



# Oak Leaves

## Family Legacy Series

Oak Hill Cemetery Association

1705 Mt. Vernon Rd. S. E. • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Oak Hill Cemetery is non-profit lot owner association dedicated to preserving the heritage of Linn County, Iowa.

### Oak Hill Cemetery – The Children of Judge Greene

*There are many resources to draw upon for a Biography of Judge George Greene but the paragraph that follows briefly says it best:*

*To Robert and Sefer Woodward Greene, natives of Staffordshire England, were born three sons, George, William and Joseph, who jointly and severally, gave the best they could of thought and energy to the cause of progress in that section of the new west which early in life they selected to be the field of their lives' work.*

*Judge Greene was one of the founders of the city of Cedar Rapids. In 1849 he, with others who owned the site, surveyed and laid out the original town. From that time his best efforts were devoted to promoting the growth and welfare of the city. In 1851 except for a short interval, the city became his home until his death. He erected many buildings in Cedar Rapids. Chiefly through his efforts and the backing of the Cedar Rapids & Marion Railway was built, and he was head of or actually interested in almost every important corporate enterprise what developed in the city before his death.*

*Although Judge Greene did not live to see all of his plans realized, his children carried on his legacy.*

On May 30, 1838, George Greene was united in marriage with **Miss Harriet Merritt** of Buffalo, New York.

Four children were born to them,

**George W.**, born April 4, 1839, died in Ivanhoe Iowa March 13, 1840;

**Susan H.**, born March 3, 1841 in Marion, who survived to adulthood and married Algernon S. Belt a lawyer and business partner of her father;



**Mary Ely**, born in Dubuque June 7, 1843, died July 28, 1844;  
**Edward Merritt**, born in Dubuque March 29, 1845, married Emma Eberhart and engaged in the insurance business in Cedar Rapids before moving to the Chicago area.

**Harriet Merritt Greene**, the mother of these children died in Dubuque April 25, 1850.

Judge Greene was again married on February 21, 1855 to **Frances R. Graves**, daughter of Calvin and Fanny (Carlisle) Graves of Cooperstown New York. Frances had arrived to visit her friend Elizabeth Calder Rock, who happened to be a cousin of George Greene.

Eight children, 6 sons and 2 daughters were born to this union namely:

**Calvin G.**, born February 18, 1856;

**Fanny C.**, born January 19, 1858, died October 1859;

**George**, born December 28, 1859;

**William J.**, born November 28, 1861, married to Mae Huldah Whittam;

**Elizabeth**, born August 13, 1864;

**Robert C.**, born December 22, 1867, died June 19, 1885;

**Francis**, born May 14, 1870;

**Woodward K.**, born August 2, 1873, married Ellen Belle Safely.

#### *Mrs. Algernon (Susan H.) Belt*

Reported to be a favorite of her father, Susan has a good relationship with her stepmother. Knowing the importance of entertaining guests at Mound Farm, she assisted with guest lists, invitations, and at least in one instance she assisted Mrs. William J. (Mae) Greene in the baking of the cakes .

In 1858 her father was a prime mover in organizing a company for the building of a steamboat, to be called the "Cedar Rapids," to be built for navigation upon the Red Cedar river. Seventeen-year-old Susan was a passenger on the first trip from Pittsburgh.

Her lasting legacy in the community began in 1899 when she organized the twelve young lady members of her Sunday School Class at Grace Episcopal Church to minister to the needs of convalescing patients at the developing St. Luke's Hospital. In 1900 the name White Cross Society was formalized.



***Edward Merritt Greene***

Edward M. Greene was living in the Chicago area when he died in 1904. Not much else has been found to be written about him; his brothers Calvin and Frank accompanied him back by train for a service at Grace Episcopal Church and burial at Oak Hill Cemetery




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### ***Calvin Graves Greene***

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"Cal" took over his fathers numerous enterprises after Judge Greene died in 1880. During his lifetime he:

- Established the first street railway (in 1881, he became president of the City Lines, constructing a street railway on Third Street to the packing house, Oak Hill Cemetery, and the west side)
- Established the electric light system in Cedar Rapids (he was associated with B. Silloway, C. L. Miller, N. O. Lawton and W. S. Moulton in organizing the Cedar Rapids Electric Light Company).
- Established Completed Greene's Opera House, which in its day was one of the most pretentious theaters in the Midwest.
- Established Served on the Coe College Board of Trustees.
- Confirmed, with the other heirs of his father, a gift of the site of St. Luke's hospital. (*Judge Greene died in 1880, St. Lukes Hospital was established in 1884.*)
- Headed the organization that brought to Cedar Rapids, the Grand Lodge Masonic Library.
- Helped organize and build the Cedar Rapids and Chicago Railway.
- Helped organize the Cedar Rapids Country Club of which he was a life member.
- Was part of the organization of the YMCA and served on the board of directors.
- Was active in the Cedar Rapids Board of Trade forerunner of the Commercial Club and present Chamber of Commerce.
- Was the first president of the Linn County Historical Society.

Calvin was born in the Greene Hotel, built at First Avenue and First Street East by his father. As a child he sat on the lap of Stephen A. Douglas who debated Abraham Lincoln while a guest in the home of Col. William H. Merritt.

He attended Parsons Seminary when it was located in the Wadsworth block, Edwards Place School in Stockbridge Mass., and Cedar Rapids Collegiate Institute the forerunner to Coe College.

At Princeton University, he shared a room with his lifelong friend, John S. Ely. They were members of Princeton's first scientific expedition to Colorado in 1877. Mr. Greene went as a botanist, Mr. Ely as a mineralogist.



Ada Estelle Taylor Bever, widow of George W. Bever married Calvin Greene in 1915. Known for her gracious manner and hospitality, she was involved with the Episcopal Church and welfare movements. She traveled extensively and her Japanese collection was one of the most interesting in Iowa as she spent a year in Yokohama as a guest of Elizabeth Greene McIvor.

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### ***George Greene Jr.***

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George Greene Jr. was born at Mound Farm, attended Parsons Seminary in Cedar Rapids, then Shattuck Military Academy, and graduated from Trinity College in Hartford Connecticut about 1884. He married Carlotta Wilson; a music teacher in Cedar Rapids at her parent's home near Boston Mass.

George became associated with his brother Calvin in the real estate and insurance business in Cedar Rapids. In 1893 he was appointed and served about two years as State Adjutant General under Governor Boies.

He was prominent in Grace Church, was a vocalist and also conducted occasional services, He continued in the real estate business in Cedar Rapids until he left about 1914.

During the latter years of his life, he was an executive in the accounting department of a manufacturing concern near Boston. He died in Providence Rhode Island and is not buried at Oak Hill Cemetery.



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### *William Joseph Greene*

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William Joseph Greene was born in Chicago, in 1861 and by 1863 the family was living in the McGregor/Marquette Iowa area before arriving back in Cedar Rapids in 1864. He attended public and private schools in Cedar Rapids entering in what is now Coe College after a short period in Washington High School. He remained in Coe until 1877 when he entered Shattuck School and upon graduation he entered the J. C. Green School of science at Princeton University. He graduated with a CE degree in 1885.

William became associated with land surveying upon graduation, later going to Cozad Nebraska to manage the Midway Land and Cattle Company. In January of 1887 he became the second president of the Cedar Rapids and Marion City Railway Company and the Cedar Rapids Electric Light and Power Company.

When Mr. Greene entered the company the chief business was arc lighting for street illumination. He reorganized the company to furnish incandescent lighting as well. The company began installation of lines for private homes and businesses and erected the new power plant at the corner of Sixth Street and D Avenue NE and the system was placed in operation in 1888. In 1892 the company installed the first steam heating plant and started direct current power circuit in the same year.

William Greene is believed to be the first in the industry to make a complete analysis of costs and bring forward a theory of rate making which has been adopted by virtually all modern utilities. Before his study, utilities conceived the idea that when their volume of business reached a certain point they would be able to lower the rates as fixed costs were spread over a greater number of consumers. Mr. Greene proposed the rates be lowered to the point that added business would make the lower price profitable. This method met with such success and swept over the country making Mr. Greene a leader in the industry.

Always quick to realize the importance of a new invention in the light world,

William Greene kept the plant ahead of its field during his administration and much of the groundwork for the modern plant was laid out during this time.

He was one of the earliest to develop a means of keeping alternating current stable and he invented a new resistance coil that made efficient arc light service possible. He devised the coil in a few minutes time when called upon to answer a complaint that the lights at the Union Depot were not functioning properly. He was the first to experiment with powdered fuel and to recognize its value. He was a pioneer in the use of forced draft to provide rapid burning and was one of the first to adopt the electric meter for measuring current consumption.

Under his administration 24 hour a day seven day a week service was established following the illness of a local resident. The patient needed the use of an electric fan which brought the company 1 cent an hour in revenue. When the plant was shut down on a Sunday, the fan could not be operated, so Mr. Greene ordered the plant to remain open in order for the fan to be used. The plant was never closed thereafter. *(That is until the flood of 2008)*



In 1896 Mr. William Greene was married to Miss Mae Whittam, of Cedar Rapids, a daughter of Judge Isaac N. and Relief (Ayers) Whittam, Judge Whittam being one of the early settlers of this city and one of its best known barristers. In 1890 we find Mae teaching high school with Abbie S. Abbott, as principal recommending her for the position. In 1887 Mae Whittam was active in the Cooking Club a group of young women who formed a club for the purpose of friendship, cooking and hosting dinners for their friends (usually boys).



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### *Elizabeth Greene McIvor*

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Elizabeth became Mrs. N. W. McIvor, consul general in the city of Yokohama Japan where he served as United States Ambassador to Japan. She died in 1943 in Providence RI.



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### *Robert C. Greene*

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In June of 1885 Robert Greene had just recently graduated from the preparatory department of Coe college with high honors, when he suffered a head injury involving a horse. The newspaper account reads as follows: He was riding to his home from the city on a pony and when near the old Fair grounds his hat blew off, frightening his pony it is supposed, he endeavored to check the little steed and by some freak the animal whirled about a few times and then ran towards the Fair grounds, and just as he came along side of a tree either on account of the saddle turning or from some sidewise motion of the pony, ho was thrown with great force against the tree striking his head. The pony coming home without its rider, suggests something wrong, and Mr. C. G. Greene and the farm hand immediately started toward the city to



ascertain the cause. They found young Robert and immediately removed him to St. Luke's Hospital, when everything which medical aid could accomplish was done, but without any apparent effect.

The funeral was large, and not all could be admitted to the Episcopal Church. Among the floral tributes were a Swiss cross of snow white flowers, with the letters "A. A." in red thereon, this being the gift of the Agassiz Association, which the deceased virtually founded. The cross was the shape of the badge of the association and the red letters were the initial letters of the same. The Alpha Nu presented a very fine offering in the shape of a broken wheel of white roses, with the name of the deceased in purple flowers.

The pallbearers representing the Agassiz Society and Coe college were: Fred Consigny, Frank Gates, Glenn Averill, Jas. Armstrong, Frank Mann, Walter Gifford, Eddie Boynton, and Walter Rook.



**Woodward Keeling Greene**

Woodward Keeling Greene, the youngest child, was born in 1873, and died in 1936. He attended Coe College and graduated from Princeton University as a member of the Princeton Class of 1896.

His business career began in Cedar Rapids with the B. C. R. & N. Railroad, later he was an agent for the road in Decorah and Waterloo. He was with the National Biscuit Company at Champaign and Danville Illinois.

By 1916 his business association was with the American Sugar Refining Company at Boston, and in 1922 was secretary-treasurer of the Red Diamond Chemical Company of Philadelphia.

He was president of the Philadelphia Celotex company in 1923, was an officer of the Telfer Biscuit Company Toronto Canada in 1924 and 1925 and finally was the building manager of the property at 210 Madison Avenue, New York City



His wife Ellen Belle Safely Greene, was a sister of Robert Safely, she made her home in Cedar Rapids until her marriage in 1899. After the death, of Woodward in 1936, she returned to Cedar Rapids and resided here for the last 12 years of her life making the Commonwealth Apartments her home. In their youth both Woodward and Ellen Belle were active in the fund-raising activities of the White Cross Society.



**Francis (Frank) Greene**

Not buried at Oak Hill Cemetery was Francis (Frank) Greene, the last surviving son of Judge George Greene born at Mound Farm in 1870; he died in Birmingham Alabama in 1958.

Frank served in the Spanish American War as a corporal with Cedar Rapids Company C., and his chosen career path was to be a structural engineer.

#### **SOCIETY IN THE EARLY DAYS**

*The entertainments given by Judge and Mrs. Greene were the crowning social events of early days. The home and estate were outside of town, but that was no obstacle to their entertaining. Judge Greene was ready for every emergency and the home was characteristic of the man. He was broadminded, warm hearted, foresighted, generous and philanthropic, and his home was conducted on these plans.*

*His first house on his beautiful estate, Mound Farm, was not large, but he always found a way to entertain his friends and visitors to Cedar Rapids.*

*For example, he had a house party of friends and wished Cedar Rapids people to meet them. He was at the time building some buildings to shelter his sheep, of which he had a great many. So he put floors in the building preparatory to entertaining his guests and friends. He found on short notice that if he expected to have the only good music in town he must take it next day.*

*He and Mrs. Greene talked the matter over and decided to have the party. They sent word to the other members of the Greene family and intimate friends what they expected to do and they all came to their assistance.*

*Early in the morning Mrs. Belt made out the list and the family delivered the invitations. Mrs. Belt and Mrs. William Greene baked all the cakes. I don't know just how many picked strawberries, but Mrs. Greene told me that eighty quarts were picked and hulled that day.*

*Mrs. Greene superintended the making of the ice cream and the decorating of the building.*

*Special train service over the Dubuque and Southwestern was arranged to bring the guests from a central point to the sheep pens. All was in readiness and the host and hostess ready to receive their guests at eight o'clock.*

*Later Judge Greene built his large house on the crowning point of Mound Farm.*

*This was the account of the events according to Mrs. George C. Haman writing for the Republican Newspaper and copied in the Brewer and Wick book titled History of Linn County.*