

The Ravenscroft Family Monument



How many times do we pass something and wonder about the story behind it. The monument with the missing head in the cemetery along North Washington is one that has a story. Whose monument is it? What story does it hide? What happened to the head?

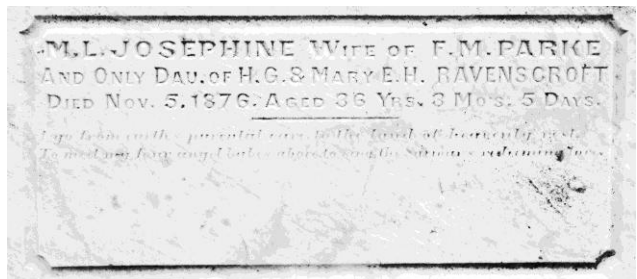
The monument marks the graves of Hanson G. Ravenscroft and his wife, Mary E. H. Rogers. He was born in 1814 in Virginia while she was born in 1819 in Kentucky. They were married in 1839 in Fayette County, Ohio. Census records show that he was a harness and saddle maker.

One child was born to the couple, Martha L. Josephine, in July of 1840. She married Francis Marion Parke who was born in 1843 in Brown County, Illinois. According to the 1870 census, the couple was living in the Ravenscroft household along with their four year old son, Francis H. Parke. Francis Marion Parke was also listed as a saddle and harness maker.

Here is where the story gets interesting. On the front of the memorial (west side) are the names and dates of Hanson and Mary. He died in 1881, she in 1897. On the north side of the memorial is the following inscription:

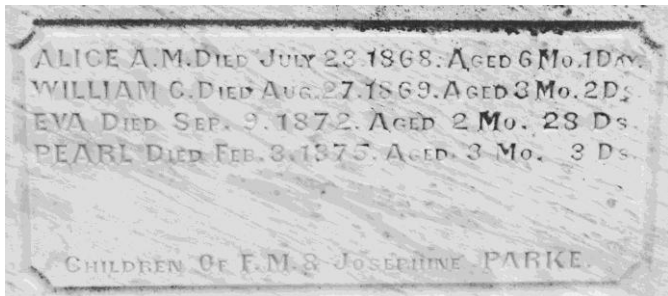
M.. JOSEPHINE wife of F. M. PARKE
and only dau. of H. G. & Mary E. H. Ravenscroft
Died Nov 5, 1876, Aged 36 Yrs. 3 Mos. 5 Days

I go from earth's parental care to the land of heavenly rest
To meet my four angel babes above to sing the Savior's redeeming love.



The east side of the memorial explains the verse:

Alice A. M.	Died July 23, 1868	Aged 6 Mo 1 Day
William G.	Died Aug 27, 1869	Aged 3 Mo 2 Day
Eva	Died Sep 9, 1872	Aged 2 Mo 28 Day
Pearl	Died Feb 3, 1875	Aged 3 Mo 3 Day
Children of F. M. & Josephine Parke		



Four children born within eight years and each never survived longer than six months of age. Why? The toll this took on Josephine must have been terrible. Another son, Marion Earl Park, was born in 1876, the year Josephine died. Did she die in childbirth? Earl was four years old in the 1880 census and living with his older brother Francis in the Ravenscroft home.

The boys were mentioned in the wills of Hanson and Mary. Hanson left real estate in Greenfield and Fayette County to Mary along with all personal belongings. She was charged with taking care of the boys and seeing that they got a "proper English

education." The Fayette County land was to be held for "Franky B" until he came of age. He also received the piano while Earl received \$300, the value of the piano.

In Mary's will, Earl received all the household and kitchen furniture. The remainder was to be divided equally between the boys. Land had to be sold so that debts owed to Mary by Frank and Earl could be paid to the estate. When the grandsons signed off on the estate settlement, their wives also had to sign. Frank was 31 years old and his wife was Mrs. Cora W. Parke. Marion Earl was 21 and his wife was Mrs. Cora B. Parke.

What happened to Francis Marion Parke, Josephine's husband? The 1880 census lists him as an inmate of the Athens State Hospital in Athens, Ohio where he resided until his death in 1925. He is buried in the Greenfield cemetery in a grave without a headstone.

On the south side of the monument, down on the lower right hand corner, is the inscription: Smith & Long, Greenfield O. They were the stonemasons who build the monument. Mr. Long was Patsy Smith's Great-grandfather. But that's another story.

So far two questions have been answered, who's monument and what is the background story. Now for the third, what happened to the head? That's one we can't answer right now. If you know, share the story with us.

