

THE

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# BEECHWOOD

WAY

MAGAZINE

*Beechwood*

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**BEECHWOOD**

Funeral, Cemetery and Cremation Services  
Services funéraires, cimetière et crémation





## Letter from the editor

ONE OF THE JOYS of working at Beechwood is the constant learning and discovering new history and heritage pieces. As you all can imagine, we are constantly undertaking research on people, symbols and communities at Beechwood and the greater Ottawa region.

Once in a while, there is a piece of history that eludes you. For nearly five years, I have been searching for this one symbol, the Crescent Moon with a Star and the letters GIA and numbers 213. It wasn't in any of the regular symbolism books and websites. There's no references internally and it appears we have never written an article about it.

The Crescent Moon with a Star and the letters GIA and numbers 213 is a metal insignia that is spiked in the ground beside monuments. I would see this symbol frequently when touring Beechwood. I often asked about it but was never able to know.

If it wasn't for a reference in a 1920 edition of the Ottawa Journal, this symbol would have eluded me still. I finally discovered its meaning because of an anniversary dinner hosted by the Grand International Auxiliary to the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) here in Ottawa.

The G.I.A. was the wives of the members of the BLE, many of whom were already meeting in small groups scattered throughout the U.S. and Canada, there was no established organization to bring them all together. The G.I.A. organized these groups of women whose mission would be to help elevate their husbands and families educationally, economically and socially. Within a few years' time, the GIA grew to more than 26,000 members, with 600 lodges (now called auxiliaries) in the U.S. and Canada. Promoting fraternal love and sociability within the families of BLE members was the main purpose of the G.I.A.

Over the years, these women banded together for their mutual protection and in the interest of their loved ones in the BLE. Charitable projects, such as the GIA Orphans Pension Fund and other funds to care for aged and indigent members were established.

Make sure you stay current on all that Beechwood has to offer with:

- Facebook (@BeechwoodCemetery, @NMCBeechwood, @cimetiereBeechwood)
- Twitter (@BeechwoodOttawa)
- Instagram (@beechwoodcemetery)
- YouTube (Beechwood Cemetery)

Thank you and, as always, we hope you enjoy this issue.

**Nicolas McCarthy**

*Director of Marketing, Communications and Community Outreach*

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Visit us online to learn more about Beechwood, the National Cemetery of Canada and read back issues at: [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca)

We want your feedback on how we are doing!

Contact: Erika Wagner at [foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca](mailto:foundation@beechwoodottawa.ca)

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# Monument materials at Beechwood: Part I

By Bruce S. Elliott

BEECHWOOD CAME INTO EXISTENCE in the period when white marble was the most popular material employed for grave markers.

## LIMESTONE

Some earlier markers, moved from Sandy Hill, were made from local blue-grey limestone by Bytown stonemasons whose main line of work was building houses and shops of the same material. Beechwood has examples of box tombs (such as the one in Sec. 37 to the Rev. William Durie (Fig. 1) who died of typhus fever ministering to sick immigrants in 1847, moved here in 1880) and recumbent ledger stones (such as the one in Sec. 50 to William May (Fig. 2), who died of sunstroke at the opening of the Union Bridge in 1844, moved in 1879). Thick upright headstones of this material are often the oldest markers in the older country burial grounds throughout the Ottawa Valley. They typically bear dates from the 1830s into the 1850s, though one encounters some made — or purchased and inscribed — later.

## WHITE MARBLE

Limestone and marble occupy a geological continuum and it is sometimes difficult to decide whether to classify an early gravestone as

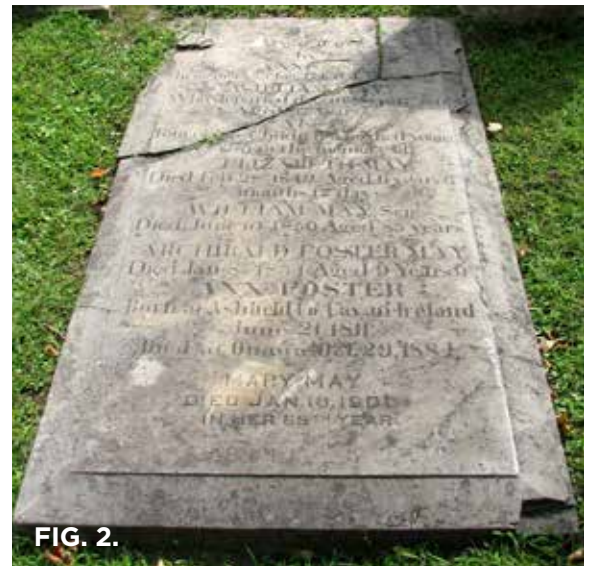


FIG. 2.





one or the other. Limestone was produced by the sedimentation of mud and shells. There is an example at Upper Canada Village that includes fossilized remains of entire marine shells. Marble is a crystalized form of limestone. Fine grades of marble, some of statuary quality, are to be found in the marble belt of western New England. This had long been the local material employed in western Vermont. The quarry operators there expanded their market areas westward into upstate New York with the construction of the Erie Canal in the 1820s and some of this material was imported north into Upper Canada. By the 1830s, marble was also being quarried in the Rideau Lakes area.

Some early white marble headstones, also from Sandy Hill, were likely produced in one of the marble mills that operated in towns along the St Lawrence River in the 1830s and 1840s. The headstone to Mary, the first wife of Robert Hardy (Fig. 3), for 20 years agent to Nicholas Sparks (Sec. 37, moved here in 1889), is likely one such. It bears an urn, a mortality symbol that generally preceded the mid-century willow tree, and contemporary with her death date of 1833. The headstone to his second wife Dorothea (Fig. 4), who died in 1863, pictures a willow.

In much of Atlantic Canada, we can pinpoint when white marble began to be imported and carved locally instead of being ordered from carvers in Boston or Italy by a wealthier clientele. In Ottawa one needs to distinguish stylistically between early types such as Mary Hardy's and later examples like Dorothea's. Many white marble markers were erected in the 1850s and 1860s to family members who died much earlier and so bear earlier dates. And there are unfortunate gaps in the survival of Ottawa



FIG. 5



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4





FIG. 6

newspapers from the 1850s, which hinders research. Railway connections established between Vermont and Montreal in 1850 and between Ottawa and the American railway network in 1854 facilitated the import of slabs of sawn white marble from a host of American marble mills, many of which consolidated to form the Vermont Marble Company combine in 1883. Pattern books in the same period disseminated popular sentimental designs such as weeping willows, clasped hands and fingers pointing to heaven.

John Rowat, a builder on LeBreton Flats who signed many limestone grave markers, advertised in 1853 “a large supply of VERMONT MARBLE for Grave Stones” and had on hand “a supply of LIMESTONE TOMBS and HEADSTONES. ENGRAVING done to order.” Though he continued to work as a builder and contractor for many years, I have never seen a white marble headstone with his signature, nor indeed any gravestone with his name or initials postdating 1853. Perhaps he wholesaled the Vermont marble to others in the trade. Many stonecutters converged on Ottawa in the late 1850s to help build the original Parliament Buildings. A number of them advertised their ability to carve gravestones on the side, and so through the 1860s consumers in Ottawa were spoiled for choice.

### ARNPRIOR MARBLE

One of the more distinctive varieties of local stone common at Beechwood in late 19th-century monuments is Arnprior marble. This was a mottled grey marble with darker veins verging on black. (Fig. 5) It was excavated and sawn originally on an island in the Madawaska River in Daniel McLachlin’s new town of Arnprior beginning in 1859. It was used extensively for architectural work, including in the Parliament Buildings, as well as for family monuments. Later Arnprior producers such as P.T. Somerville had their own quarries and made extensive use of it, especially for the obelisks popular in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as wholesaling it to other monument makers. White marble from along the Ottawa River near Arnprior and Portage du Fort was also used for headstones, though the Vermont firms undercut their prices in the 1880s to retain their grip on the Canadian market.

### SANDSTONE

As sandstone is soft and fine-grained, it lends itself to detailed carving. Beechwood has some elaborate monuments from the 1870s by P.A. Taylor late of Perth, Scotland. (Fig. 6) The A.K. Mills firm in the same period produced many sandstone obelisks with the inscriptions inset on white marble panels. Many sandstones, such as the Pictou variety commonly used for early headstones in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, resist wear reasonably well, but much of the sandstone used at Beechwood has proved susceptible to weathering by wind and rain.

### WHITE BRONZE

Beechwood has a solitary example of a cast metal monument retailed as “white bronze”: it was actually a high grade of zinc. These were produced originally at a foundry in Bridgeport, Connecticut, but several other American foundries also turned their hand to them, as did one in St Thomas, Ontario. American monument men waged a propaganda war against white bronze, and in the end the more natural granite seemed more obviously to meet the criteria of hardness and durability. White bronze has proved to be enduring, unless toppled by falling branches or buckling under its own weight. More often the bolts holding



the side panels have rusted out, and a panel goes missing, as is the case with Beechwood's lone example, in Sec. 22 (Fig. 7). Its stone base bears the signature of Francis Wright, whose marble shop was where the Garden of the Provinces is today. He was clearly one monument man who thought he could profit from working with the competition. Many country cemeteries around Ottawa have one or two examples, most dating from the early 1880s when there was a local agent of the St Thomas interests downtown. Nick McCarthy has recounted the broader story of "white bronze" in the Summer 2021 issue.

*Bruce Elliott taught a seminar course on gravestones and cemeteries at Carleton University till he retired in 2019.*

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Fig. 1. Box tomb of local blue-grey limestone erected to the Rev. William Durie by St Andrew's Congregation, 1847. Sec. 37.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 2. Ledger slab of local blue-grey limestone by Andrew McGibney to William May, who died of sunstroke at the inauguration of the Union Bridge in 1844. Sec. 50.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 3. White marble headstone to Mary Evans (d. 1833), first wife of Robert Hardy. Probably purchased from one of the early marble works along the St Lawrence. Sec. 37.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 4. White marble headstone to Dorothea Smith (d. 1863), second wife of Robert Hardy. By the early 1850s white marble, mostly imported from Vermont, was being worked extensively by Ottawa stonecutters. Sec. 37.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 5. Arnprior marble, of a mottled grey colour, was popular for obelisks in the 1870s and 1880s. Sec. 34

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 6. Peter A. Taylor carved a number of monuments of soft sandstone, this memorial to watchmaker Edward Grant while Taylor was manager of Wall's Monumental Works. Unusually it has inscription tablets of the veined grey Arnprior marble.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

Fig. 7 White bronze was the trade name given to monuments of cast zinc. First made in Bridgeport, Conn., a plant in St Thomas, Ontario had a local agent, but this is the sole example at Beechwood. Sec. 22.

*Photo: B. Elliott*

***This article will continue in the next issue of the Beechwood Way Magazine***



**FIG. 7**





# Events 2022

ALL THE EVENTS listed below remain free to the public because of donations. Your support could mean adding even more free events for the community to enjoy. Despite COVID slowing down programming, Beechwood will still be hosting all our signature events (excluding tours). To keep up with event updates, sign up on our website to receive event information by email.

*\*Beechwood remains committed to following city and provincial COVID guidelines and events are subject to change depending on future restrictions.*

## Tours

**LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH  
@1:00PM**

Beechwood continues to offer free monthly tours on the last Sunday of every month between May and November. Registration can be found at our website [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca).

## Grief Support Workshop

**HOW I SURVIVE THE LOSS OF A  
LOVE - 19 JUNE @ 12:00PM**

A workshop by Dr. Martin Rovers, a registered psychologist of Capital Choice Counselling Group.

## Bonnes décisions, bons plans

**22 JUIN @1:00PM - FRANCAIS  
SEULEMENT**

Venez assister à une présentation de planification GRATUITE organisée par le groupe Doyle d'IG Private Wealth Management et le cimetière Beechwood. Joignez-vous à nos experts financiers et juridiques pendant qu'ils vous guideront tout au long du processus pour prendre les bonnes décisions et, en fin de compte, choisir le bon plan.

## Spies in the Cemetery

**FBI EDITION - 22 JUNE @7:00PM**

Join us at Beechwood Cemetery, home of the CSIS National Memorial Cemetery for a night of Cold War Espionage and the FBI's longest open espionage case.

## Reconciling History Tour

**10 JULY @1:00PM**

Exploring the vast grounds of Beechwood, this version of the tour program focuses not only on the History of Beechwood and those buried here, but more specifically on those who were involved with the Indigenous Community. Registration can be found at our website [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca).

*Continued on Next Page*





### Soldiers of Suicide

**10 SEPT @7:00PM**

See the faces of the unremembered in this sunset ceremony at the National Military Cemetery of Canada. Join the families and friends of the soldiers who gave their lives in service. This service will help connect one another through healing and understanding.

### The Annual Historical Tour

**INFLUENTIAL WOMAN - 11 SEPT @2:00PM**

Join us outdoors in front of the Mausoleum as we highlight four women who impacted the world around them. Actors bring the stories of these artists, activists and adventures to life.



### Annual Memorial Service

Memorial Service for all

**SEPT 25TH @3:00PM**

Through music and poetry, this new format of a memorial service will help those struggling with grief. This non-religious event will use art to express the stages of grief in both musical pieces and spoken word.

### National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day at Beechwood

**SEPT 30TH**

A public Day of Reconciliation education and action to learn from residential schools and other forms of







colonialism so we can all implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

### **Remembrance Ceremony for the Latin-American Community in Canada**

**OCT 17 @10:30AM**

October is Latin American Heritage Month (LAHM) in Canada and we are proud to showcase the richness and vitality of Latin American cultures and heritage and to highlight their contributions to Canada.

### **No Stone Left Alone**

**1 NOVEMBER @10:30AM**

The 6th Annual No Stone Left Alone

event will have school students, members of the Canadian Armed Forces and the community at large unite in a remembrance experience. The ceremony involves students and others placing poppies on every soldier's headstone in different sections of the cemetery to honour Canada's fallen military.

### **Remembrance Day**

**11 NOVEMBER @10:45AM**

Military members of the National Capital Region and their families and friends are invited to observe the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the National Military Cemetery of the Canadian Forces.

### **Wreaths Across Canada**

**4 DECEMBER @1:30PM**

Wreaths Across Canada will conduct a wreath-laying ceremony where members of the public are invited to lay a wreath for a fallen member of our military.

### **Christmas Candlelight Service**

**11 DECEMBER @6:00PM**

A special way to remember loved ones, our service features a candlelight memorial with carols and a tree-lighting ceremony.



**More events get added every day!**

**To stay up to date, register your email at [www.beechwoodottawa.ca](http://www.beechwoodottawa.ca)**





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# Tree Planting Program

By Trevor Davidson

**SPRING IS ALWAYS** a busy season for Beechwood, with the flowers blooming and annual beds being planted. On top of the usual busyness, this year is going to be an exciting year for tree planting. The Beechwood Cemetery Foundation has launched a new program to help replant lost trees. Over the years, trees around the property have aged, gotten sick or fallen, but with the new Tree Planting Program, Beechwood will be replanting those trees. Donations of \$400 through our Annual Campaign Mailout plants one tree somewhere in the grounds. Those trees will be marked by a small tree tag. Made by local shop Woodgrain Ottawa, these tags will show how the generosity of donors makes a physical difference to the Beechwood landscape.

Make sure to keep a lookout for them the next time you walk through the grounds!

