the originator of the Erie and Waterford Turnpike.

I-d

SARAH A. REED (1838-1934)

Reed is the great-granddaughter of Erie's first settlers, Colonel Seth Reed and Hannah Harwood Reed. She was a major force in the cultural and charitable activities of the community for almost 70 years, and served as president of the Home for the Friendless for 44 years. Following her death, the name of the institution was changed to the Sarah A. Reed Home.

II-a

PIERRE SIMON VINCENT (P.S.V.) HAMOT (1783-1846)

Born in Paris, this French immigrant and skilled businessman began in the salt trade and soon became one of Erie's most successful merchants. One of Erie's first philanthropists, he donated the land overlooking the bay at State and 2nd streets for Hamot Hospital, with the provision that no one ever be denied medical treatment there.

III

THE REED FAMILY (LARGE OBELISK SURROUNDED BY THE REED FAMILY)

No family played as great a part in the early history of Erie as that of the descendants of Erie's first settlers, Colonel Seth Reed and his wife Hannah Harwood Reed. That distinction is reflected in the fact that the Reed Family plot is the only one to occupy its own mound surrounded by a walkway. The centerpiece of the plot is a granite pillar topped with a life-sized statue of a woman, perhaps looking to the family farm on Walnut Creek.

III-a

COLONEL SETH REED (1744-1797)

A veteran of the Battle of Bunker Hill in the Revolutionary War, Reed was the first settler to arrive in Erie in July 1795 with his wife, Hannah, and two of his sons. They erected a one-story log cabin covered with bark at the mouth of Mill Creek and labeled it the "Presque Isle Hotel". This was the first building in Erie.

III-b

RUFUS S. REED (1775-1846)

Son of Colonel Seth Reed, he was one of Erie's first and most successful capitalists. He opened a store in 1796 doing business with settlers, soldiers, and native indians. He later secured large government contracts to supply western military posts with beef, pork, flour and whiskey. He served as a Burgess of Erie in 1841. Seven years later he owned an extensive fleet of lake vessels. His second wife was the daughter of General William Irvine, who, with Andrew Ellicot, laid out the town of Erie in 1795. Rufus and Agnes had one son, Charles M. Reed.

III-c

CHARLES M. REED (1803-1871)

Charles was educated in Washington, PA, then went to Philadelphia where he read law and was admitted to the bar in 1821. He returned to Erie and became the largest owner of steamboats on the Great Lakes. He was instrumental in developing the Erie Extension Canal and was one of the first to build railroads in the Erie area. He served for one year in the State Legislature and a term in Congress. Reed died in his mansion at the corner of West 6th and Peach, known today as the Erie Club. His fortune at the time of his death was estimated to be between \$5 and \$15 million.

IV-a

GILES SANFORD (1782-1866)

Born in Connecticut, Sanford came to Erie in 1810 and for many years was a partner of Rufus S. Reed, with whom he helped provide supplies for the building of Perry's fleet. He was a descendant of John Sanford, who served as president of Rhode Island in 1655. Sanford assisted substantially in the promotion of local agricultural and horticultural interests. Giles Sanford's Odaughter, Laura Goodwin Sanford published the first history of Erie County in 1862 and founded the Home for the Friendless in 1871. On September 10, 1895, as part of Erie's 100th anniversary, she and her mother laid the cornerstone to the "Free Public Library,"located on the corner of South Park Row and French Streets, which served as Erie's library until 1996 when the Blasco Memorial Library opened on Erie's Bayfront.

IV-b

JUDAH COLT SPENCER (1813-1885)

Born in Connecticut, he came to Erie in 1829 to take a position in the land office of his uncle, Judah Colt, succeeding to the business on Colt's death in 1832. Spencer played an important role in the early history of the Erie and North East Railroad and was president of the Common Council of Erie. One of the Founders of the First National Bank, he served as its president for 22 years, and was president of Erie Cemetery for more than 20 years.

IV-c

JUDAH COLT (1761-1832)

Colt came to Erie County in 1795 to purchase land, and was appointed the general agent for the Pennsylvania Population Company, which held the warrants for all the land in the triangle. He opened a land office which has since been known as "Colt Station" and opened a road from Lake Erie at the mouth of 16 Mile Creek where he furnished supplies to settlers on generous terms of credit. One of the most widely known and respected of the earliest settlers in this area, he served as a Burgess of Erie in 1813, and again from 1820-21.

V-a

WILLIAM L. SCOTT (1828-1891) (MAUSOLEUM)

Born in Washington, D.C., he came to Erie at age 17 at the invitation of Charles M. Reed, who was at the height of his commercial career. He entered the coal mining business, eventually controlling over 70,000 acres of coal lands in four states, earning him the name "Coal King." He, and his associate John F. Tracy from Erie, branched into railroads, becoming key figures in the building and operation of a number of successful lines. He owned over 22,000 miles of railroad, and subsequently became known as "The Railroad King." Scott, a democrat, served two terms as Mayor of Erie and two terms as Congressman from this district. A close friend of President Grover Cleveland, he helped Cleveland formulate policy during his first administration. Scott married Mary Tracy, granddaughter of Daniel Dobbins. Their daughter, Annie Wainwright, married Charles Hamot Strong, and for their wedding gift, Scott designed and built the house known today as "Old Main," Gannon University's Administration building on the south corner of West 6th and Peach streets.

V-b

CHARLES H. STRONG (1853-1936)

Charles Strong, grandson of Martin Strong (paternal) and P.S.V. Hamot (maternal), and son-in-law of William L. Scott, is interred with his wife Annie Wainwright, in the Scott mausoleum. A graduate of Yale University, he returned to Erie where he read law in the office of Frank Gunnison (later Judge Gunnison), and became one of Erie's railroad magnates. Strong served as president of the Mount Hickory Iron Works; of the Union Coal Company in Shamokin, PA.; of the Erie and Pittsburgh Railroad; and was owner of Erie County Electric Company. He also served as president of the *Erie Morning Dispatch*, later to combine with the *Erie Evening Herald* to become the *Dispatch-Herald*. Strong was a friend of President William Taft, who once visited him at his Erie mansion at West 6th and Perry Square.

V-c

DANIEL DOBBINS (1776-1856)

Shortly after his arrival in Erie in 1796, Daniel Dobbins witnessed the funeral and burial of General Anthony Wayne, a hero of both the Revolution and the Northwest Indian War, as he was interred at the fort overlooking the bay. Young Dobbins shortly became owner of a lake schooner, the *Salina*, hauling salt, whiskey and furs on Lake Erie and Lake Huron. Captured by the British at the outbreak of the War of 1812, he believed that the U.S. must build a fleet to protect the southern shore of Lake Erie, and convinced President Madison to build the fleet at Erie. Dobbins, along with Oliver H. Perry, helped oversee the building of the fleet and supplied provisions for it once it had sailed. He went on to play an important role in the development of Erie's first public dock in 1823, which is now named "Dobbins Landing" in his honor.

V-d

JOHN A. TRACY (1798-1875)

Born in New York, Tracy moved with his family to Erie County in 1799. He was raised in Waterford and came to the city of Erie at age 18. He entered into a partnership with P.S.V. Hamot for several years, and served as director of the U.S. Bank in Erie. He became a contractor on the New York and Erie Railroad and the Erie and North East Railroad, and served as director until 1853 when he became president. He then became Director of Railroads for the Buffalo and Erie; the Lake Shore and Michigan; and the Erie and Pittsburgh. He married Susan Jane Dobbins, daughter of Daniel Dobbins, in 1826.

V-e

JOHN F. TRACY (1827-1878)

Born in Erie, the son of John A. Tracy, he is considered one of the fathers of the American railway system. He engaged in railroad construction, carrying on in the tradition of his father; and became Superintendent of Railroads for the Erie and North East railroad, a post he held during the Erie Railroad War. He served simultaneously as president of railroads for the Chicago and Rock Island, and the Chicago and Northwestern. During the Erie Railroad War in 1853, Tracy held the position that the railroad gauges be one size and did not yield to the pressure of popular sentiment which sought to maintain a break in the continuous line in what was destined to become a great continental highway. He also built the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi River.

V-f

GENERAL STRONG VINCENT (1837-1863)

Born in Waterford, PA in 1837, he was one of the Union's heroes in the Civil War. He was in charge of the 83rd Pennsylvania volunteers at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863. On the second day of the battle, the Confederacy had one great opportunity to outflank and destroy the Union Army by sweeping over Little Round Top, but Colonel Vincent's brigade never yielded. Vincent, who was mortally wounded in the action, was promoted shortly before his death to the rank of General by President Lincoln.

V-g

PRESCOTT METCALF (1813-1891)

Born in Vermont, he came to Erie as a young man. He became associated with Rufus S. Reed, and eventually managed all his business affairs. Metcalf was a prominent figure in the operation of stage coaches between Erie and Pittsburgh, construction of the Canada Southern Railway, the extension canal and the Erie and North East Railroad. He was an incorporator of Erie Cemetery, Erie Gas Works, the Dime Savings Bank and founded both the Burdett Organ Factory and Erie Malleable Iron Works.

V-h

HONORABLE WILLIAM A. GALBRAITH (1823-1898)

Moving to Erie with his family in 1837, Galbraith attended Erie Academy and graduated from Allegheny College. In 1845 he graduated from the Dane Law School of Harvard University, and returned to Erie to practice law. From 1846 to 1850 he was deputy attorney-general of Pennsylvania. He became the director of railroads for the Sunbury and Erie, and for the Cleveland and Erie. He also served as president of the Erie Dime Savings and Loan Company. He made large investments in real estate, particularly in Chicago where his "Galbraith Building" stood at the corner of Madison and Franklin streets. Galbraith, along with Herman Haupt, spent two years (1856-1858) supervising the building of the Hoosac tunnel through the Berkshire Hills in western Massachusetts.

VI-a

HARRY T. BURLEIGH (1866-1949)

Born in Erie, Burleigh is regarded as the "savior of the spirituals," because he created arrangements for over 100 African-American folk songs, which developed under slavery and had been transmitted only in an oral tradition. A leading baritone of his time, he performed across the U.S. and before crowned heads of Europe. Buried in White Plains, N.Y. in 1949, he was reinterred in Erie Cemetery in May 1994.

VII-a

REID T. STEWART (1850-1872)

The only son of prominent Erie physician and surgeon, James L. Stewart, he graduated from West Point in 1871, and was commissioned second lieutenant to Company G, 5th U.S. Calvary. He was killed by Apache Indians near Tucson, Arizona Territory in 1872.

VIII-a

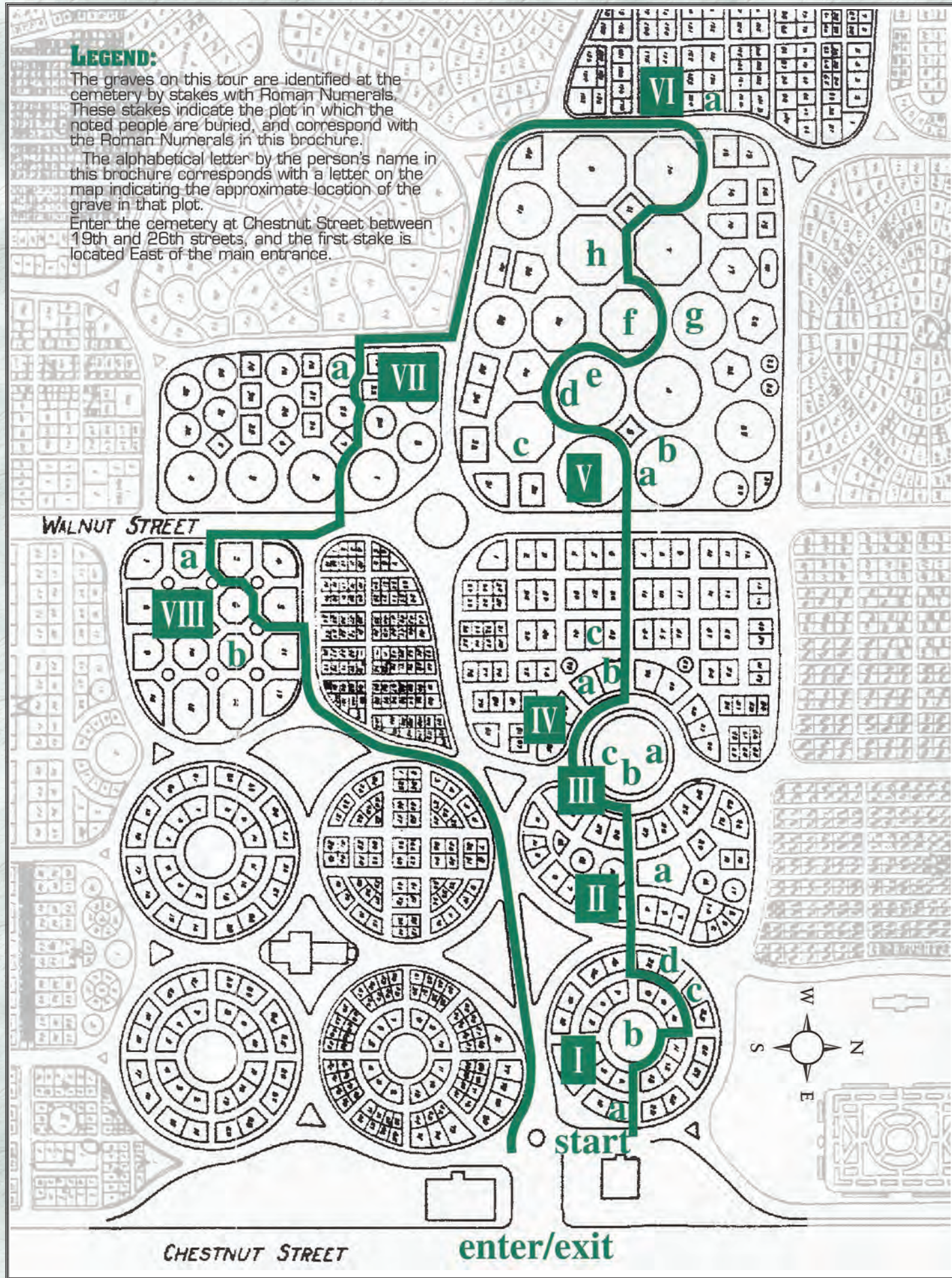
COLONEL JOHN W. McLANE (1820-1862)

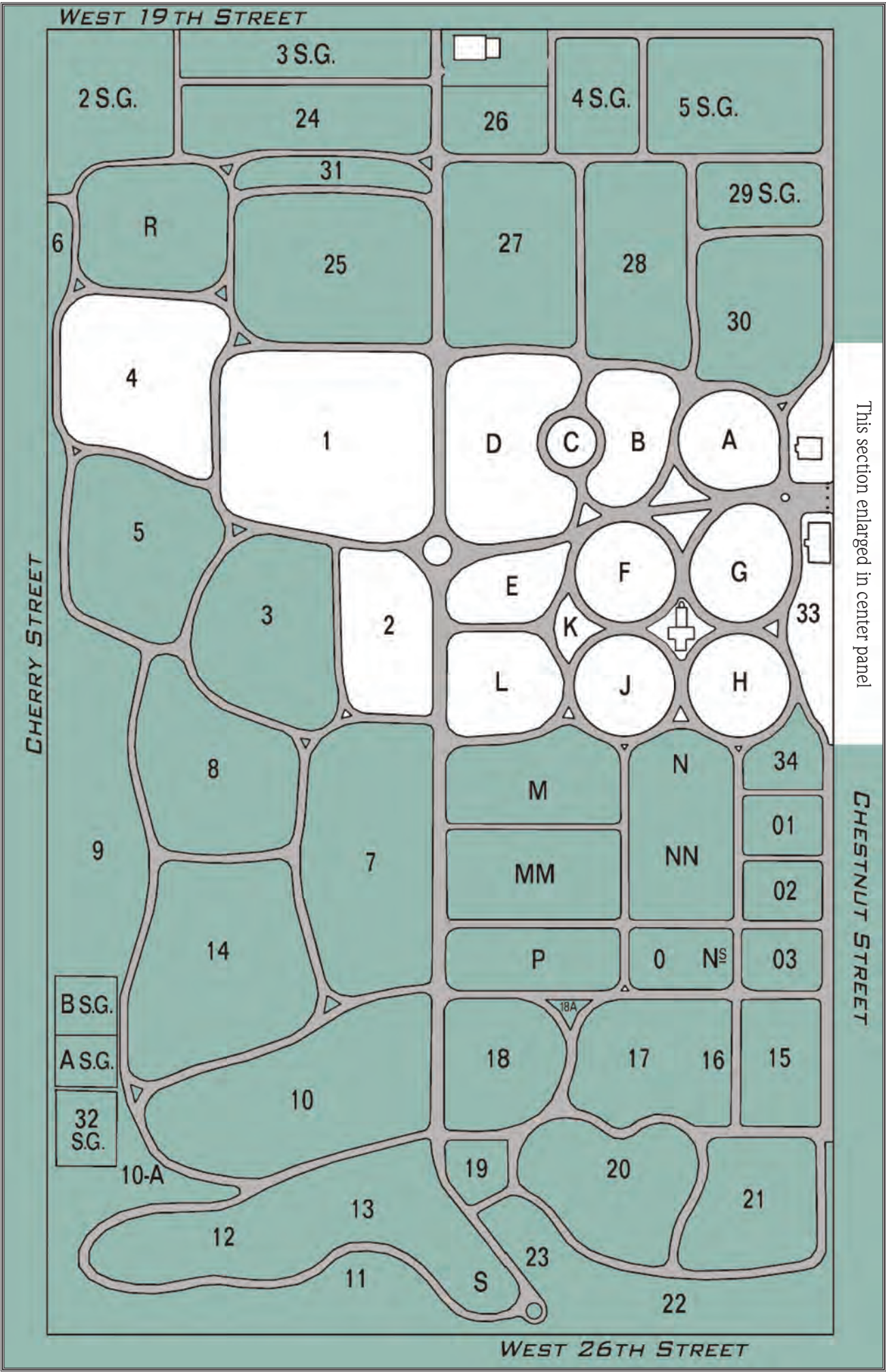
At the outbreak of the Civil War, McLane formed the 83rd regiment with men from Erie, Crawford, Warren, Venango, and Mercer Counties. In the Union invasion of Virginia in 1862, the 83rd distinguished itself at the Battle of Gaines's Mill by preventing a Confederate breakthrough. McLane was mortally wounded in the battle. He was promoted to the rank of general on April 4, 1861, 99 years after his death.

VIII-b

HONORABLE THOMAS SILL (1783-1856)

Born in Connecticut, Sill opened a law practice in Erie (1813) becoming Erie's first lawyer. He was a member of the militia as a "Minute Man," who guarded the building of the ships in Erie during the War of 1812. Sill was elected to the state legislature in 1823 and to Congress in 1826 and 1828. He became president of the U.S. Bank branch at Erie in 1837. Sill took a lively interest in public matters, especially projects of public improvement, and the cause of education serving as School Director; and as Trustee of Erie Academy for more than 30 years. Sill also served as Postmaster of Erie from 1849-1853, and as a Burgess in 1816-17, 33-34, 43-44.





INTRODUCTION

The following walking tour is designed to give you an insight to the lives of some of the early founding citizens of Erie, without whose foresight and philanthropy Erie might not be the great city it is today.

Note the circular grave sites showing the abundant availability of land in the cemetery at that time. This design contrasts greatly with today's cemetery plots which are compact and rectangular in shape to conserve space. The mausoleums and obelisks within these family grave sites reflect the wealth and appreciation for beauty of these early leaders.

Note, the information in this brochure is not comprehensive and only identifies a handful of the notable citizens in Erie.

PHOTOGRAPHS LOWER

Lower right. Uncharacteristic of today's cemeteries where plots are laid in rows, the Strong Vincent family circles round the Irish cross. (Located in V f, on inside map).

Below. This picture shows a beautiful monument, more ornate, being a Corinthian column surmounted by a sculptured urn, with tablets at the base recording the death of Lt. Reid T. Stewart. (Located in VII a, on inside map).

Back cover. The Reed lot has as its center the cemetery's largest obelisk (20-25 feet). The figure, a life size mourning figure symbolizing perpetual sorrow, looks over the hills to the Old Reed farm at Walnut Creek. (located in III a,b,c on inside map).

Front cover. The William L. Scott Mausoleum, by far the grandest in the cemetery, is Gothic in design and practically identical to that of J.B. Ford, founder of Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company in Allegheny County Cemetery. (Located in V a,b, on inside map).

Photos © 1995 by Ed Bernik



ABOUT THE CEMETERY

Erie Cemetery was established in 1850 to fill the need for a community-based, non-sectarian burying ground for local residents. It grew out of the "rural cemetery" movement - a nationwide phenomenon which emphasized a pastoral setting, landscape and statuary in its design.

On 75 acres, Erie Cemetery was able to more adequately meet the burial needs of the community than the four existing religiously affiliated graveyards. Dedication of the new enterprise, whose corporation included many leading citizens, was held May 20, 1851. As was true at cemeteries throughout the country at the time, Erie Cemetery soon became a favorite place for family members to spend their leisure time. In that sense it also served as Erie's first public park. It was not unusual for crowds of upwards of a thousand people to tour the grounds on the weekend.

With the passage of time, many improvements were made to the grounds, such as iron fencing, paved roadways and planting of trees and shrubs. A chapel and receiving vault were erected in 1887.

However, it is the markers people chose to place on their family lots which contributes most to Erie Cemetery's appearance. These consist of stately mausoleums, soaring obelisks, crosses in a variety of shapes, and that most popular of Victorian motif - the draped maiden. The total effect of the beautiful sculptures and monuments is truly inspirational.

While the number of these earlier marker styles has declined markedly in recent decades, the transition to less elaborate gravestones has been accomplished with great care. Furthermore, Erie Cemetery has escaped the "cluttered look" which has afflicted so many other cemeteries of the same age. It is hard to believe that the cemetery now accommodates over 50,000 burials, which is almost ten times the population of Erie in 1850, when the cemetery was opened.

-John Claridge, author, Landscapes for Eternity



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A WALKING TOUR VISITING SOME OF ERIE'S EARLIEST SETTLERS



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