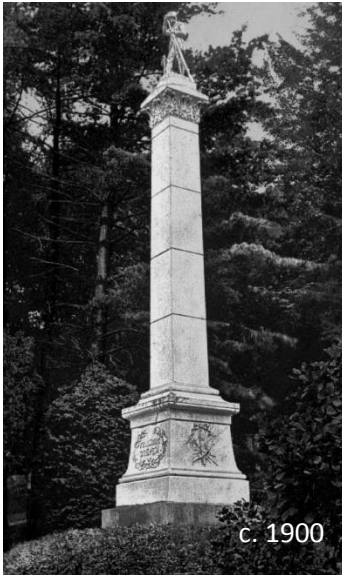


# *Lakewood Cemetery Association*

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## *Summer 2022 at Lakewood*



### *James Fenimore Cooper Monument Preservation*

The preservation and restoration of monuments, gravestones and stone steps is an important part of the mission of the Lakewood Cemetery Association. Projects for Summer 2022 will include cleaning of monuments, in particular the Cooper Monument, a special landmark and focal point in the Cemetery. Humphrey Memorials Inc. of Herkimer will power wash the 30' marble monument following environmental guidelines. A brief history of this memorial to James Fenimore Cooper, erected in 1860, includes a detailed description of the sculptured features on the landmark.

***Commemorating Cooper*** James Fenimore Cooper's most famous hero, Natty Bumppo, carved in marble, rifle in hand, and with the dog Hector at his feet, stands at the top of the Leatherstocking Monument in Lakewood Cemetery on a rise of ground near the entrance, overlooking Otsego Lake from the east side, about fifteen minutes walk from the village of Cooperstown. That a monument commemorative of Cooper and Leather-Stocking should stand in the public cemetery, in which neither the author nor his supposed model is buried, is sometimes puzzling to visitors. It is said, however, that the site was chosen with reference to certain scenes in *The Pioneers*. The monument stands near the spot upon which the novelist, for the purpose of his romance, placed the hut of Natty Bumppo. It is not far below the road referred to in the opening scene of the tale, where the travelers gained their first glimpse of the village and stands at the foot of the wooded slope upon which, in the same story, Leather-Stocking shot the panther that was about to spring upon Elizabeth Temple.

The monument itself was the result of an unsuccessful effort which was made shortly after Fenimore Cooper's death in 1851 to erect in his memory a statue or monument in one of the public squares of New York City. To this end, ten days after his death, a public meeting of citizens of New York, at which Washington Irving presided, was held in the City Hall; two weeks later the Historical Society of New York held a meeting in commemoration of Cooper; and on February 24, 1852, there was a great demonstration at Metropolitan Hall, with speeches by Daniel Webster and George Bancroft, and a memorial discourse by William Cullen Bryant. The raising of funds for a memorial, which these meetings set as their object, was not commensurate with the expenditure of rhetoric. The sum of \$678 was contributed, chiefly at the meeting in Metropolitan Hall, and the committee organized to solicit subscriptions did nothing further.

Six years later Alfred Clark and G. Pomeroy Keese of Cooperstown undertook to raise by subscription a sufficient sum to erect a monument in Cooper's memory in or near the village in which he lived, having in view the transfer of whatever sum might be on deposit in New York toward the proposed monument. They raised \$2,500, to which Washington Irving, acting for the defunct committee in New York, added the \$678 already contributed.

The monument, of white Italian marble, with the statuette of Leather-Stocking at the top, was sculpted by Robert E. Launitz, and erected in the spring of 1860.

*Excerpted from The Story of Cooperstown by Ralph Birdsall. Cooperstown, NY: The Arthur H. Crist Co., c.1917*

*The Cooper Monument in Lakewood Cemetery* The Cooper Monument was completed on April 13, 1860 with the addition of the statuette of Leatherstocking on the top. A detailed description was published in *The Freeman's Journal* in 1926. "This monument is of white Italian marble resting on a granite base six feet square. The shaft including the base, die and cap from which it rises is about twenty-five feet in height, and is surmounted by a richly carved Corinthian capital. The four sides of the die are beautifully sculptured in bold relief; the front with the name of Fenimore Cooper, surrounded by a wreath of palm and oak branches, the latter with acorns, one falling and another fallen; the north side with appropriate naval devices, viz., the anchor, oars crossed, commander's sword and spy glass; the south side with Indian emblems, such as bow and arrows and quiver, lance with scalp locks attached, tomahawk and necklace of bear's claws. On the east side are literary emblems, books and manuscripts, with the student's lamp just extinguished, an inkstand, the pen which has just been seized and born aloft by an eagle. On its capital stands the statuette of Leatherstocking four and a half feet high representing him in the act of loading his rifle and gazing intently in the direction of the game which the dog, (nearly a full-sized hound) by his side looks anxiously into his master's face waiting for permission to bound away."

The total subscription for the monument including the sum received from New York was \$3,262, the greater part of which was subscribed in Cooperstown.

### *Gravestone Cleaning*

The Association is offering Lot Owners/Families an opportunity to collectively have one or more gravestones within their Lot power washed by Humphrey Memorials. An estimate will be provided; payment will be made directly to Humphrey Memorials. All the cleaning will be done in late summer. If you are interested, please contact Project Manager Merrilyn O'Connell at (607) 547-9515 or email [merrioc88@gmail.com](mailto:merrioc88@gmail.com).

### *Monument Repair*

Lakewood Cemetery Association has been awarded a second grant from the NYS Division of Cemeteries Vandalism Fund for the repair of 36 monuments deemed hazardous. Humphrey Memorials, Inc. will begin work in late summer and the south end of Pine Grove Avenue will be closed off during the project. Last summer 33 monuments on the north end of Pine Grove were completed.

### *More Stone Work*

The stone steps next to the Marcus Field Lot will be rebuilt – they are sliding into the roadway! Other steps that are hazardous will be repaired or removed as necessary to address liability issues as well as access to terraces.

### *And More Maintenance*

Summer is a busy maintenance season at Lakewood. Superintendent Bill Truax continues to assist with burials, lot sales, and directing the crew for grounds maintenance. To facilitate mowing, please remove loose memorabilia, old plants and flowers and containers, and faded plastic arrangements.

*Annual Meeting of Lot Owners and Board of Trustees* Thursday, August 4, 2022, 9 a.m. at Deysenroth Funeral Home, 82 Chestnut Street, Cooperstown, NY. Please join us.

## *The Board of Trustees*

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