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Bonus Episode: Revisiting Mount Auburn Cemetery

Peter Drummey 00:00

I know I'm keeping you but let me tell you just one more thing.

Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 00:03

[Intro music fades in] This is Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai.

Cassie Cloutier 00:10

This is Cassie Cloutier, and this is a bonus episode of The Object of History, a podcast of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Earlier in this season, we visited the tombs of Robert C. Winthrop in episode four and Isabella Stewart Gardner in episode five. In both episodes, we asked Meg Winslow, Senior Curator of Historical Collections and Archives at Mount Auburn cemetery, to provide some context for our listeners. On this bonus episode, we revisit Mount Auburn, learn more about its history and share additional portions of our conversation with Meg.

Cassie Cloutier 00:50

Can you share a little bit about your workplace and maybe a little bit about its history and why it's significant to Boston?

Meg Winslow 00:58

Well, I love that you asked that because we could talk for the rest of the day. It's one of my favorite places, and Mount Auburn, it means many things to many different people, and it's been here a long time in Boston, since 1831 as an institution that's part of the fabric of Boston life because it serves as a cemetery. Many people know it because they might have a friend or family buried here, or they might have come to a memorial service, or they might have come to early in the morning to go birding or attend a program. It's a beautiful green space that has an evolving, designed landscape that is very healing. It's a very important designed landscape, and so many of us can't find the words to articulate why it means something to us. I was just thinking about Notre Dame earlier this morning, and how listening to the comments that visitors were saying about how they never realized it was so important to them, and how it had so much meaning, but they weren't sure how to articulate it, that's a little bit the way I feel about Mount Auburn because it's really it's a landscape of memory and it's a landscape of of meaning. So, and it has an incredible history. It

was founded in 1831 by a group of gardeners and enthusiastic horticulturalists and Boston area citizens who were very aspirational in their thinking about the city of Boston and very practical about their thinking in terms of solving a burial crisis that was going on in the city of Boston. Boston had grown so quickly and needed additional burial space, and it was difficult to find that land. It's expensive. Not everyone wanted to be near a cemetery, and it was hard to get the energy going to actually purchase land for additional burial space, and a group of really well-meaning citizens got together and made it happen, and that is the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, not to be confused with the Historical Society, but the first Horticultural Society in Massachusetts, which had been founded in 1829, and consisted of botanists and horticulturalists, gentlemen, gentlewomen and people who believed in the art and science of horticulture to improve our life. They purchased land on the boundary between Watertown and Cambridge that would be burial space for the people of Boston, and the sale of burial lots would fund an experimental garden. So the creation of Mount Auburn cemetery is really to me I find it really fascinating because it's a practical solution to the needs of a city that had grown very quickly that ran out of space, but it also was very aspirational in that it reflected the thinking of the time that was one of a romantic understanding of nature, a nostalgia for nature, and a kind of new idea that nature is healing, that it would be a place for Boston citizens to come and and leave the better for it, because of being in nature, because of reading the monuments and inscriptions on the monuments, and a walking in a place that commemorated the people that had gone before us. It's the same thing that visitors do today. They come and walk and learn the history and look at the trees and look at the birds and and leave better for it. I think it's a very important designed landscape. It's the first landscape of its kind in this country, the largest spaced design landscape open to the public in North America that was designed specifically to look natural, to enhance the natural features of the landscape. You know, it's a National Historic Landmark because of its landscape, but you forget that when you're walking through the landscape. It's it's such a place of beauty, of memory. It's a sacred landscape that's always had a little bit of tension because of the sacred aspect of it, where people are being buried and remembered, and then the pleasure ground aspect, where people really enjoy walking along the paths and and carriage avenues today. It was inspired by Père Lachaise Cemetery that was founded in 1804 as well as English picturesque landscape gardening. And also it was inspired by the books, the literature and the artwork of the time that that's kind of predated the actual landscape, which is also very interesting to think about, especially when you're working in collections because if you have, as I know, you have at the Historical Society memento mori and drawings and embroideries and artwork of all kinds that represent, you know, an urn and the willow tree, that kind of romantic notion that was very, very significantly different

from the Puritan idea of a burying ground as being purely functional, not a place that you would want to visit. That's another important thing about Mount Auburn. It was actually created for visitors to come.

Cassie Cloutier 06:38
You had said that it was started by gardeners and people within that field. Is that an innovation, or is that unique to Mount Auburn or is that something that was new for this particular project?

Meg Winslow 06:52
That's a great question Cassie because I think that thinking was in the air. I would, in fact, say that if Mount Auburn was not founded, something very similar would have been founded because of the incredible popularity in 1831 of its impact on the country, and the fact that so many people came to Mount Auburn and visited and went back to their city and said, 'I want one of these in my city.' I think it would have happened anyway, and we're just so lucky that in Boston, we have this as a as a great resource. It has been described as innovative, but I would counter that a little bit to say it was really something that was in the thinking of all of the citizens at the time. The fact that nature and the history of our country could land us as one, to be something as practical and useful as a cemetery and as helpful to the country in nation building as a cemetery of New England citizens. I think it's distinctly New England in its founding. It's distinctly Western Protestant in its thinking. It's distinctly nation building in its thinking and in the iconography that you see in the front gate and the memorials that you see as you're walking through the landscape. But it certainly was enthusiastically received by this country and served as a prototype for cemeteries all across the country and for visitors to come from all over the world to see what exactly was this new type of cemetery. In fact, the rural cemetery movement is what was started by Mount Auburn. There were other rural cemeteries all over the world by different cultures, but in America, it was really the beginning of of a movement of monument building, of cemetery building, and of a new art form too of sculpture. In fact, that's an untold story really Mount Auburn's role in the proliferation of sculpture in the city of Boston, and really providing the bread and butter for the new interest in sculpture and in Boston.

Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 09:15
So, what are some of the other cemeteries that are based on Mount Auburn or took their inspiration from Mount Auburn?

Meg Winslow 09:21

Well Forest Hills in Jamaica Plain was designed by Henry Dearborn, who also designed Mount Auburn. He went off to be the mayor of Roxbury and then designed Forest Hills. Many people are familiar with Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia, then we have Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo and Spring Grove in Cincinnati, and beautiful rural cemeteries all over the country. So those are a few examples.

Cassie Cloutier 09:51

I was wondering if you could briefly talk about the iconography that you mentioned or the relationship to sculpture.

Meg Winslow 10:00

The art and monuments are what drew me to Mount Auburn, the art and the monuments and the trees, that combination I can't even I can't you can't even record me. I don't know what to say. It's my favorite place, but the sculpture and the iconography on the monuments and on the structures that were built by the founders of Mount Auburn Cemetery reveal the tastes of the time. They reflect our community. They reflect the thinking and the esthetic of Boston. It's very easy to call up in your mind the skull and crossbones that you see in the colonial burying grounds of Boston and the graveyards. The skull and crossbones and and the epitaphs that say this too will happen to you. They're very different from what you find at Mount Auburn and what you find in a rural cemetery. A rural cemetery is of the Victorian age, which was rich with revival styles. So, you have Egyptian Revival being our earliest collection of note and then Gothic Revival and the continuation of revival styles, not in a single line, but often all mixed up, which is what makes it very exciting and confusing when you visit a cemetery and you're maybe an art historian trying to place a memorial. The iconography at Mount Auburn is much more romantic. It reflects a notion of sleep. So, you'll find poppies, poppy pods, and the sculpture of sleeping children and a kinder, gentler iconography that includes willow trees and urns. The founders of Mount Auburn and the monument makers that were working in the earliest years of the cemetery were inspired by the classical Greco-Roman world and the simplicity of those architectural forms. So, the earliest monuments you'll find at Mount Auburn are pedestal monuments and obelisks, Altar tombs or sarcophagi, very simple forms with inscriptions and then as we progress ahead into the future, the Victorian style becomes more ornate and elaborate, with longer inscriptions and a lot of horticultural design. And you know, tussie-mussie the little bouquets of flowers, where each flower symbolizes something different. And then the civil war comes, and of course, it reflects

the horror and tragedy of something that's much more personal, that hits just about well every family in this country, and so you've got a sword and a hat. So, there's a progression that you can see, but it's not necessarily linear in the iconography. But I would say there's a verticality to the rural cemetery. There are a lot of vertical shafts, a lot of three-dimensional monuments, very different from the tablets that you find in the colonial burying grounds. There are tablets at Mount Auburn, but the prevalence is really for vertical shafts, and the Victorians also liked women, women holding wreaths, or angels pointing to heaven. So, they're often also figures of hope and charity, a scribe, lot of angels that add to this verticality and sculptural presence in the landscape. And then, of course, that changes over time. The iconography you'll see a lot of willow trees and urns, as well as the ivy, which stands for evergreen and abiding affection, along with oak, which is strength and faith. You'll see pomegranates and acorns, all very rich symbols of something pointing towards heaven. Actually, in fact, pointing towards heaven. You'll see hands pointing towards heaven, saying, 'Until we meet again.' There's an optimism here. I do recall reading an article of the time describing Père Lachaise Cemetery and the iconography of Père Lachaise, which was founded in 1804 and describing how it was so different from Mount Auburn, which was filled with positive, uplifting symbolism and inscriptions. It was very optimistic, this idea that you would join your loved ones again in heaven or that you would find peace or that you would find rest and you can really pick that up as you walk through the landscape and look at the symbols.

Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 14:50

Speaking of the material elements that you've highlighted, these are delicate. These are artistic. And so, it must seem like you're not just caring for the landscape, but also an outdoors art museum. How does your staff manage to do all the upkeep on all of these very fragile works that are commemorating people's lives?

Meg Winslow 15:16

The monuments in the landscape are fragile, and we do care for them, to the best of our knowledge. The strength of the cemetery's collection is really the early marble monuments and because they have a chemical reaction with the climate, the New England climate around them, they do not last. And something that I find fascinating, and that we learned from our archives, is that in the 19th century, we knew that marble wouldn't last in New England outside yet the prevalent choice for our monument was marble. And so, I often wonder what that means. If that means someone would anticipate that their monument would become a ruin like the ruins of Rome, or not, or if they just believed in that esthetic that came from the classical world. The marble is very delicate, and it varies in its fragility depending on where it's cut, if it

comes from Vermont, or if it comes from Italy, if it's this creamy, soft, beautiful Carrara marble that cuts like butter that often doesn't last well in a New England landscape. But there's also granite and rose quartz and brownstone sandstone, other materials that you'll find in the landscape, and they won't all last forever. We think of stone as something that lasts forever. We don't think of it as a sponge that absorbs water and needs to have water come through it, and we don't think of it as something ephemeral. But that's one thing that I have learned working at a cemetery, is that even stone doesn't last forever, and so we have an extraordinary staff that cares for the landscape, but cares for the landscape in balance with all the structures that have been placed within the landscape. In other words, you cannot do horticulture care without thinking about the landscape. You can't use fertilizer that might impact the stone or you can't just run around in mowers and bump into all these beautiful works of art that are in the landscape. So there's a high degree of care that the staff take in terms of caring for the landscape around the memorials, and there is a lot of skill involved in maybe surrounding a delicate monument with a planting, a ground cover to protect it, or pea stone to protect it, or working with conservators to come up with a plan, and really learning from the conservators in the field who share with us how to take care of these stones because there's not one solution for all of the stones. Every stone is treated differently. Every work of art is treated differently and and that's hard to explain because it's really complicated, but one thing I do know is that every stone is cut differently, and every stone is in a different environment, in a different climate out in the landscape. And our staff have a very gentle care program, which is washing and repointing the memorials that are under perpetual care on a cyclical basis, and then washing and repointing the what have has been determined as the significant monuments on a cyclical basis to so perpetual care is part of that care program, and about a third of the monuments are under perpetual care, meaning they'll be cared for as long as they shall last by the staff. So, there is definitely job security in this field. It's a lot of work, and the trees and the stones on the grounds have have a relationship that we come to understand and respect. It's very easy, for example, to conserve a monument, and it's very easy to take care of a tree, but it's not as easy to do them in tandem and in balance, and oftentimes one has to take precedence over the other. But if a tree begins to grow over a monument, and that monument is being surrounded by roots, you need to decide what you're going to save. Are you going to save the monument, or are you going to save the tree? And that is the calling for the people who work here at Mount Auburn that balancing act.

Cassie Cloutier 19:51

I'm wondering how do you maintain the balance between being a historical site and also an active burial ground at the same time?

Meg Winslow 20:12

Since the beginning, Cassie, Mount Auburn has been a place that had to balance being an active cemetery with an experimental garden, and then continued to be an active cemetery with a place that was a tourist destination, and that is in our DNA, that's who we are really is the place between visiting and programs because it's a cemetery that was made for the living to come. So, it really is in our DNA to balance all those different aspects. For example, if I were to go on a program about birding at Mount Auburn, I might end up asking lots of questions about how are people buried or I might be very interested in the history of how tombs got erected at the cemetery or if I were to attend a funeral, which I did just a few weeks ago, I might notice that people are birding, and I might become enamored by the landscape, and I might start birding. There isn't a dividing line really. It's we're going back and forth between all these elements, which is, to me, reflective of our humanity, that we can go back and forth between the living and the dead, and that a cemetery can serve as that liminal place where there's a through line from the past to the present to the future. I think that idea of time at Mount Auburn is very significant because as we visit today, we're thinking about the past, but we can also use that past to think about our future, and we can look back and forward at the same time as we're being fully present in walking through the canopy trees.

Cassie Cloutier 22:15

I think, you know, visiting other local cemeteries, it seems like that through line is especially unique to Mount Auburn. It seems like that's more at the forefront there.

Meg Winslow 22:26

I think people who love history tend to love cemeteries, right? We think of them as archives in the landscape. There's so much that you can glean from a culture by visiting at cemeteries, and if you come to Mount Auburn Cemetery, you will go away with a very good understanding of what Boston was like in the 19th century and what it's like today, the same way as if you visit the Historical Society and you read through the documents that show our community's tastes and feelings and emotions and interests. I think the collections, along with the landscape, tell a whole story about who we are. I think we learn who we are at a cemetery.

Cassie Cloutier 23:16

Could you talk a little bit more about the collections of Mount Auburn?

Meg Winslow 23:22

The collections of Mount Auburn are valuable, but they're made even more valuable by our local repositories, by the other collections in Boston, like the Historical Society and the [Boston] Athenaeum that in enlarge the collections that we have here because at Mount Auburn, since the founding, we kept the records of the institution, the institutional archives, as well as the records of correspondence and communication between the owners of the lots, the lot proprietors, we call them. So, we have a story through time that's quite unique of how our community has commemorated and remembered and made decisions to care for their dead. It's altogether a very valuable story. I think if it was disseminated you wouldn't have that understanding of this time of these nearly two centuries of time since 1831. So, our records are the first records that were created for a rural cemetery. The records are extraordinary. They include big, huge, heavy, dusty, red leather ledgers that have 19th century handwriting with the name of every individual who was buried at Mount Auburn, along with beautiful pen and ink diagrams of the lots and the measurements and the scale and the compass rose. Those, and they include what one would expect, which are the records of the dead, the interment, the burial permits and the cremation authorization forms. That's a given, and that's what most cemeteries collect, but we've kept so much more in addition to that, which are the letters, the letters from the superintendent saying your grass will grow in the spring, it will not grow in the winter or, you know, we'll move this tree, or we'd be happy to place this monument, or we will weed or would you like your fence or could we please take your fence down? The care that goes into the care of the lots at Mount Auburn has many levels and if you were a prodigious writer, the folder for your lot at Mount Auburn could be thick. And if you weren't a prodigious writer, it could be an empty folder. So, for example, we were looking at the Winthrop tomb. You're able to find in that lot folder plans for planting, plans of the tomb and the tomb design, correspondence with the family over time, the wishes of the family, in a way we protect this story, really, that the families have had with Mount Auburn through many generations.

Cassie Cloutier 26:19

Are some of those maintenance and logistical records are those some of what the MHS houses?

Meg Winslow 26:26

I think MHS has the family records. And in the family records, you will have the commissioning of a monument. For example, you have the wonderful story of Thomas Dowse who put an obelisk on his lot,

but he also raised the obelisk to Benjamin Franklin, who was his hero. Also on his lot, even though Benjamin Franklin isn't buried at Mount Auburn, because he wanted everyone who visited the cemetery to go away knowing about Benjamin Franklin. You have those records, and you have the models for the obelisks that stand here in our landscape. So that's the perfect example of the kind of partnership of our records. That is because it's the families who commissioned the memorials. It's not Mount Auburn's work. But then say I was the monument maker and you were the person, you were Thomas Dowse, you would ask me to contact the cemetery to say I was coming to deliver my monument, or I needed to have the foundation set to receive this monument. It's the family records that you have at Mass Hist or I should say, MHS that are so valuable to completing the story of what's actually placed in the landscape here at Mount Auburn. In addition to the family collections, there's also the ephemera and the artwork that was created for Mount Auburn as a place of tourism and destination. There were many photographs taken of the cemetery and paintings and sculpture and stereographs that were created by people who visited the cemetery, as well as diary accounts.

Cassie Cloutier 28:16

Could you tell us more about some notable figures that are buried at the cemetery or notable burial sites?

Meg Winslow 28:25

There are more than 200,000 individuals buried and remembered at Mount Auburn, people from all walks of life and from all over the world. And some of the names you may be familiar with are Henry Wadsworth Longfellow the popular 19th century poet, [Richard] Buckminster Fuller, the innovator and engineer of the geodesic dome, Fannie Farmer, who's known for her cookbook, Joyce Chen, who was an entrepreneur and restauranteur, Margaret Fuller, the extraordinary transcendentalist and editor, friend of [Ralph Waldo] Emerson, Harriet Jacobs, who wrote Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl and lived here and in the Cambridge area, Julia Ward Howe, who wrote Battle Hymn of the Republic, Dorothea Dix, who did incredible work here and as a reformer, Dr. Harriet Hunt, who is one of the first female practicing physicians. You know, they're Supreme Court justices. They're they're Civil War nurses. They're really remarkable people buried here, and all of them mean something to someone, and all of their monuments mean something to someone.

Meg Winslow 29:47

I'm sure, you know, I have many friends who are buried here. One thing I think it's important to know is that everyone, no matter what their faith is or what their race is, is able to be buried at Mount Auburn, and that was the case from the beginning. The first deeds represent blacksmiths and paper hangers, gentlemen, gentlewomen, lawyers, seamstresses, the whole range of Boston, and so you'll see, you'll see every kind of individual here, and every individual reflecting the community that surrounds the cemetery because you can track, you know, an influx of different types of cultures and different types of people, and they're not separated in any section, like veterans. There's not a veterans section at Mount Auburn, but veterans are buried throughout the cemetery. There's not a black section. Black Americans are buried throughout the cemetery. So, you'll see that when you visit other cemeteries across the country. I think that's something interesting about Mount Auburn, that it was a little like real estate. You could just choose to be buried in a single grave or in a large 300 square foot lot, depending on your economic standing, if you didn't have the means to be buried at Mount Auburn, there were many charitable institutions that would buy a lot and provide burials for people who didn't have the means to be buried. One example of that is the Scots Charitable Society, which is the oldest charitable society in the United States. And in they bought a lot, and they're more than 250 people buried in that lot who didn't otherwise have the means to be buried at Mount Auburn. If you walk around the newer area, you'll see many Armenian burials and different burials. There's even a Confederate burial here at Mount Auburn. You'll see more variety as you enter the more contemporary areas. When you go to a cemetery, usually right at the front entrance is the oldest area, and when you go back and out further, those are the newer areas, and they often reveal very different demographics.

Cassie Cloutier 32:25

Are there any unique stories, or perhaps legends associated with any locations around the cemetery?

Meg Winslow 32:33

Well, I did want to speak to your question about sculpture at Mount Auburn. There was quite a confluence happening when the first president of Mount Auburn died Justice Joseph Story. He was revered as a great constitutional scholar and lawyer, and the Cherokee Nation lays a wreath every year on his lot for his dissent on a Trail of Tears ruling and when he died, almost immediately, there was a call to create a sculpture in his memory, and that sculpture was going to be placed in Bigelow chapel, here at Mount Auburn. And in the 1850s the cemetery wanted to commission sculptors to create four full length statues for the chapel. And in

fact, Jacob Bigelow, who was one of the founders of Mount Auburn, envisioned his chapel that he designed in the 1840s to be a repository for works of art that were marble that wouldn't be able to last in an outdoor environment. So, he envisioned the chapel to be not so much a funerary chapel, as it's used today, but as a repository for works of art and a place to sit and read books, a place of melancholy reflection. But then the chapel got very, very popular, and funerals started to happen in the chapel, and that didn't take place, except for the commissioning of four sculptures, which were given in the 1930s to Harvard when they renovated the buildings here at Mount Auburn. So that story is one that needs some scholarship. In fact, all rural cemeteries need scholarship. There is a lot to be studied and discovered in the archives of I know our archives because they were very interested in telling the story of our country through a tangible art form, the tangible art form of sculpture. And they wanted people to come and learn from those sculptures the history of our country. Now, what happened after Mount Auburn was founded is that the landscape was so popular that it began the discussion of creating parks without memorials in downtown cities. So, Mount Auburn led directly to the creation of the park system here in this country, and also to the suburbs and by bringing nature into the city, contributed to land conservation in a way that is often overlooked. They contributed to this idea that it makes a healthier environment to have trees and a healthier environment to have places of nature for people to spend time. And Andrew Jackson Downing, who was the editor of *The Horticulturalist* magazine, wrote about that and noticed how popular Mount Auburn and then later Greenwood Cemetery were, and said, this is what we need in our cities. This is what we need to design. And so, of course, that led to the founding of Central Park. You know, many years later, in the 1860s in New York. We have Mount Auburn to be thanked for that. I think that's a story that is one of our most important stories. I do have another fun story, which is oftentimes, when I give a walk, someone inevitably will ask if there's a phone in Mary Baker Eddy's grave. And Mary Baker Eddy, who many people know, is a discoverer and founder of the Christian of the First Church of Christ, Scientist, has a beautiful, open peristyle temple overlooking the banks of Halcyon Lake at Mount Auburn. And that is probably the most photographed memorial at Mount Auburn because it's so picturesque and it's so classical. It's the finest example of its time of granite carving. It's actually granite. It's bethel white granite. It looks like marble, but it's granite, and it has beautiful carving of roses. But there's always been a little bit of a rumor about whether she has a phone and if she calls God, or if God calls her on that phone. That's a beloved story at Mount Auburn.

Cassie Cloutier 37:23

Do you have a favorite location at Mount Auburn?

Meg Winslow 37:28

Mount Auburn is 175 acres of beautiful, designed landscape with declivities and declivities at this beautiful natural s-curve running through East West vistas from all sides, and a lot of mystery in the landscape because of the variety of its topography. And so, it's very difficult to choose a favorite site, and I have several and and I would say it's always been Consecration Dell because that vernal pool feels like the heart of the cemetery. It's where the consecration was held in 1831. It's where there were benches and Joseph Story gave his most eloquent consecration address to about 2000 people. So, it has deep meaning to the cemetery and also as a beautiful spot with native New England planting. It has a different kind of climate to it. It's its own microclimate because of the vernal pool and the spotted salamanders that live below the leaf litter give it another added layer as a wildlife refuge and very favorite place of mine. My second favorite place has to do with the people who are buried here at Mount Auburn. And I would say it's up along Bellwort Path and Tulip Path where the Bowditch family is buried, and and the Lowell family is buried, and the great architect Thomas Bullfinch is buried, and the great Shakespearean actor Edwin Booth is buried. And I just love thinking of all of them talking to each other when we're not there. It's just a very creative site. Oh, I might even have a better one than that actually. I love Lily Path, where the great American artist Winslow Homer is buried, and where Dr. Harriet Hunt commissioned another woman named Edmonia Lewis to carve a statue of Hygeia for her lot that is one of my favorite places at Mount Auburn because it was a commission by a woman for another woman who was a sculptor working in Rome in 1872 who created Hygeia to be placed on Dr. Hunt's lot so that people would remind themselves to live a healthy life. I just think that is probably my favorite spot in addition to Consecration Dell and in addition to Bellwort Path.

Cassie Cloutier 40:17

You've talked a little bit about the cemetery's relationship with the community and visitors, but is there anything else you'd like to say about Mount Auburn's relationship with the public or maybe projects you have going on that involve the public?

Meg Winslow 40:34

One of the things I love about working here is that our mission has evolved and is the same as it has been from the beginning, which is to commemorate and remember people who died, as well as comfort the bereaved, as well as welcome visitors in a landscape of extraordinary beauty that has been designed for that purpose. I love that the work that is here is so intentional and practical and deeply meaningful. But we can't

do our work without partnership with our communities and without thinking about our future and how to be sustainable. Again, through line of past, present and future, we value all the partnerships that we've had with the families who have friends and family members buried here. We value the learning that goes on in our community from sharing our collections as we've been doing. We hope to provide greater welcome and greater beauty and greater service as we move forward into a world where we are opening up our thinking to be much more welcoming and much more inclusive, and opening up our stories and our narratives and I would say it's a really exciting time to be working here and to be working with you, and to be delving into our collections in a really dynamic, fresh new way, where we're having conversations and where we no longer have one narrative or one story but many.

Cassie Cloutier 42:43

[Outro music fades in] The Object of History was produced by the research department at the Massachusetts Historical Society. We would like to thank Meg Winslow, Senior Curator of Historical Collections and Archives at Mount Auburn Cemetery, and Sam Hurwitz, Podcast Producer at the MHS. Music in this episode is by Ketsa Music and Chad Crouch. Please see our show notes for details. Thank you for listening, and please rate, review, and subscribe to both the MHS produced shows wherever you listen to podcasts.