

Town of Greenburgh
**ASSISTANT
TOWN HISTORIANS**



— felicia barber + riley wentzler —



*Beyond Heritage Versus Hate Toward
Hope and Reconciliation: The story of
Mount Hope Cemetery and its
Confederate Monument*

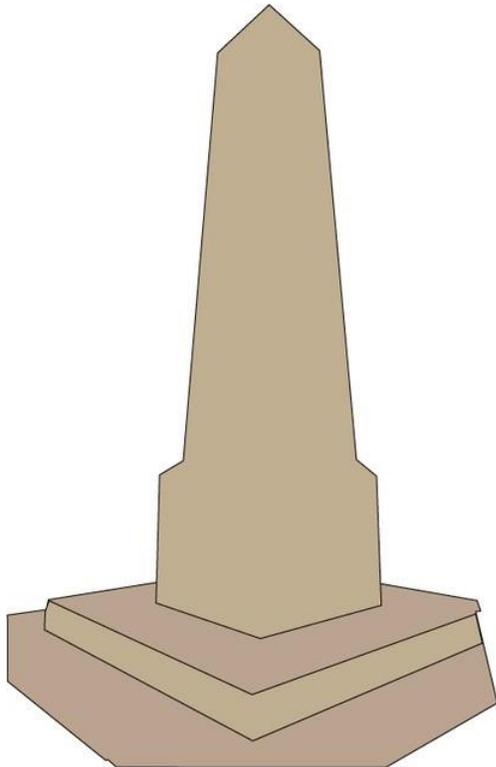
By: Riley Wentzler & Felicia Barber

On 50 Jackson Avenue Hastings-On-Hudson, NY stands a very old and well-loved cemetery (<http://www.mounthopcemetry.com/visit-us.html>).

This is Mount Hope Cemetery and it was founded in 1886. Since its founding , many residents of: Westchester County, New York City, and other parts of the

New York Metropolitan Area have chosen Mount Hope Cemetery as the final resting place for their loved ones (<http://www.mounthopcecemetery.com/burial--cremation.html>). In fact currently there are 100,000 people buried there (<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/65345/mount-hope-cemetery>). It is owned by the Mount Hope Cemetery Association (<http://www.mounthopcecemetery.com/visit-us.html>).

What makes Mount Hope Cemetery different from other cemeteries in Greenburgh? While both the age of the cemetery and the sheer number of burials are impressive, neither of these facts are what truly distinguish it from other cemeteries in Greenburgh. Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale has more burials, as there are approximately 148,000 people buried in that cemetery (<http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47403&TID=10&jump2=0>) and the Little White Church Cemetery in Dobbs Ferry is older than Mount Hope, having been established in 1842 (http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Memo%20Style_Redacted.pdf).



What makes this cemetery different than the others in Greenburgh is a 60-foot-tall obelisk built in 1897.

The wording of an inscription on one side of the obelisk reads “Sacred to the memory of the Heroic Dead of the Confederate Veteran Camp of New York.” This obelisk was erected to commemorate the memories of 40 Confederate veterans who came to New York after the Civil War and became well respected citizens in the New York Metropolitan Area

(<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.lohud.com/amp/575772001>). One of these Confederate Veterans was General Thomas Jordan, originally a Virginia native, who established the Financial and Mining Record in New York (<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.lohud.com/amp/575772001>, <https://www.history.com/topics/american-civil-war/civil-war-spies>). Another was a Jewish -Confederate soldier, Private Eugene H. Levy, originally a native of Louisiana, who owned a book store in New York City (<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.lohud.com/amp/575772001>, https://www.newspapers.com/clip/404964/eugene_henry_levy_csa_army_of_n_va/).

The Town of Greenburgh prides itself on being a progressive community which welcomes racial and ethnic diversity. Therefore, in August of 2017, many residents expressed concern over this monument thinking it should be removed especially in light of recent events in Charlottesville Virginia (<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.lohud.com/amp/575772001>). On Saturday, August 12th, 2017 when the city of Charlottesville Virginia attempted to remove a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, this led to a violent clash between the Ku Klux Klan and anti-racist protestors in which one person was brutally murdered (Bellantoni, 2017, p.2). The widespread media coverage of this horrific event led to a massive national debate about Confederate statues and Confederate monuments with the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and their allies on one side claiming these statues and monuments represented “Southern Heritage,” meaning a glorious struggle for States’ Rights, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and its allies on the other. The NAACP and its allies view the statues and monuments as hateful symbols of both slavery and white supremacy (Leib, Webster & Webster, 2002).

Greenburgh Town Supervisor, Paul Feiner, initially agreed with the residents who were asking that it be removed. He asked the Mount Hope Cemetery Association

President Theresa Joyce, to remove the monument. In his letter to Joyce, Feiner argued that since Confederate soldiers were fighting to preserve slavery and white supremacy they and their cause should not be honored in progressive and diverse Greenburgh. At this point the monument gained an unlikely yet passionate ally, the mayor of Hastings, Peter Swiderski. Mayor Swiderski argued that far from honoring the Confederate cause, this monument is actually a monument to reconciliation (<https://dailyvoice.com/new-york/greenburgh/news/confederate-monument-in-greenburgh-symbol-of-reconciliation-feiner-says/720638/>)

In making this claim, the mayor pointed to three facts:

1. Both Union and Confederate Veterans attended the dedication ceremony
2. It is maintained not by the Sons of the Confederate Veterans but instead by the Westchester-Putnam-Dutchess Chapter of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War
3. A second inscription exists on the monument itself which reads:
“Fold up the banners! Smelt the guns!
Love rules, her gentler purpose runs.
A mighty mother turns in tears
The pages of her battle years,

Lamenting all her fallen sons." (<https://dailyvoice.com/new-york/greenburgh/news/confederate-monument-in-greenburgh-symbol-of-reconciliation-feiner-says/720638/>)

After being made aware of these facts, Supervisor Feiner spoke with The President of the New York State chapter of the NAACP Hazel Dukes. After much deliberation, Feiner, Swiderski, and Dukes all agreed that the monument should remain where it is and remain untouched.

Mount Hope’s 1897 Confederate Monument is what distinguishes it from other cemeteries in Greenburgh, and yet the unusual circumstances surrounding this monument make it more of a monument to reconciliation than a monument to the confederate cause. As General Ulysses S. Grant once said, “The rebels are our countrymen again” (<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/robert-e-lee-surrenders>).



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Abandon Ship!!! The Story of United Nuclear Corporation and their Short-lived Elmsford Facility (6/28/19)

http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Microsoft%20Outlook%20-%20Memo%20Style_Redacted.pdf

“Like a long lost friend”: The story of how summer recreation has evolved in Greenburgh (6/7/19)

<http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%20-%20Recreation%20Part%201.pdf>

From Farmland to Shopping District: The Rise of Central Avenue

(5/25/2019) <http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Microsoft%20Outlook%20-%20Memo%20Style.pdf>

Irvington in Chains and our Process A History of Slavery in Irvington and A look at how Slices of History are made (and our interview with historian Robert Marchant) (5/11/2019)

<http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Mail%20-%20jlucasey@greenburghny.com6.pdf>

There is no church here, but “the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated” this ground: The Story of The Little White Church Cemetery (4/27/19)

http://greenburghny.com/Documents/Memo%20Style_Redacted.pdf

From Fixing Cars to building Infrastructure: How Massaro Park Got its name (4/13/2019) <http://greenburghny.com/Documents/History.pdf>

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The Power of Wealth and Humility: A Reflection on Two Highly Influential African Americans (2/18/19)
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An Unspoken Promise of Redemption: How Hartsdale Got its Name (1/31/19)
<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Greenburgh%20is%20one%20of%20the%20few%20communities%20anywhere%20that%20provides%20residents%20with%20frequent%20history%20bytes%20about%20their%20community.pdf>

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The Guardians of History: Greenburgh's Historical Societies (1/6/19)

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How a Flat Tire led to a Happy Escape: The Story of Carvel in Greenburgh

(12/11/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Carvel%20History.pdf>

A Thousand Words Which You Never Knew: The Forgotten Story of the Seal of Greenburgh. (11/17/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%20-%20A%20Thousand%20Words.pdf>

"The Disappearing Railroad Blues" in Greenburgh: The Fate of the Putnam Railroad Line and the old Putnam Trail ((11/6/18)

<http://www.greenburghny.com/Documents/Slice%20of%20History%20-%20%20Railroad%20Blues.pdf>

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Story (10/19/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47461&TID=10&jump2=0>

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A Final Resting Place for "Man's Best Friend": The Peaceable Kingdom (9/29/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47331&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh and The Arts (9/22/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/index.cfm?NID=47278&TID=10&jump2=0>

Greenburgh's BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH: A History of The Freemasons in Greenburgh (9/12/18) <http://www.greenburghny.com/Cit-e-Access/news/archnews.cfm?NID=47212&TID=10&jump2=0>

About the Authors:

We are both Assistant Town Historians at Greenburgh Town Hall and we are engaged to be married and are currently looking for permanent employment.

Riley Wentzler:

I was born and raised in a small rural town in central Pennsylvania. In high school, I took every honors course available including four years of Spanish. I received A's in all of them. I graduated third in my class of 146 students. This brought me to Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. Once there, I continued my trend of academic excellence. I graduated summa cum laude in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and a Master's in Communication Studies, with a G.P.A of 3.94. It was also there that I met my lovely fiancée, Felicia Barber. My Master's in Communication has promoted public speaking, teamwork, and customer service. My Political Science degree has developed my research skills using computer-based tools and provided me with experience using the Microsoft Office products. My minor in Spanish has facilitated my bilingual capabilities. During my internship at Greenburgh, I created the petition for the State Roads project using website tools. My diverse education and areas of interest have provided me with a wide range of skills. I look forward to finding a career opportunity in business or government. **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com, or to help me find employment, you can contact me at rjwentzler413@gmail.com**

Felicia Barber:

I was born in New York City and raised in Hartsdale, New York. I graduated from Ardsley High School. I recently earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Graphic Design at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania. It was here that I met my fiancé, Riley Wentzler. As a result of my academic excellence, I won a scholarship every year. I learned and applied many graphic design skills to projects during my summer internships and at school. I am proficient in using Adobe graphic design applications including Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. For my Identity/branding course at Edinboro, I created logos to appear on the tee-shirts of Physical Education majors. For a veteran's upcoming event, I used a typeface to focus the reader to the soldier in the poster. For the State Roads Legislative Campaign project, I created the embedded graphic-photo that accompanied the petition I am looking for a job to utilize my skills as a Graphic Designer in an agency, print shop, company or government **To suggest a topic for next week's article, you can contact me at assistanthistorian@greenburghny.com. To learn more about my artwork or to help me find employment you can contact me at feliciadbarber@gmail.com.**

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