

Allegheny Cemetery

Quarterly



Fall 2026

In this edition...

- Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt
 - Bookbinder, book collector, philanthropist
- Preservation Efforts



Allegheny Cemetery is the final resting place for over 137,000 loved ones entrusted forever to our care.

The Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association was created to help support the historical landscape and structures within our hallowed grounds. When you respectfully visit **Allegheny Cemetery** or contribute to the **A.C.H.A.**, you are honoring the founders and the community that built our great city.

More info available
on our website!





Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt

Section 44, Lot 5

June 30, 1882 – February 22, 1963

Rachel McMasters Miller was born on June 30, 1882, in Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania. The daughter of Rachel Hughey McMasters Miller and Mortimer Craig Miller, a prominent maritime lawyer, Rachel attended the Thurston School (now Winchester Thurston) and Miss Mittleberger's School for Girls in Cleveland, Ohio.

Plants were an early passion for Rachel. Growing up at her grandmother's estate, she was surrounded by trees, gardens, and farms. As a girl, her mother's friend gave her a book on wildflowers, called *How to Know the Wild*

Flowers by Frances Theodora Smith Dana Parsons, which taught her how to identify different flora. This passion for plants and books would stick with Rachel her whole life, and the book stayed in her collection as an adult.

The first rare book she collected was gifted to her at the age of 15. The book, Leonard Meager's *The English Gardener* (1670), was a practical guide for gardening. Her love for collecting rare books, especially horticultural-based works, only continued to grow from there.

But Hunt was not just a collector of rare books. Starting in her late teens and into her early twenties, she showed an increased interest in bookbinding. After a vacation in 1901, she met Euphemia Bakewell, a native Pittsburgher and a bookbinder. Hunt convinced Bakewell to teach her how to book bind, and over the course of two years she learned all parts of the craft from Bakewell.

During this time, Rachel met and was courted by Roy Arthur Hunt, who would go on to become President of Aluminum Company of America (Alcoa). The courtship was lengthy and included many gifts of books, like a copy of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which Rachel hand-tooled in aluminum and bound herself. She gave the book to Roy for Easter in 1913.

The couple married in June of 1913 and traveled to Europe on their honeymoon. While abroad, Rachel took the opportunity to shop for supplies to

continue binding.

Between 1903 and 1920, Hunt did around 125 bindings. Before she was married, her bindery was set up on the third floor of her family's home in Shadyside. After her marriage, she still used the bindery at her parent's house, but by 1926 her bindery equipment had moved to the third floor of her home on Elmhurst.

Although a passionate bookbinder for many years, her responsibilities as a mother of four and as a figure in Pittsburgh's civic life meant her bookbinding eventually took a backseat. Her bindery became a place for meetings with friends, and a place to show off her book collection, as it continued to grow.

Hunt attended her first large book sale in 1929. Hunt never had an agent; she researched and collected her books by herself, unless they were gifted to her. She often claimed that her library was "built book by book by herself," and she took great pride in her collection.

Hunt was active in Pittsburgh's civic life. She helped found several different horticultural clubs, including the Garden Club of Allegheny County and the Hrowsitha Club. She was a member of national societies, including the Garden Club of America (of which she was a director from 1934-1939), the American Horticultural Society, and more. She often gave lectures to other clubs on horticultural topics.

In 1961, Rachel and Roy helped found

the Hunt Botanical Library at Carnegie Institute of Technology (Carnegie Mellon University). Rachel donated her collection to the library, and a financial contribution helped build the library. The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation still exists today and is used as a source for botanists around the world.

Hunt passed away on February 22, 1963, at the age of 80. She is buried in Section 44, Lot 5. Following her death, about 1,650 rare books from her collection were donated to the already established Hunt Library at Carnegie Institute of Technology. Some of the rare books that were donated included first editions of *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*. In addition, the Hunt family donated \$175,000 to go towards the rare books room.

Hunt was the recipient of many awards during her lifetime, and received honorary degrees from both the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon. Her contributions to the field of literature and horticulture is still remembered today.



Wildflowers of Western Pennsylvania

Check out these native wildflowers spotted around Allegheny Cemetery!





Historic Preservation



Donate by clicking the link below or mailing checks for the A.C.H.A to the Cemetery.

Donate Today!

Your support helps aid the restorative work being done to the **Butler Street Entrance Complex**. This includes the **Gatehouse**, the **Gate**, and the **Administration Building**.

Recently, the 12-foot arched windows on the 1st floor of the administration building were painted to match the gatehouse.

The entire **Butler Street Entrance Complex**, including the administration building, is on the **National Register of Historic Places** and is vitally important to the historic integrity of the cemetery.

We hope you will continue to support the **Allegheny Cemetery Historical Association** by sharing kind donations as we fulfill its mission of conservation, preservation, and restoration.

Sources: Allegheny Cemetery archive; "Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt as a Collector and Patron of the Arts and Crafts" by Mary Catherine Johnsen; Pittsburgh Post-Gazette; Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation "About" section; The Pittsburgh Press.