

*“I covet for every able woman the opportunity to do some
public or community service in their lifetime.
Of necessity we must hitch our wagons to the stars,
even though we may never reach them.
We must have vision to see what new heights may be reached.”*

Mrs. Charles T. (Nellie Turner) Hickok

*With over 150 years of area history,
and more than 10,000 known burials
it is impossible to include everyone
who has in some way contributed to
the community into one map.
We invite you to explore the stories,
celebrate the memory of these people,
give them the respect they deserve and
share their stories with others.*

Explore your place in history

Lots are still available



Oak Hill Cemetery Association

1705 Mt. Vernon Rd. S. E.
Cedar Rapids Iowa

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

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The Women of the Community

***As Oak Hill Cemetery begins it's 155th Year,
we invite you to explore your place in history***

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Ruth Bryan Chehak Vogel – Block 4 Lot 2

Born Aug. 29, 1907 to Milton and Clara Parks Bryan, she earned a bachelors degree from Coe College in 1929 and a Masters Degree from the University of Iowa. She taught English and Latin in the Cedar Rapids schools for many years. At the time of Pearl Harbor, Ruth was employed in Honolulu as a civilian and was prompted to join the WAVES where she had an outstanding career, retiring as a lieutenant commander in the Navy.

Emma J. Fordyce – Block 9 Lot 4

A teacher in the Cedar Rapids public schools for 56 years. The first teacher in the city to be awarded a pension, she could include among her students, the Wright Brothers, author Carl Van Vechten, Edwin McDaniel who went on to take charge of a missionary leper hospital in Siam; and Walter Shirer a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Tribune.

Susan E Pugh – Block 10 Lot 4 SG 13

Susan E Pugh was born into slavery in Caldwell Co. Missouri in 1860. As a deaconess of Bethel A. M. E. church she was also a member of the Colored Federated Women's Club. One of the first women drawn for jury duty in Linn County, Mrs. Pugh believed that she was the first Negro woman on an Iowa jury.

Prudence (Crane) Higley – Block 22 Lots 2, 3, & 4

Abiel & Prudence (Crane) Higley & Family arrived in the area, from West Granby Connecticut in 1842. Settled on a farm near Marion, Abiel suddenly died. In 1845 , with 6 children to raise, Prudence sold the farm and purchased the land that is currently the site of the Granby Building as well as 160 acres between 14th and 19th street SE, in the path of the development of the city. Harvey Higley's first business ventures in Marion were limited due to the fact that if one did not stay within the regular immigration areas, you could travel for an entire day and not encounter another white man. Prudence arranged the marriages of her 2 daughters into prominent families. Daughter Louise Higley married William Greene, (brother of Judge Greene). Daughter Sarah married a gentleman for Marion. The Higley family built the Granby Building in 1891, and the Higley Building in 1917. With buildings downtown, and land purchased between 14th and 19th street from Bever Avenue to Mt. Vernon Road, they would eventually build their homes on the land vacated by the moving of the Village Cemetery. **Helen Olds Higley**, wife of grandson Elmer Higley, is related to once Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr.

Elizabeth Calder Rock – Block 34 Lot 3

Elizabeth Calder Rock left her home in Cherry Valley New York in 1849, to assist Judge George Greene (a relative) in preparing the Iowa Supreme Court reports. This was despite her parents objections due to the fear of an outbreak of cholera along the road to Dubuque. When Judge Greene decided to come to Cedar Rapids the following year, she followed and soon established Miss Elizabeth Calder's school for girls, an even older private school than the one started by Williston Jones to become Coe College. Her school was on the second floor of the Greene Brothers Store. She taught English, French, drawing and needlework. Elizabeth Calder Rock was one of the first five members of the Grace Episcopal Church, and her school room was used for services before the organization of Grace parish. The bowl from her silver tea service was used for baptismal services before the church had a baptismal font.

Mary Amidon Holbrook – Block 67 Lot 100

As a graduate of the University of Michigan class of 1898, she was the first librarian at Coe College.

Mrs. Walter (Mahala Dutton) Douglas

Titanic survivor, widow of Walter Douglas a victim of the disaster. Also know for the collection of poetry she had written.

Mrs. Charles J. (Ellen) Ives

Always one to take an interest in the lives and well being of the employees of the BCR&N railroad, she would arrive whenever there was an illness in the family. Mrs. Ives and her team of black ponies more clearly signified Santa Claus in the minds of the children than did any imaginary team of reindeer.

When Judge Greene described the resources and the water power of the rapids to Alexander Ely, he could not leave on such short notice. His wife, the then 24 year old **Mary Weare Ely** was a very formidable pioneer woman. She set out on horseback with the Greenses to visit her sister, Mrs. Elizabeth (Weare) Shearer, with Alexander to arrive later to accompany her home. After the death of Alexander, his brother, John F. Ely to come to Cedar Rapids to look after his brother's estate and he and Mary were married in 1853. In 1862 as a commissioned Surgeon in the 24th Iowa Infantry. Rising through the ranks to Division Surgeon, the heavy fighting as Grant was closing in on Vicksburg entailed long hours of surgery and Dr. Ely broke down from exhaustion. Again the pioneer woman, Mary Weare Ely took horse and wagon to a hospital in St. Louis to find her husband and return him to Cedar Rapids.

Bessie Shaver (Mrs. John S. Ely) was one of the first women to enter business life here, becoming bookkeeper in the office of her father, who was a partner of Capt. S. L. Dows in the cracker factory of Shaver and Dows. The business was later sold to the National Biscuit company. She remained in business with her father until her marriage in 1881.

Refer to the Map for Block 95-96 for more information on **Jane Boyd and Abbie Abbott– Block 95 Lot 86**

Mrs. Charles T. Hickox – Block 94 Lot 38

Mrs. Hickox's first community service came during World War I, when she served two years on the Red Cross civilian relief board. That work, she said, whetted her appetite for community work and she served on the YWCA board for six years, prior to her appointment to the school board, for which she is best known. She filled out an unexpired term in 1927, and was re-elected five successive times before resigning for health reasons. She served on the educational committee, responsible for hiring teachers, served on the rules committees and was chairman of the supplies committee from 1931 to 1933 during the time Harrison school was built and equipped.

**PLAT
OF
OAK HILL CEMETERY
CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA
2004**

Dorothy Robinson – Block 182 Lot 14

Dorothy Robinson was the first black nurse to work in a Cedar Rapids hospital. Encouraged to pursue nursing by her mother, who died when Dorothy was 5, she graduated in the 1930's from Provident hospital Nursing School with better than a "B" average, When she returned to Cedar Rapids to get a job, she was told the only position open was for a cleaning lady on the 3rd floor. Robinson did domestic work to earn money while seeking a nursing position. Seven years later, a nursing supervisor at St. Luke's contacted her with an offer. She worked there, taking a brief break to be near family in California, returned to Cedar Rapids and worked at St. Luke's until 1978, retiring as head of urology. She was quoted as saying "Being first was not easy, but there wasn't anything that couldn't be taken care of." In the mid 1970's she was a panel member for community affairs to bring harmony between the black and white races.

Viola Gibson – Block 179 Lot 80

Viola Gibson was a resident of Cedar Rapids from age 9 to her death in 1989. She was educated in the Cedar Rapids public schools, was trained as a practical nurse, and worked as a Red Cross home nursing instructor. Spurred by the denial of access of African Americans to the Ellis Park Pool, Mrs. Gibson founded the Cedar Rapids chapter of the NAACP in 1942. She served on the Cedar Rapids-Marion Human Relations Council and led a campaign to convince the Iowa congressional delegation to support the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Mina Jensen – Block 159 Lot 1413

Born in Binsaker Norway, in October of 1857, she arrived in this country at the age of 11. She was a resident of Cedar Rapids for 51 years, arriving from Davenport. She was the first postmaster of Kenwood, and had the position for 15 years.

Maude M. Krebs – Block 89 Lot 4

Miss Krebs joined the ranks of city employees in March 1903 as deputy city clerk when the city offices were located at the site of the Killians store. Her office later moved to the old Smulekoffs building on Mays Island, finally moving into the Memorial Building in December 1928. During her long city career she was named City Clerk in 1941, serving in the administrations of more than a dozen mayors, over 57 years. Miss Krebs was also a charter member of the Business and Professional Women's Club.

