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ROCHESTER

Historical society's Cemetery Walk to highlight women

By Mary Beth Almond

September 16, 2015



ROCHESTER — The community is invited to take a stroll through time to learn about prominent women in Rochester's history this month.

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society will host its fourth annual Mount Avon Cemetery Walk and guided tour 1-5 p.m. Sept. 26 at the cemetery — which is the oldest cemetery in Rochester and the oldest platted cemetery in Oakland County, platted in 1826.

This year's tour theme is "Women in the Stones."

RAHS member Deborah Larsen said the group decided on the theme because in years past, it was sometimes difficult to find enough female roles to add to the tours because so many of the stories that are attached to the city's history seem to be centered around the men.

"We looked for women who had some kind of an impact on the growth and development in some way. One that we are letting everybody know we are doing is Eva Woodward Parker, who left her estate so that a public library building could be built for the people of Rochester and Avon Township. She is going to be featured on the walk, as well as several other women whose stories aren't necessarily in the history books but are still important to us. The history of women wasn't written in the 19th and early 20th century the way it is now, so we have to dig for it a little bit. That's what this walk will be providing to the people who attend," Larsen explained.

Led by tour guides, visitors will walk through the Mount Avon Cemetery and listen to stories of the lives of seven women buried there. The stories will be told in first person by re-enactors dressed in period costumes.

"The people that play the roles of these residents of Rochester know so much about them that they even can go off script sometimes and answer some questions about the people

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they are representing,” said Carol Tough, a historical society member.

“This year, the tour guests will meet a pioneer lady who came to the Rochester area with her husband when it was still pretty much just a wilderness and the township hadn’t even been created yet. She and her husband established a family that is still prominent in the Rochester area today, and people will most definitely recognize the name when they meet her. We have another woman who is going to tell her story about some tragedy that she went through at a very difficult time in Rochester’s history. Then they will also meet a couple of women merchants. In the 19th-century Rochester, that was a bit unusual,” Larsen added.

The timed tours will depart from the municipal parking lot at Third and Walnut streets. Ticket holders should park in the municipal parking lot, and they will be transported to and from the cemetery via shuttle van. Tours will be held rain or shine, but in the event of severe weather, the tours will be canceled and money will be refunded. In the case of rain, the show will go on with umbrellas.

Tickets, which are nonrefundable, cost \$15 per person. The proceeds will fund the Rochester-Avon Historical Society’s local history and preservation projects.

Advance tickets may be purchased at the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce office, 71 Walnut St., Suite 110, or online at www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org by clicking on the online store link. Any tickets not sold in advance will be available for walk-up sales on the day of the event at the shuttle stop in the municipal parking lot at Walnut and Third. The number of tickets is limited, so advance purchase is recommended.

Rochester Hills Chrysler Jeep Dodge, Pixley Funeral Home and Potere-Modetz Funeral Home are sponsoring the Mount Avon Cemetery Walk.

For more information, email rahsupdates@gmail.com or call (248) 266-5440.



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