

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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## HILLSIDE CEMETERY: 125 YEARS



The Holley Cemetery Association has recently published an informative booklet entitled Hillside Cemetery: 125 Years. It has been compiled and authored by Marsha DeFillips, Historian for the Village of Holley and Town of Murray, Ronald Herlan, History Dept. SUNY Brockport, Alan Isselhard, Historian Town of Clarendon, with a special chapter by Scott M. Schmidt, funeral director from Merrill-Grinnell, Inc. Printed at the Lake Country PennySaver, it is an 8 1/2 x 11 format and consists of 63 pages with illustrations and black and white photographs. The book, which will be available at the Lift Bridge Book Store in Brockport, will sell for \$9.95 with these funds going toward the beautification of Hillside Cemetery. The following is an excerpt from "Remember When..." by Scott Schmidt.

"Most of us can honestly say we don't remember what it was like in the late 1800's but some of the old-timers that are around might remember when a funeral bill would total around \$70. They might relate stories about a relative or a friend who had died and that the undertaker, not funeral director, would come to the house to do the embalming. They would tell you how the undertaker would have a coffin shop in the back of his furniture store, and how the coffin would then be brought back to the house so that the dead person could be placed inside the coffin. However, those same people might also tell you that embalming wasn't really relied upon like it is today and that the undertaker might place the deceased in an ice chest."

"As you would look at an ice chest it appeared to

be an over-sized coffin. The ice chest opened into a top and a bottom. The deceased would be placed on the bottom portion which was usually lined with tin or some kind of metal which had soldered seams. The top would be placed over the deceased at this point. In the top would be a few compartments that opened. One would be an opening so that people could look in and view the face of the deceased and the other would be so that the undertaker could put ice around the deceased to try and slow decomposition."

As you can see, the book has related material as associated to the history of Hillside. The photo here of the Cook monument at Hillside, shows one with great imagination and symbolism. The arches are indicative of victory and hospitality showing the final harmony of two souls united. This is reinforced by the hand clasps which symbolize the fellowship of love. An ivy vine also appears on the lower arches which is associated with friendship and remembrance. At the apex of the monument is an urn indicating death. This is derived from the Greeks who used such urns for cremated remains. It's interesting that our Christian ancestors essentially used something of a pagan origin in a sacred setting. The urn is also draped with a veil suggesting renunciation of the world, modesty and mourning.

An appendix in the booklet contains a listing of familiar symbols and their meanings. Interment statistics are also included among with Rules and Regulations.