

He keeps roots well preserved

Greater Rochester history buffs scrambling to find money to erect historic markers and monuments can take heart in the long-distance mementos of Philo Van Wagoner.

Van Wagoner, who lives in Los Angeles, is a former Rochester resident who plans to remember—and have others remember—that his ancestors were among the community's first settlers.

In the past two years, he has arranged, via telephone and letter, to have the resting places of those ancestors restored and improved.

His most recent project was to establish a historical monument in Stoney Creek Cemetery in tribute to Michael Van Wagoner. Michael Van Wagoner was the first person buried there—in 1825.

The marker tells a little of Van Wagoner's trek from New York to Rochester in the early 1800s. Hannah, and Michael's wife, died en route, and Michael set up a homestead on Washington Road.

The monument was erected two weeks ago by Rochester Monument Sales, under the supervision of William Potere Jr. Although Potere has never met Philo Van Wagoner, he's learned quite a bit about him through his letters and phone calls.

"HE (PHILO) apparently was born here and later moved away," Potere said. "About two years ago, he called us and said he'd like some restoration work done in Oxford Cemetery, where some of his relatives were buried."

"Then he said there was another person—Michael Van Wagoner—he'd like to build a monument for."

Philo and Potere exchanged sketches of the restoration work and monument before they were completed.

"He knew exactly what he wanted—he was very methodical about it," Potere said.

Philo's interest in the past doesn't end with commemorative markers to his ancestors. Last summer, he took



This tribute to Michael Van Wagoner is the newest memorial in Stoney Creek Cemetery. (Staff photo by Doug Bauman)

several historical aides with him to Europe to trace the beginnings and branchings of his family tree. Just where Philo's interest in genealogy begins and ends isn't known, but his perseverance is something that

should intrigue of greater Rochester history buffs, Potere said.

"He seems to be a man who knows exactly what he wants to do, for whatever reason."

"It's all very unusual."

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Ashkenazy performs dual role

By KAREN BODIN

Pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy took on the dual role of conductor-soloist for an all-Mozart program with the Detroit Symphony at Meadow Brook festival last week.

While Mozart is particularly appealing to 18th century enthusiasts, the evening was made special by the presence of Ashkenazy.

He is known to metropolitan area audiences as a great pianist, and his local debut as a conductor could only enhance his reputation.

From the onset, he was in complete control of the music. In a flamboyant style reminiscent of Bernstein and

Ozawa, he seemed to personify the music.

HIS ENTIRE BODY was energized by the rhythms and flushed with the orchestral color while he moved with the shapes of phrases and melodies.

Dedicating the use of a baton, Ashkenazy used his hands to elicit the expressive qualities of Mozart. On the podium, he was a generator for all the emotion, intellect, charm, elegance and power required to interpret the composer.

The Symphony No. 25 in G minor was written in 1773 when Mozart was 17. It is the work of a master showing the great amounts of freedom that can

be possible within the constraints of a particular style.

THE ALLEGRO MOVEMENTS were strong and forceful, but never cumbersome. The strings were particularly notable in running passages which demanded unusual precision.

The orchestra seemed to float from color to color in the slow movement while the winds performed excellently in their solo trio section of the first movement.

Ashkenazy conducted Concerto No. 19 in F Major from the keyboard. The

first movement is dominated by a persistent rhythm and brilliant melodies which were well executed.

The second movement, which demands numerous overlaps of sound between sections of the orchestra and piano, was not as satisfying. It seemed that the ends of many phrases were lost as Ashkenazy needed to switch hands from the keyboard to conducting. The last movement contains contrapuntal writing and a complex finale wasn't as cohesive as it could

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