



Oak Leaves

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.

White Cross Society – The Early Years



The White Cross Society began as a Sunday School Class at Grace Episcopal Church in 1899. Mrs. A. S. Belt, the former Susan Harriet Greene, daughter of Judge George Greene of Mound Farm asked the twelve young women in her class to minister to the needs of convalescing patients at the developing St. Luke's Hospital. In 1900 the name White Cross Society was formalized.

In organizing the society Mrs. Belt hoped that the twelve charter members would “*find true happiness in cheering and helping the sick by your ministrations and while away many hours that would otherwise be passed in weariness and pain.*”

First officers of the organization were Mrs. Belt, chairman;

Miss Henrietta Dows, president (later Mrs. James E. Blake)

Miss Helen Hall, vice-president; (later Mrs. Fredrick Upham)

Miss Frances Belt, secretary treasurer. (Mrs Robert Hilton)

Other charter members were:

Miss Genevieve Blake,
(later Mrs. William H. Sutherland)

Miss Julia Douglas,

Miss Helen Clark,

Miss Ella Belle Safely,

Miss Adelaide Frick,

Miss Mable Cook,

Miss Winifred Augsburg,

Miss Margaret Cooper and

Miss Sarah Cook.

Although many of these young women are listed by their maiden name, look for them as you walk thru the cemetery.

The organizational meeting was held at St. Luke's hospital. Women were assigned to visit weekly in the wards, to read to patients and take them flowers, fruit and tasty foods



By 1901 an announcement was made in The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette, which reads:

The Young Women's auxiliary to the ladies' finance committee of St. Luke's Hospital, better known as the White Cross Society, have decided to enlarge the scope of their work and to that end have adopted a plan for raising money that cannot fail of success.

This auxiliary society was organized about three years ago by the ladies who have been prominently connected with hospital work since the founding of that institution. It was planned to educate the young women along practical lines, so that in time they might succeed as members of the managing board the ladies who have toiled so long and faithfully for the institution.

Though they have regularly attended to the work assigned to them and added in no small decree to the success of the hospital they have now decided

upon an original plan, and one which cannot fail to interest the people of the city, especially the young women and working girls.

They will at once establish a young women's ward in the hospital, to which any unfortunate young woman in the city who is without funds may be taken and cared for without expense to herself or her friends.

It will be charity work, pure and simple. Numerous cases have come to light where young women who had no homes here, except a boarding place and who were filling positions in stores and offices, were taken seriously ill and compelled to rely entirely upon charitably inclined acquaintances for care. It is the intention of the White Cross Society to care for all such cases gratuitously, where necessary. Any unfortunate young women who need care and treatment will have the new ward to themselves, and unless they are able and willing to pay for such treatment it will not be expected.

But the members of the White Cross society have been doing more. They have been fitting themselves for emergency work. During the past they have met and listened to informal talks by physicians who have instructed them in the mysteries of medicine, as far as related to emergency work, whether in the hospital or home.

This year preparations have been made for a more systematic course of instruction. The little lectures by doctors have proved so interesting and so valuable that many who are not members of the society have asked to be admitted to them. That has led to the idea of arranging a course of lectures, for a nominal price. The doctors give their services free and all the money will go to the work of the White Cross Society.

The Winter Charity Ball established to fund the continued endowment of the working women's room at the hospital became a tradition in Cedar Rapids. Before the organization of this Ball there were other creative events utilized to raise money for this room and its furnishings. Following is a news account of an earlier novel event the young ladies organized.

The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette,
Saturday April 26, 1902

***Entertainment of a Novel Character
Arranged by the Young Ladies of the
White Cross Society—Was Generally
Patronized and Appreciated.***

"A Tour around the World" was the title of a unique entertainment presented yesterday afternoon and last evening under the direction of the White Cross Society. The tourists boarded the cars at Washington, D. C., and after touring Paris, Constantinople and Tokio returned via Amsterdam, Edinburgh and New York. The White Cross Society is composed of twenty young society ladies who have undertaken the endowment of a "working girl's" room in St. Luke's hospital. They have accumulated \$800 of the \$3,000, which will be required.

A novel expedient of producing revenue was the form of entertainment adopted in this latest and most successful venture of the White Cross girls. The representations of half a dozen domestic and foreign cities were found at as many different residences. Somewhat widely scattered, transportation from one to the other was afforded by means of a tally-ho and carry-all, fifty cents being charged for the round trip. An hundred or more tourists undertook the delightful journey last night and all pronounced it a picturesque and inviting one. Transportation vehicles departed from each station every twenty minutes. The traveling facilities proved ample in every particular. Coupon tickets were sold, a coupon being detached at every stage of the journey.



The initial or starting point of the tour was Washington, D. C., at the home of Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Morrison at No. 857 Third Avenue.

Here was the representation of a railway depot and ticket office where tickets were sold for the entire journey. The attendants and officials here were Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Morrison, Mr. and Mrs. Craig Cook and Miss Putnam, while M. V. Bolton, appropriately uniformed and lanterned, served in the capacity of conductor and announced the departure of "trains".



The "depot" walls were covered with railway advertising matter and various admonitions to the traveling public, among which were the following:

Attention! Insurance here. The great Bum Bum Accident Insurance Company. Ten cents per \$1,000. If you live you have the Insurance.

Your money back if you die. Our Record—We have never paid a cent.

Travelers are permitted to give fees to all employees of this road.

I. Ownit, president."

"Ladies and gentlemen will kindly refrain from smoking."

"Talk kindly to the baggage man as he is deaf and dumb." There were many amusing features connected with this parody on the American railway station.



Tokio (yes, that is how it was spelled!) Japan, at the home of Mrs. W. H. Frick, was the first stopping place of the tourists

where they were amply repaid for the time and money expended in sightseeing. The young ladies in charge and who were attired in the native Japanese costume were Miss Witwer, Leila Frick, Frances Belt.



Mrs. Dorwart and Mrs. Frick, and Kurata, the young Japanese student who is attending Coe College was among the guides and regaled the tourists with a love lament in the Japanese tongue. Tea was served in the reception room a la Japanese, the guests being seated on the floor. The house was beautifully illuminated with Japanese lanterns and decorated with richly colored Japanese fabrics and flags and ornaments. Numbers of the articles were of great value and costly and were inspected with a keen degree of interest.



Constantinople was represented at the home of Mr. and Mrs. U. C. Blake. The tourists were fascinated with the sights.

Constantinople proved most fascinating to the tourists—more especially those who gazed through a pair of male eyes. The dark-eyed beauties, of the harem-guarded by the servants, Woodward Greene and P. W. Tourtellot were attractive beyond compare. They were for visual inspection only, being jealously

guarded by two stalwart, turbaned Turks, with flaming scimitars.



The toilets of the ladies evidenced oriental richness of color and texture. The inmates were Mrs. Woodward Greene, Mrs. J. W. Clark, Miss Blake, Miss Georgie Blake, Mary Clark, Muretta Crozier. Marjorie Hannegan and Miss Huston, fortune-telling dancers, amused the tourists with a Turkish dance, while Miss Consigney presided at the piano. The apartments were gorgeously furnished and promoted a feeling of languor resultant from the richness and elegance of the decoration. Coffee was served and Turkish pipes were in readiness for those who desired to participate in that mild form of dissipation.

Paris – gay Paree – proved to be the charming city that it is where tourist is wont to linger and sample its pleasures. The cafe Chantant was represented at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. George C. Haman.



Tables and seats were provided for the accommodation of guests, while a mandolin orchestra was stationed in a recess of the adjoining garden. A splendid

quality of punch was served while the music was enjoyed by the patrons of the cafe. Most of the American tourists patronized the vaudeville performance of which they had heard and read so much. Little Misses Frances Casky and Gladys Kittoe gave a graceful skirt dance and Ivy Griesel delighted with a dexterously executed highland fling, while Mrs. Edward Haman operated the orchestration. Edward Haman was the doorkeeper. The ladies responsible for the pleasures of Paris were Mrs. G. C. Haman, Georgia Mullin, Nellie Richardson, Helen Hayes, and Ruth Taylor.



In the afternoon in the vaudeville theatre Miss Sara Sherman gave a character song, Nellie Hedges a whistling solo, and Bertha Walker a skirt dance.

Edinburg proved such an interesting city that most of the tourists remained longer than the itinerary permitted, so some of them missed the tally-ho. It was depicted within the comfortable home of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Wolf on First Avenue.



The lady and gentlemen attendants were attired in the garb of Scotland and were the following: Frances Tomlinson, Mrs. Frank Denlinger, Catherine Crozer, Murtilla Foster, Tomas Powell, Dr. Heisey, Norman Smith, Robert Boyd,

who was attired as a kiltie, and his son, Willie, who sang Scotch songs; James Low, violinist and his daughter, Helen, pianist, who played Scotch airs.



In the reception room large pictures of Burns and his home were conspicuous. Some old Scottish ware and numerous articles of manufacture in Scotland were exhibited. The national colors were used for decorative purposes, as well as the Gordon, Stewart, Douglas, and Victoria plaids. Among the old relics was a bronze bell manufactured one hundred years ago and also a small dirk that the Scotch carried in their stocking. Silver mounted bagpipes that are said to have been carried through the Soudan and were a gift from Queen Victoria attracted considerable attention. In the dining room refreshments consisting of oat cake, cheese and milk were served. Suspended from the chandelier was a foot ball, attached to which were the significant: words, "Scotch high ball." The tourists were well repaid for the time devoted to Edinburgh.



Amsterdam, the next stop, was depicted at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Broeksmit. Mr. Broeksmit is a Hollander and much of the furnishings of the house were indicative of his nativity. In the dining room which is finished in Delft blue, was served

chocolate and zwieback, the latter is Dutch bread. Many Dutch pictures and fine china were exhibited for inspection and altogether a delightful time was had in this quaint Dutch town. The attendants were Eugenia Broeksmit, Mary Watt, May Frick, Mabel Cook, Ruth Pinney, Helen Harwood and Walter Watt, the latter acting as doorkeeper.



New York, on the return trip of the tourists, was reached at the home of Mrs. James Blake.



Some of the most interesting features of metropolitan life found representation. Ed Gavin disguised as an Indian, with a war club in his hands, with which he menacingly demanded the admission tickets, stood guard at the door.

Mrs. Blake represented an Indian maiden. In the hallway was a scene representing Columbia, Miss Edith Keyes impersonated Columbia – and James Clark Uncle Sam, the latter manipulating a graphophone that ground out patriotic airs. Elinor Green and Steele Hamilton impersonated newly landed emigrants.

The colonial room, where the guests were received, was beautifully decorated in the national colors. The colonial ladies were Mrs. Barry Gilbert, Mrs. Lewis Buttles, Gladys Green and Mabel Nyere. The dining room, where coffee and pie were served, was decorated in red, white and blue, while red and white candles illuminated the apartment. Red and white carnations rested on the table.

A special feature of the New York exhibit was the "Great American Hysterical Museum," wherein Barry Gilbert was the voluble lecturer, explaining to the spectators the many curios. Among them were, the frog that croaked at William Penn, Barbara Fritchie's hand, represented by a stuffed rubber glove, the great Mississippi basin, represented by an ordinary tin wash basin, etc.

The young ladies of the White Cross are deserving of credit for the successful manner in which they conducted the "tour," it representing a vast amount of labor and time. Its novelty made it all the more appreciated.

The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette
Friday November 6, 1914.

White Cross Society Sewing for Sick and Wounded of Europe

The White Cross society is now engaged in filling a huge box with articles which the American Red Cross society has written are most needed for the use of the sick and wounded of Europe. Patterns and instructions have been sent and the society had its first meeting Tuesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. George B. Douglas. Fifty garments already cut out, were basted and sewed and the little red silk cross attached. The garment is a flannel nightshirt suitable for hospital use. It requires four yards of dark grey outing flannel and the society has received about 400 yards, which has already been cut out and distributed to people who are desirous of assisting in this work.

