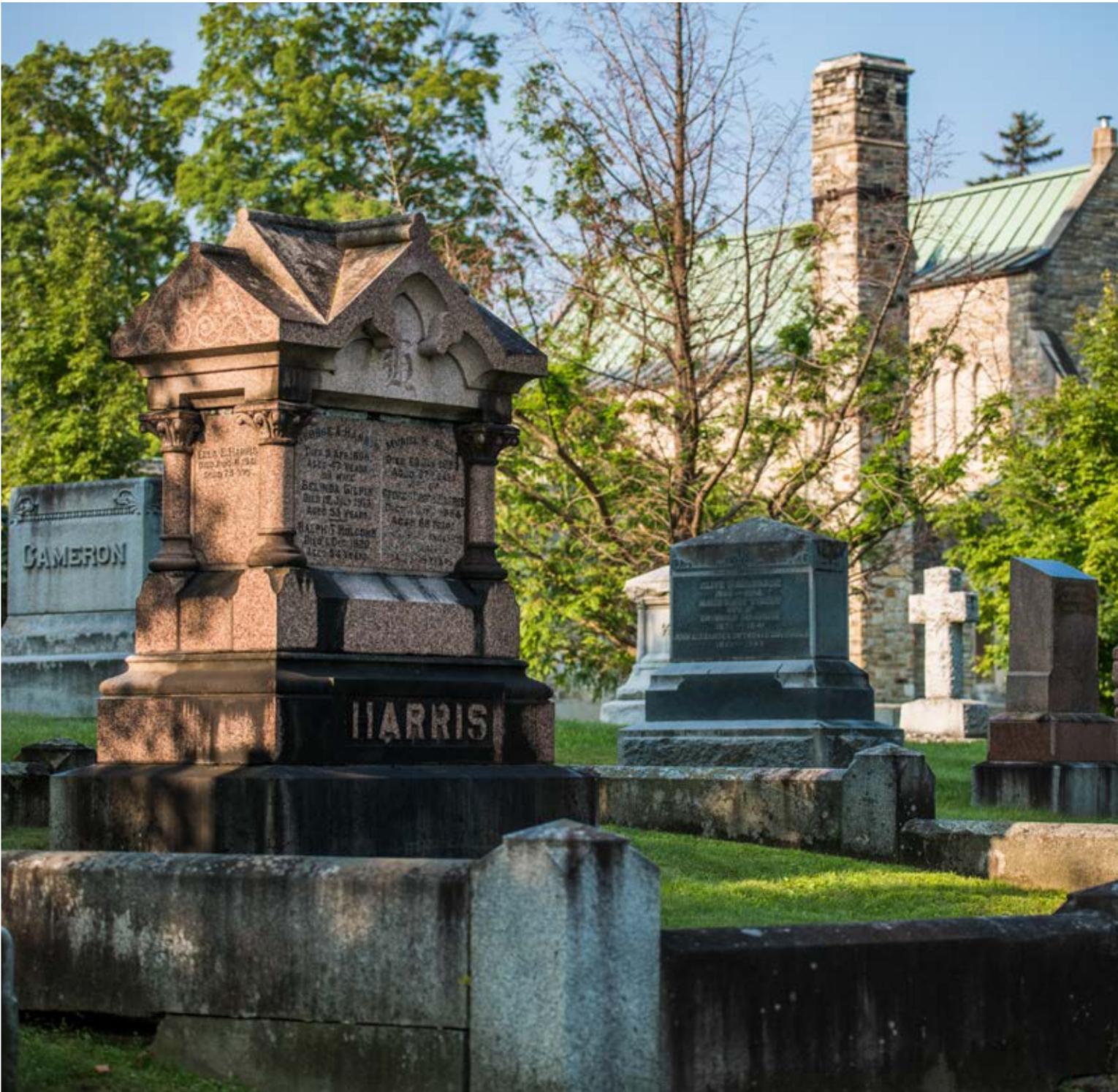


# THE BEECHWOOD WAY

SECTIONALS

## Section 50



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# As you gently walk past

the historical Mausoleum, you will be surprised to find a meandering section that opens upon a soft hill punctuated with breathtaking monuments. This section is deceiving as it is larger than it seems, formed in the ideal standard of the 1900 century country cemetery that Beechwood is known for.

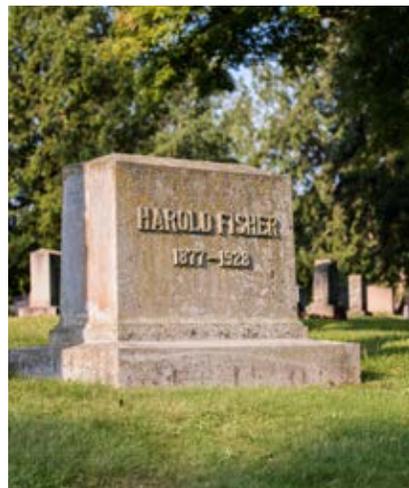
Its overall pleasing look is overtaken by the Victorian and Edwardian era monuments that provide each the story of those interned within. The great families' names of the past are represented as well as those who worked in the initial industries, which helped build our country.

Section 50 provides everything one is looking for in an historic cemetery.

# CLASSICAL GREEK AND EGYPTIAN MOTIFS

**THE ARCHITECTURAL AND** other features familiar to all are among the most popular motifs seen on early monuments at Beechwood Cemetery. Greek temples are popular, featuring the classical acanthus leaf motif along with Corinthian columns.

The sarcophagus — In ancient Egypt, a sarcophagus was a stone coffin into which the mummy was placed after it had been properly prepared for burial. The word sarcophagus comes from a Greek word meaning, “flesh eater.” The ancient Greeks called this outer coffin a sarcophagus because it was often made of limestone, which, they thought, helped dead bodies to decompose. In modern times, it refers to a monument whose shape approximates a casket.



# THE MONUMENTS SPEAK TO US

**THOUSANDS OF SYMBOLS** or emblems have adorned monuments throughout the ages. Some show attitudes toward death and the hereafter, some show affiliations to certain social organizations, some even display trade or occupation, and others ethnic identity. While many of these symbols have simple interpretations, it is not always easy to determine their meaning and significance. Few were present when these symbols were carved into the stone.



**Oak Leaves & Acorns ||** Oak leaves and acorns are often used to represent the strength of the mighty oak. The mighty oak tree often represented as oak leaves and acorns, signifies strength, honour, longevity and steadfastness.



**IHS ||** "IHS" is what is known as a Christogram, or an abbreviation of the name of Christ. It is technically abbreviating the Greek characters: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ. "IHS" is meant to reference the Greek letters iota, eta, and sigma, or the first three letters of Christ's name in Greek.



**Masonic Symbols ||** The compass and setsquare are a very recognizable symbol of the Freemasons, and it represents both spirituality and lawfulness.



**Grape ||** The grapevine as a symbol can be traced back to the ancient Greeks and is still used today as a symbol of fertility and prosperity.



**Wheat ||** Wheat symbolizes the resurrection, the cycle of the seasons and the cycle of life.

# RECONCILING HISTORY

Nicholas Flood Davin

IN 2014, BEECHWOOD CEMETERY collaborated with Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts and civil society to launch *Reconciling History*, a remarkable educational initiative that places information plaques near burial sites of persons involved in residential schools or Canada's colonial history. The aim is to enhance awareness, foster understanding and build bridges of respect and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) identified education as the key to reconciliation, specifically education about the residential schools system and its legacy. The TRC focused on providing truth about a system it said amounted to cultural genocide. Moreover, while the TRC acknowledged that getting at the truth was hard, especially for the more than 6000 survivors and their families who courageously stepped forward to share their experiences, it said *realizing* a reconciled Canada would be even more difficult and would require “virtually all aspects of Canadian society” to be reconsidered. The TRC challenged everyone to see reconciliation not as an Indigenous problem, but a Canadian one.

*Reconciling History* is one way Beechwood Cemetery responded to the TRC's challenge. It is a simple yet profound initiative that contributes to the truth telling that is essential for reconciliation. The initiative embodies the values espoused by the TRC and ensures the plaques are balanced, accurate and unveiled in ways that reflect the dignity of the deceased and the occasion.

A few words can transform public understanding of a person's place in history, and inspire thoughtful reflection on what history has to teach us about co-building a Canada that respects First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples. Care has been taken to honour some of the early reconciliation activists as well as those who were complicit and to transform the research underlying the plaques into school curriculum with the support of Project of Heart, an organization supporting educators to engage students in reconciliation.

Davin's plaque reads: “A lawyer, journalist, politician and proponent of voting rights for women. In 1879, at the request of Prime Minister Macdonald, Davin authored a Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds, advocating residential schools as institutions where children, removed from the “influence of the wigwam,” would receive “the care of a mother” and an education befitting a Canadian. Tragically, they received neither. A 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded the century-long system was “cultural genocide.”



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# THE PEOPLE OF BEECHWOOD

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## THOMAS AHEARN Section 50, Lot 123

Born in LeBreton Flats in June 1855, Thomas Ahearn was the son of an Irish blacksmith on the Rideau Canal maintenance crew. At age 14 or 15, Ahearn got his first job in a branch telegraph office tucked away in the mills near his home. He worked for barter, running messages in exchange for lessons in keying.

He became an operator and worked in the telegraph office at the House of Commons, sending parliamentary decisions down the wire to their relevant recipients. After a stint with Western Union of New York, Ahearn came back to LeBreton Flats and at age 25 became the manager of a local telephone company. Two years later, he formed an electrical equipment firm with Warren Y. Soper, the manager of a rival telephone firm and another former operator.

Together, Ahearn and Soper obtained a contract to rig up telegraph equipment from ocean to ocean for the Canadian Pacific Railway. They then moved into the field of invention, with a particular interest in electricity. In 1887, Ahearn rounded up investors and started an electric company that lit the first light bulbs and street lamps in Ottawa.

Next, Ahearn tackled transportation. In 1891, he inaugurated Ottawa's electric streetcar service. In response to winter weather, he equipped the trolleys with large rotating brushes to push away snow, and used electricity drawn from the overhead supply instead of wood stoves to heat the interiors of the cars. His company also produced streetcars for other cities. By pursuing these varied interests, Ahearn became the first Ottawa millionaire who made his money in something other than timber.

In 1899, he drove the first automobile in Ottawa — an electric model, of course. As time went on, Ahearn continued to play a role in the development and spread of new inventions. He made the first telephone call between Canada and England in 1926, as well as the first national radio broadcast a year later, establishing a continental chain of radio masts.





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### **THE HURDMAN BROTHERS** Section 50, Lot 33 N

One of Ottawa's enduring dynasties, the Hurdman brothers were pioneers in industrial and agricultural development along the Rideau River. The patriarch of the clan, Charles Hurdman, was one of the first European arrivals in the Ottawa Valley. Originally from Ireland, he joined Philemon Wright's settlement in Hull. After six years, he left Wright's employ to farm his property on the Aylmer Road. His first son, William H. Hurdman, was born in Hull in 1818, and was the first child born of old country parentage in Hull.

Under the name 'Hurdman Brothers,' William started the family lumber business in 1841 with his brothers Charles and Robert. It became one of the largest timber operations in Quebec. In the early 1870s, William and Robert established themselves in the Junction Gore area of Gloucester Township, branching into large scale farming. Eventually, both brothers were farming 200 to 300 acres each, using the most progressive methods of the day. William became director of two district agricultural societies.

The brothers won international awards for their horse breeding at the Centennial Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia. William also organized the Dominion Exhibition of 1879. They continued working in the lumber industry as well. They built their own bridge across the Rideau River to connect with their lumber and storage yards, and allowed travellers and the municipality to use it. It was the third span across the Rideau. When the Great Fire of 1900 wiped out the family's lumber mills at the Chaudière, the Hurdman brothers did not rebuild and decided to concentrate their efforts on farming. William and Robert established the earliest and largest piggery in Gloucester Township. The area around their farms became known as Hurdman's Bridge.

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### **JOHN ROCHESTER** Section 50, Lot 1

Born in Rouse's Point, New York on May 22, 1822, Rochester is referred to as one of the 27 American founders of Bytown. He arrived in Bytown in 1833 with a spirit of enterprise and a wagon full of sons. He became wealthy quickly, supplying the military with bread, beer and butchered meat. Coincidentally, he was also appointed inspector of pork and beef on May 17, 1837. In 1856, with his brother James, he established the first brewery in the city. He then turned his efforts to the lumber trade and built two large steam mills on the Chaudière, where he worked until his retirement in 1885. He launched his youngest son George into the lumber trade in the Ottawa Valley, founding Burnstown. Rochester also bought large tracts of land west of Ottawa's core, creating the village of Rochesterville, which the City of Ottawa annexed in 1887. Rochester was voted mayor of Ottawa in 1870 and 1871, and helped organize, construct and equip the Ottawa Ladies College. He was a Member of Parliament from 1872 to 1884, representing Carleton County. He died on September 19, 1894, six years before the Great Fire that would destroy his businesses and residence.





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## ELLA HOBDAY WEBSTER BRONSON

Section 50, Lots 119, 120 and 128

Ella Hobday Webster was born on September 1, 1846 in Portsmouth, Virginia to Nathan Burnham Webster, a prominent Southern American educator. The family moved to Ottawa in 1862, where, at some point, Bronson met her future husband, Erskine Bronson.

Between 1890 and 1892, Bronson served on several informal committees to furnish the new nurses' institute building. She was also treasurer for funds raised to provide Ottawa soldiers with comforts during the South African War. A staunch member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, she was active in its women's missionary society and sat on a number of committees.

In 1893, Ella Bronson answered a call from Lady Aberdeen to help establish the National Council of Women of Canada. Although she served as a delegate to several national conventions, she was more consistently involved at the local level. A vice-president of the Ottawa Local Council of Women from 1894 until 1911, Bronson served on committees to lobby for the teaching of domestic science in the city's high schools, the creation of a free library system, and the establishment of cottages for consumptives. In 1894, she pioneered the Associated Charities of Ottawa, a scheme intended to coordinate the efforts of various agencies, set standards for recipients of charity, and provide work-placement programs for the unemployed.

The culmination of Bronson's public projects was the foundation and successful operation of the Ottawa Maternity Hospital. With Bronson as president and an all-female board of directors, the hospital opened in 1895 and it functioned until the mid 1920s.

Fashioned on a new, medical, model of hospital, the Ottawa Maternity Hospital provided obstetrical services to women, most of whom paid a small fee. It eschewed any religious agenda, although it accepted support from church groups, and did not concern itself with its patients' moral purity as some institutions did. Professionalism was stressed, and from 1897, a three-month certification course was offered for nurses from other hospitals. They were educated in post-natal medical and nutritional care for new mothers as well as in pre-natal and obstetrical matters. By the hospital's 25th anniversary in 1920, it had trained 600 nurses, and by its closing, it had served more than 10,000 patients. This hospital was later absorbed into the Civic Hospital in the 1920s.

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## JOHN BURROWS (HONEY) Section 50, Lot 6 SW

His gravestone is inscribed with a tribute to the one buried beneath it, "HONORED PIONEER GENTLEMAN, CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS LEADER, ROYAL ENGINEER, AND SUPERINTENDENT OF THE RIDEAU CANAL. CAME TO THE WILDERNESS OF UPPER CANADAIN 1816, FROM ENGLAND."

Burrows was a civil engineer in England, which enabled him to work as a surveyor when the British Army's Royal Engineers, the builders of the canal, undertook construction of the Rideau Canal. The Rideau Canal had been planned soon after the War of 1812-14 ended.

By 1829, Burrows was named "Overseer of Works" when he drafted the "Plan of improvements in timber channel at Chaudière Falls." In the course of the canal's construction Burrows took part in several surveys and explorations of the route. Measurements were made of the depth of water along rivers and lakes, and determinations made of the availability and quality of stone required for masonry work, as well as the suitability of stone for making lime for mortar.

Since the route passed through areas of wilderness, axe-men cleared the way for others. In his diary, Burrows wrote about the difficulties they encountered. They often passed through swamps containing "Canadian thistle and prickley (sic) ash, which sting through the clothes and cause an intolerable pain." After a day's work in "pelting pityless (sic) rain," the work ending about dark, he was "much fatigued, wet and hungry." At night, there was no relief "from the suffering stinging of the muskeetoos (sic) and flies."

When the party reached Kingston, Burrows described the place where he stayed there as "nothing was of the best yet every thing seemed a luxury after coming from the Bush."

On several of his trips on the waterway, Burrows made sketches and watercolour paintings of scenery and canal structures, which undoubtedly provided the first views of many settlements. In 1832, when the canal was completed, his pencil sketches included "views of the canal at Newboro, the locks at Edmond's and Maitland's Rapids." He made many watercolour paintings in the 1840s, mostly scenes of the locks at various places along the waterway. His painting of Smith's Falls shows the canal, a sailboat, the locks, and about 20 houses. His paintings of locks included Old Slys, Merrick's Mills, Burritt's Rapids, Long Island, Hogs Back and Hartwell's Locks.

The Rideau Canal was an important factor in the settlement and development of the areas along its route. John Burrows remained, after its completion, in the British department that operated the canal, eventually becoming superintendent. The costs of the canal's operation consistently exceeded the income from its tariffs and as Canada entered the railway age, the canal suffered from the competition.

The considerable contributions that Burrows made to the canal's construction and operation were matched by his contributions to the community of Bytown. Appointed by Colonel By to be a town councillor, he also served as a Justice of the Peace.

Although in poor health, John Burrows continued to work at the canal until his death on July 27, 1848 in Kingston.

