

Thomas E. Ream, formerly of Peru, although he is not buried here, made a contribution to the cemetery that had historical significance, by donating two Civil War cannons, that occupied the G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic) lot at Mt. Hope Cemetery for a number of years.

According to a shipping manifest the cannons were donated under various acts of congress from 1869-1897. Two 12-pound bronze Howitzer cannons were shipped on August 8, 1882

On Decoration Day, May 30, 1928, several veterans from the Civil War attended the Memorial Day services held at Mt. Hope Cemetery in honor of their fallen comrades, among them was Thomas Ream. In his brief speech he stated, that present were among the youngest Civil War Veterans, Mr. Ream was 82. He told those present that after the war he and Captain W.F. Daily of Bridgeport Connecticut had two cannons shipped to Peru. Mr. Ream stated the Union Forces at the Battle of Gettysburg had captured the cannons from Confederate Soldiers. It was only later when he examined them, that he found they had been spiked. Mr. Ream stated that when General Lee thought they were going to lose the battle, the cannons were spiked before they fell into enemy hands.

The term spiking refers to when the soldiers were faced with retreating, they would temporarily disable the cannon by driving a spike into the vent, so the enemy could not turn and use it against them.

The cannons were placed at the cemetery's Grand Army of the Republic area, one to the south and the other to the north. The carriage of one of the cannons rotted away and the merchants from town took up a collection to have it mounted on a cement frame. The unveiling of the cannons new site at the south corner of the G.A.R. was done by the Boy Scouts and George Redmon, a Civil War veteran, who had also attended the proceedings.

The cement frame and memorial plaques still remain. The plaque on the east side of the frame reads: This tablet erected by the children of comrade George Redmon, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, 14th Army Corps Co. 101, Indiana volunteers Jan. 6, 1864 – Aug. 5, 1865.

George Redmon is buried in the family lot to the east of the G.A.R. section F lot 51 space 2/3

On that glorious Memorial Day, Harvey Cole, attorney, delivered the opening address. It was a beautiful tribute to those who had fallen in battle as well as those that came to hone them: a few of his closing remarks were as follows:

“You propose today to pay a special tribute to these heroic dead by unveiling a relic of the rebellion. The drawing of that curtain will not reveal a sight entirely new. For perhaps some three score years that old cannon, mounted on the wheels which carried it to battle, and its companion, resting there, you have kept watch over the graves of your departed comrades.”

“I do not know the history of this old gun before it came here...this much we know – it signifies to us four long years of unrelenting struggle, four long years of man’s stern courage and devotion, four long years of women’s patient suffering and endurance.”

“It’s wheels and frame have rotted to the ground, like the bodies of the blue clad boys who manned it, they have succumbed to the toll of advancing years. But the old bronze barrel, unmarred by the ravages of time, will gleam. I dare say, in the morning sunlight, just as it did in the glorious days of its youth.”

“You have mounted it on a slab of enduring masonry, where with its companions, it will stand throughout the years, a monument to the heroism of the soldiers of the rebellion. The patriotism, the devotion to the union and the love of the flag, of the Grand Army of the Republic, glow and gleam and glisten today, with the same undying light as when the host of Grant and Sherman marched forth to win imperishable glory. Though the robust forms of your companions, like the wheels of that old gun, are feeble and dissolving dust, though your ranks are thin and your steps are faltering, the patriotism which has fired your soul is this day enshrined in the hearts of your countrymen more firmly far than that gun is imbedded in its rock foundation to abide there so long as this republic shall endure.”

**Atty Albert Harvey Cole was buried in 1964 at Mt. Hope Cemetery section 12 lot 1 space 6.
He was a World War 1 veteran.**

The cannons remained at Mt. Hope Cemetery, standing watch over its fallen comrades until 1943, when a drive was made for metal to be used in WWII. At that time, the Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War gave them to the government to be melted down.

A Tribute to the Cannons of Mt. Hope Cemetery

Mr. Cole stated in his address, that the cannon that came to guard this burial ground had not always remained silent. He said that as a boy he had heard it roar at daybreak on the 4th of July proclaiming again the nation's independence. According to Mr. Cole, the booming of the cannon was also heard announcing the victories of our boys in France during World War II.

That old cannon that once rolled the battlefields of the Civil War and stood as sentinels over its fallen comrades, was once again called into battle. If you listen carefully as you walk these grounds you can hear it in the silent cries of those who come to pay honor to the men who served our great nation in World War II.

Many have asked why such a valued part of our history was given for such a cause, but when you listen to the laughter of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren, whose freedom carried such a high price, it is not so hard to understand. The words of Mr. Cole say it far better than I:

"That same undying love

Of country and of flag

Burns as fiercely in your heart

As on that glorious distant day

When you drove the invading host in gray

Back from Gettysburg into the south"