

THE INGERSOLL

The Newsletter of the Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum and the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee

REPORT

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MUSEUM HOURS 2016

The Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum will be open at 61 Main St., Dresden, N.Y., from Noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays from May 28 through October 30, 2016. Suggested admission is \$5.00!

NEW FOR 2016: A NEW FRONT PORCH

The Robert Green Ingersoll Birthplace Museum will sport a new, historically accurate front porch for the 2016 season. The porch will follow the design of a porch featured in an undated photograph, probably from the late nineteenth or very early twentieth century. Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll, a retired contractor, plans to construct the new porch during the spring. Work should be completed when the Museum opens for the season on May 28 (the first day of Memorial Day weekend). The project has been funded by a grant from the James Hervey Johnson Charitable Educational Trust of San Diego, California.

In conjunction with the existing porch on the building's one-and-a-half-story wing, which Jeff erected several years ago, the new porch will restore a look the Ingersoll birthplace has not displayed for several decades.



This undated photo shows the Birthplace with full front porches on each wing, though the original porches were already in poor repair when this image was made. This spring's project will restore the two-story wing's historic porch.

INGERSOLL'S MOTHER TO BE MEMORIALIZED

Mary Livingston Ingersoll, mother of Robert Green Ingersoll, has lain in an unmarked grave for more than 180 years. On Memorial Day (May 30), the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee will right that historic injustice by dedicating a new gravestone.

Mary Livingston Ingersoll (1799–1835), wife of Rev. John Ingersoll, gave birth to her fourth and last child, Robert, on August 11, 1833, in Dresden, New York. By 1835, the Ingersolls had moved to



Cazenovia, New York's South Cemetery. Once a private graveyard, it is now owned and operated by the Town of Cazenovia.

Cazenovia, where Mary died on December 2, aged thirty-six. Rev. Ingersoll could not afford a proper burial. Luther Myrick, a more prosperous local cleric, offered a gravesite on his family plot. But the grave was never marked, and when Rev. Ingersoll was called to a church in Oneida County, Mary Ingersoll lay forgotten.

In 2014, the Robert Green Ingersoll Memorial Committee reached out to Town of Cazenovia histo-

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PEORIA INGERSOLL STATUE TO BE RESTORED

Last year's *INGERSOLL REPORT* recounted that Fritz Triebel's full-size statue of Ingersoll in Glen Oak Park in Peoria, Illinois (where Ingersoll raised his Civil War regiment and first attained national prominence) needed thousands of dollars in repairs. In an unusual partnership, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) and the City of Peoria Parks Department collaborated to make it happen. FFRF raised about \$40,000. Twenty-six donors gave \$1,000 or more and will have their names placed on a new bronze plaque mounted to the statue base. Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll worked hard to promote this campaign.

Repairs should begin this spring, when the bronze statue is removed from its stone plinth and taken to a bronze foundry in Philadelphia. Repairs will also be made to the plinth, which has also been damaged by weather and vandalism.



Ingersoll's widow (seated to the right of plinth) joined other family members and well-wishers on October 23, 1911 to dedicate the Fritz Triebel statue in Peoria's Glen Oak Park. Over one hundred years later, the statue is in need of restoration.

EBON INGERSOLL'S GRAVESTONE PLACED

Last year's *INGERSOLL REPORT* noted that Congressman Ebon Clark Ingersoll, Robert's beloved brother, lay in an unmarked grave in Washington, D.C.'s Oak Hill Cemetery. A stone was placed on September 2, 2015. Admirer Gerrie Paino of Berea, Ohio, arranged it almost singlehandedly, even purchasing the stone herself.

"Robert loved his brother so deeply that he expressed the desire that their names be associated until both were forgotten," said Paino. (Ingersoll's eulogy for Ebon is one of the most heartfelt of his graveside orations.) Researching Ebon's life, she discovered that his grave was unmarked. "That situation was unacceptable to me," she recalled. "It called for a swift remedy, a memorial to Ebon's life and to his congressional service."

Oak Hill Cemetery required permission from a family member to install a gravestone. Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll filled that role. Paino chose the accomplished artist and stone

INGERSOLL'S MOTHER TO BE MEMORIALIZED, cont'd. from page 1

rian Sara Chevako, who mobilized local officials to help her find Mary's grave. Examination of old records revealed Mary's interment on the Myrick family plot. In late 2015, the plot was surveyed and scanned with ground-penetrating radar. An unmarked burial was located. Mary's resting place was known at last.

At 1:15 p.m. on Memorial Day, local officials, regional tourism officials, and (of course) friends of Ingersoll will attend the dedication of a new, proper gravestone at Cazenovia's Old South Cemetery. Speakers will include Town of Cazenovia Supervisor Bill Zupan, Ms. Chevako, Ingersoll Committee Chair Jeff Ingersoll, and Museum Director Tom Flynn. The headstone and the dedication were funded through a special appeal to supporters of the Museum. Lead donors to this campaign were Gerrie Paino of Berea, Ohio; Anita Szccepek of Tampa, Florida; and Jeff Ingersoll and Sandy Parker of Hammondsport, New York.

Through a unique collaboration, Sara Chevako observed, "we have repaired the torn fabric of a 180-year-old life." If you'd like to attend the dedication, please e-mail Tom Flynn at tflynn@centerforinquiry.net.



Ground-penetrating radar located three bodies (dashed white lines) on the old Luther Myrick plot. Two line up with the headstones of Myrick's sons. The third, unmarked, burial is that of Mary Livingston Ingersoll. Photo courtesy Sara Chevako.

carver Andy Del Gallo of Manassas, Virginia, to help realize her vision. "Rather than a traditional headstone, I felt a boulder would be the ideal vehicle."

A boulder of Seneca red sandstone from New York State weighing approximately 300 pounds was selected. "In addition to the dates of Ebon's birth, death, and congressional service, the memorial stone also includes two quotes," Paino noted. "The first is: 'In the night of death, hope sees a star,' beautiful words from Ingersoll's eulogy for his brother. The second quote comes from a book dedication made by Colonel Ingersoll in honor of Ebon: 'To my brother, with whose name I wish my own associated until both are forgotten.'" Robert C. Ingersoll.

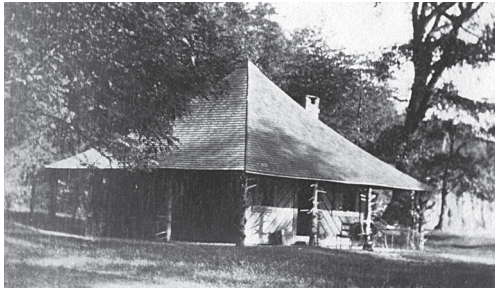


The new gravestone of Ebon Clark Ingersoll, carved by Andy Del Gallo and made possible by admirer/activist Gerrie Paino. Photo by Steve Lowe.

FREETHOUGHT TRAIL KEEPS GROWING



The Freethought Trail, a suite of radical-reform sites within a roughly hundred-mile radius of the Ingersoll Museum, is once more growing. In the last twelve months, nine new sites were added for a total of sixty-eight freethought, abolitionism, woman's rights, sex radicalism, and anarchist sites, marked and unmarked. "With the additional new sites now in the planning stages, I expect the Freethought Trail will have seventy-five sites by the end of 2016's Museum season," said Ingersoll Museum Director Tom Flynn.



This is the only structure now remaining from Fossenvue, where top artists, writers, and orators of the day (though, sadly, not Ingersoll) summured with reformer Elizabeth Smith Miller and her family.

Among the additions:

- The farm in Huron, New York, (still a working farm) that host-

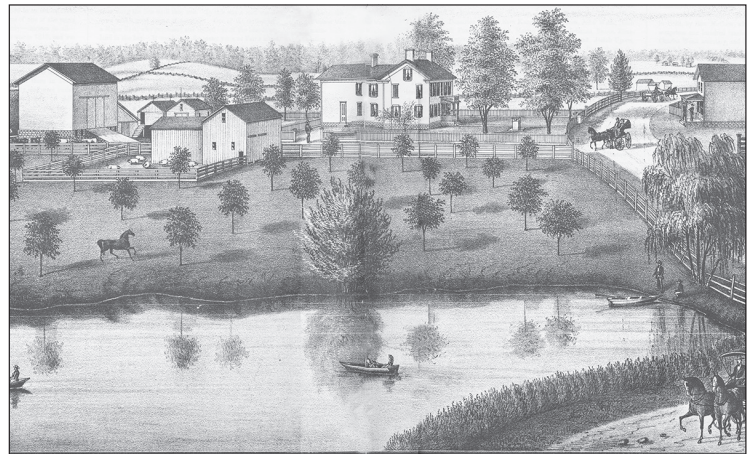


For twenty years, this hotel in the Quaker abolitionist colony of Sherwood, New York, operated as the Bob Ingersoll House.

ed the little-known 1877 predecessor to the famous 1878 freethought conference at Watkins Glen;

- The historic hotel in the old abolitionist community of Sherwood, New York, which from 1880 to 1900 was called "the Bob Ingersoll House";
- Office and residence sites for Charles Elmendorf, a freethinking dentist who was among Penn Yan, New York's most prominent citizens (The Museum holds a copy of *Ingersoll on Blasphemy* once owned by Dr. Elmendorf.); and
- Fossenvue, the lakefront summer camp and literary colony founded by suffrage crusader Elizabeth Smith Miller, located just across Seneca Lake from the Ingersoll birthplace.

And of course, Cazenovia features the gravesite of Ingersoll's mother—and also two sites from a famous 1850 convention that focused Northern opposition to the Fugitive Slave Act.



Freethinking farmer J.M. Cosad opened his Huron, New York, property for the 1877 "grove meeting" of the group that would hold a famous freethought convention in Watkins Glen the following year.

ENDOWMENT UPDATE

The Ingersoll Museum endowment fund stands at \$131,814.20—up slightly from last year, but "far from the pace of growth required to meet the fund's target of \$400,000," said Museum Director Tom Flynn. With an endowment of that size, the Museum could meet its routine operating costs from investment income and would no longer require subsidies from the Center for Inquiry.

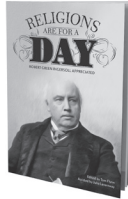
Considering a gift, large or small, to the Museum's endowment fund? The professionals at the Center for Inquiry's Development Department can assist you in arranging your gift in the way that can achieve your charitable objectives while achieving maximum tax advantage. Contact Vice President for Philanthropy Martina Fern at mfern@centerforinquiry.net or call (800) 818-7071.

**MUSEUM
ENDOWMENT**
Now
\$131,814
Target
\$400,000

MARKETPLACE



Ingersoll Museum Mug: A three-color ceramic mug features drawings of Ingersoll and his birthplace museum. Around the rim is the bold Ingersoll quote, "The clergy know that I know that they know that they do not know." 11 oz. mug, hand-washing recommended. \$14.00



Religions Are for a Day: Robert Green Ingersoll Appreciated: Museum Director Tom Flynn chronicles Ingersoll's life and impact with many never-before-published details. Plus numerous accounts of historical mysteries solved during the Museum's more than twenty years of operation. \$15.00



A Visit with Robert Ingersoll DVD: Stage actor Richard McNally performs his one-man show as Ingersoll before a live audience in an authentic Victorian setting. A multi-camera professional production. Runtime approximately one hour. \$18.00

Museum Brochures: Museum visitors pick up these five fact-packed brochures about Ingersoll's public life, his Civil War service, and more. Now you can enjoy them at home! \$8.00



The Faith I Left Behind: First-person deconversion stories written by freethinkers from many walks of life that appeared in *Free Inquiry* during 2014, plus fourteen more pieces never before published. \$20.00

American Freethought: Four-part video documentary extends from Paine to early twentieth century. 3 hr. 43 min. 4 DVDs. \$39.99



<input type="checkbox"/> Ingersoll Mug	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Religions Are for a Day	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> A Visit with Robert Ingersoll	x _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Museum Brochures Set	x _____
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