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Forman Park gets new features

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By



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Forman Park fountain

Forman, on East Genesee Street in Syracuse, was rededicated as part of the so-called “Connective Corridor,” a partnership of the city of Syracuse, Syracuse University, Onondaga County’s “Save the Rain” program and the state and federal governments.

Nancy Cantor, SU’s chancellor, calls the corridor “1.5 miles of signature strip of cultural development.” Francesca Merwin, a student in the corridor office, called it a civic engagement, cultural development and scholarship in action.

Just now, it involves a major ripping up of University Hill and the East Genesee business

district. The public work adds up to a nearly half-a-million-dollar investment in Syracuse. Owen Kerney, deputy city commissioner for planning and sustainability, represented City Hall among partners on the park.

Kerney told me last week he’s pleased with the outcome of the corridor as far as Forman Park is concerned. He put the cost at \$2.06 million for design and construction for Forman.

The focal point of the reconstruction is installation of an ornamental fountain at dead center, where the park pool used to be. The fountain looks old but is new. It has three tiers and slightly resembles a fountain placed in the park in the 1800s.

The city bought it from Robinson Iron, a company in Alexander City, Ala., according to Kerney. Mayor Stephanie Miner threw the ceremonial switch at last week’s rededication, he said.

He explained the redone park includes some of the old features and some new things, including the concrete benches and landscaping and lighting. One of the items missing from Forman is the old stone bench that once sat at the park’s eastern edge, before SU took it over as an art exhibit space. Kearney said he didn’t know the bench’s fate.

There was a bit of a dust-up in 2008 when the university installed a sculpture — a 11-foot-high yellow metal, foam

and plastic work — that the Police Benevolent Association, which looks after the nearby police memorial, called “inappropriate.” The piece was replaced.

Another “bright and refreshed” element at the park’s west end are the 1908 memorial statues of Lewis Redfield, a pioneer Syracuse journalist; Joshua Forman, a city founder; and a Native American figure. The sculpture group was cleaned and returned to Forman in December 2011.

Schwartzwalder feedback

Jim Jerome, who suggested the May 27 column about former SU Football Coach Ben Schwartzwalder’s grave, forwarded a nice comment from Felicia Louise Walker, Ben’s granddaughter, who lives in Manhattan: “My youngest son is a Gemini (just like Ben). He was due June 14th (Flag Day) but decided to come early ... June 6 (D-Day)! He’ll be 10. I think it all means something!”

Note: D-Day was the World War II invasion that Ben jumped in as a member of the airborne infantry.

Fellows follow

Information flows in about Dr. Milton A. Fellows, who died during the Civil War, in 1863, and was buried in Pine Ridge Cemetery, near Navarino. The large, metal marker on Milton’s grave was rediscovered a while back by Jerry Orton and his wife, Lorraine. Jerry’s a Civil War buff, complete with reenactor’s uniform.

Based on documents supplied mostly by Pam Priest, archivist at the Onondaga Historical Association, we believe Milton was from that part of Onondaga County (so is Pam) and was placed in a lot when he died of “camp fever” while serving as an Army surgeon. Pam emailed a copy of the Pine Ridge burials, which lists some 26 with the last name of Fellows. That includes the physician’s mother, Sarah, and father, Hiram. Milton’s burial note included “killed in Civil War.”

The list also includes a passel of Cases, likely the branch of my family who lived on Case Hill, a settlement south of U.S. Route 20. Pine Ridge was the burial place for Joshua Chaffee (1886), namesake for the hamlet of Joshua, which is on Route 20, too.

I checked with Mike Horigan, the expert on the Civil War military at Elmira, where Milton Fellows died. Mike thinks it’s likely that the surgeon was sent to Elmira, which had a large Union encampment in the war, on his way home to Onondaga County. The infamous Elmira Confederate prison camp ran between July 1864 and July 1865.

Sue Greenhagen, of Eaton, an avid Civil War researcher, found Milton Fellows in an 1860 census, listed as a physician in the Town of Onondaga, where Navarino is located.

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