



JANUARY 2012

VOLUME II, ISSUE I

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Celebrating 25 Years of Volunteer Effort!

When something reaches a quarter century old, attention must be paid. Volunteers have been working in the Historic City Cemetery for 25 years to care for this historic site. Twenty-five years of monument repairs, gardening, educational programs and historical research have resulted in a complete transformation of the Cemetery.

Stand by in 2012 to celebrate our efforts. As volunteers conduct a variety of tours and events, we will celebrate twenty-five years of volunteer efforts dedicated to the preservation, beautification of the Historic City Cemetery in keeping with its historical importance. Special celebratory activities will be announced in the Epitaph and on our website. Please plan to join in the celebration.



Time To Renew

It's time to renew your membership in the Old City Cemetery Committee. Your membership helps to support the mission of the Committee, working with the community to...

...restore, beautify, preserve and protect the Historic City Cemetery, while maintaining access by descendants of the deceased, and to provide educational services to all visitors to the Historic City Cemetery of Sacramento.

As you know, members are invited to participate in the annual membership meeting in June where accomplish-

ments, future plans and activities are planned. You will continue to receive this newsletter describing these activities and volunteer opportunities, with a historical tidbit or two.

This year we will conduct a membership drive, looking to expand our membership. We encourage each and every member to recruit others to support the Cemetery.

Membership forms on the website: <http://www.oldcitycemetery.com/membership.htm/>



Connie Bettencourt
OCCC
President

President's Message *Connie Bettencourt*

As we close out a successful 2011 and plan activities for 2012, I want to say a big thank-you to all who have worked so hard throughout the year.

From our Open Garden in the spring, to our Lantern Tours in the fall and all the other events throughout the year, none of it could be done without the hard work and dedication of OCCC members and volunteers.

This year's Lantern Tours were particularly enjoyed by our guests and the team that put them together gets my thanks.

As we begin a new year of gardening, research, tours and events, we find changes that bring new challenges.

Sharon Patrician has resigned as Volunteer Coordinator (see page 8). Over the years, she has accomplished many tasks, and helped bring many volunteers to the Cemetery. Fortunately for us, she will continue working with the Board and participating in Cemetery Projects such as the Headstone Photo Project. My heartfelt thanks to Sharon for all she has done as Volunteer Coordinator.

We have some great things planned for 2012 including a celebration of our 25th year as an organization dedicated to the support of the Cemetery. When it was founded, my husband John and the others who participated had no idea of what we would realize over that quarter of a century. They would be proud of all we have done, and would look forward as I do to what we will accomplish this year.

Editorial

Judy Eitzen

Well, here we are again at the start of a new year, my second as editor of this newsletter. Thanks to all who have contributed to the Epitaph during 2011. Please continue to send contributions and suggestions about the cemetery to appear in the Epitaph. The newsletter is published three times each year; the next issue in May.

At a recent Board Meeting, Membership Chair Pat Hutchings suggested that each Board member

recruit three new members during 2012. A great idea! I concur and strongly recommend that each OCCC member make the effort to recruit three new members during the year. Our organization is only as strong as its members; fresh faces, fresh ideas and the willing hands of our volunteers help keep the Cemetery beautiful.

Comments, questions, concerns:
Judy Eitzen
verlaine@citlink.net

Old Masonic Plot

This is the first in a series of articles about specific plots in the Old City Cemetery. The Old Masonic Plot is located in the area designated as B-116.

The Masonic logo, shown here, represents the working tools of the Masons: a compass and a square surrounding the letter 'G' representing God. This logo is found on many headstones, both in this plot and throughout the cemetery.



In 1849, at the beginning of the gold rush boom, Sacramento began to grow rapidly. Many Sacramento citizens had been members of the Masonic Order or the Odd Fellows in their previous communities and recognized the need for establishing charity in this new community where there was increased suffering due to illness, poverty, deaths, etc. In the summer of 1849, a group of men were summoned by notices placed on trees at an old horse market at 6th and K Streets. They met together for the purpose of forming a structure to deal with the problems of "relief of sick and distressed." At this meeting, the first Masonic association in Sacramento was formed with 69 Masons. This group proved to be vital during

by *Jeanne Baldwin*



the cholera epidemic that hit the City in 1850 and in subsequent years as the City grew. They provided valuable services to the community.

One notable contribution to Sacramento was the formation of a health insurance plan for citizens. For \$100 a year, Sacramentans could enjoy free treatment at a hospital for a year. This was in keeping with one of the earliest missions of the organization.

In purchasing this land from the Board of Trustees of the Sacramento City Cemetery, on July 30, 1859, the Order of Free and Accepted Masons became the first fraternal organization in Sacramento to provide a private burial plot for its members—a cemetery within a cemetery.



The Old Masonic Plot was acquired in two sections, the last of which was purchased April 30, 1860, which increased the plot to its present size and brought the total cost to the Masonic Order up to \$579.

(Continued on page 4)



When the Masons began to run out of space in this plot, the organization purchased a large tract of land from the City which serves as their burial site today. It is located just south of the Old City Cemetery.

The Old City Cemetery Committee has erected memorial stones to those who perished and are buried together in a mass grave and to those brave doctors who gave their lives in an effort to save their fellow citizens.

Masonic Plot, Cont.

(Continued from page 3)

The plot was established for members of the Masonic Order and their families. Because the older graves contain some early Sacramento pioneers, it is not surprising to find some notable citizens in this section: Governor John Bigler (third governor of California and ambassador to Chile) and his wife and daughter; Dr. Charles Duncombe (an early Sacramento physician with a colorful past); J.J. Fowler (an agent for Sutter's Fort who opened the first trading store on the Sacramento River waterfront); and Captain Nathaniel Kidder (the first Harbormaster who also moonlighted as a janitor at the Sacramento Court House). Biographies for these men and many

other Masons are available in the Old City Cemetery Archives.

The Old City Cemetery plots are privately owned and are not owned by the City of Sacramento. Therefore, plots today are owned by descendants of the original purchasers. The plots in the Old Masonic section are owned by the Masons, and they maintain the plot.

There are several family groups, such as the Foster/Madeley, Flint/Wilson, and the Goss/Gunn families. The Foster plot had its first burial in 1867 and the most recent burial in the Foster plot occurred in 2008. There are over 500 people buried in the Old Masonic and it continues to be an active plot.

CHOLERA 1850

Any study of early Sacramento pioneers (including those mentioned above) should include a mention of the cholera epidemic of 1850. An examination of US epidemics will show that Asian cholera followed Gold Rush settlers as they migrated to the West Coast. It appeared on overcrowded, unsanitary ships and stepped ashore in Sacramento in the person of a passenger on the "New World". The resulting epidemic in Sacramento and San Francisco took more than 700 lives, many of whom are buried in a mass grave on Old City Cemetery grounds.

The waterborne mechanism spreading this disease was not discovered until later in the decade; many died drinking contaminated water without knowing why they got sick.

We tend to remember those who died in epidemics, but the fact is that of those exposed to cholera in the 19th century, about 20% died, while the majority were either symptom free or suffered only mild symptoms. One of those who caught cholera and survived was Governor John Bigler, one of the few who remained in Sacramento to treat the sick. Though not a doctor, he did this when most physicians quickly left town. Of those doctors who remained, seventeen perished; one is known to be buried in the Old City Cemetery.

Cartoons on Headstones?

by Sharon Patrician

Several months ago, a sheriff's crew worker turned over a loose in-ground concrete memorial marker and discovered, in pristine condition, a newspaper cartoon adhered to the back.

The concrete stone memorialized Caroline Wemmer who died at 69 on November 8, 1933 of hypertension. Located in the area called "Singleton Fill," Caroline's gravesite has gone undisturbed until someone noticed the stone was loose.

But back to the cartoon on the bottom of this flat stone: It is a cartoon called **Mickey Finn** by Lank Leonard. Wikipedia says this cartoon was syndicated to newspapers from 1936 to 1976 and was a "lighthearted strip" about an Irish-American



cop named Michael Aloysius "Mickey" Finn in Port Chester, New York. This strip appears to be part of a story line about Finn's Uncle Phil as a door-to-door broom salesman. Leonard based Uncle Phil on his own uncle, a cab driver who was always getting into scrapes.

It seemed mysterious that the strip appeared on the back of a stone commemorating a 1933 death

when it did not appear in newspapers until 1936. The logical conclusion is the stone was installed some years after Caroline Wemmer's burial.

Why there should be a cartoon on the bottom of this memorial stone is equally interesting. When concrete was poured into a form, wet newsprint was placed on the bottom as a cheap method to keep the concrete from adhering to the ground. (Wet newsprint also controlled curing time of the cement.) If the print stuck to the bottom, no notice was taken when the concrete dried and was installed. We can only surmise that newsprint (in color by the way) was tougher stuff then, and not exposing it to the elements kept it in good condition.

Thanks to Gordon Hutchings, husband of volunteer Pat Hutchings, an expert photographer who took the photo which had to be reversed. There is another cartoon strip on this same page but I was unable to identify it. Perhaps one of our readers remembers?

In 2007 in the Historic Rose Garden, a similar stone memorializing J.L. Corey, a two-day-old infant, was turned over and news-



print was found on the back of it as well. The date on the stone is 1940 and unfortunately the nature of the article can't be discerned.



Both stones have been replaced to their proper places, perhaps to provide a mystery to the next person who turns them over in the future.

Volunteer Triumphs

by Sharon Patrician

Sometimes we forget in the relentless march of days how much we as volunteers manage to accomplish in just one year. To remind you of your hard work, dedication and love for what you do, here are a few achievements in 2011 to warm those winter nights:

Volunteers

Over 15,000 volunteer hours were donated to the cemetery. This equates to the number of hours worked by seven full-time employees! (Valued at more than \$300,000!)

Headstones & Structures

With earnings from tours, special events and donations from the Historic Rose Garden, we repaired 110 headstones in 2011. Additionally, funds generated by Rose Garden and Native Plant Demonstration Garden volunteers were used to repair several plot surrounds in those areas.

Visitors

More than 9,000 visitors visited the cemetery during 2011.

Trees

Eleven (11) new trees were planted to replace our dying elms.

Tours

October Lantern Tours were sold out (again) and our actors, musicians and volunteers were imbued with new energy and enthusiasm. This year we began selling tickets online which improved our efficiency and customer convenience.

Saturday morning history tours were well attended throughout the year, due to the excellent research and skilled presentations of our volunteers.

Open Garden

Our annual Open Garden in April

was, thanks to lovely weather and a top-notch volunteer group, eagerly attended by more than 300 visitors.

OCCC Membership

Our annual Membership meeting was well attended and members were gratified at the amount of effort and accomplishment in the cemetery.

Photography Project

Over three-quarters of the cemetery's headstones, monuments and mausoleums have been digitally photographed and photographers are working as we write.



Gardens

The Historic Rose Garden's reputation continues to gather respect and admiration for all the accomplishments of its volunteer corps. Rose Garden volunteers will celebrate their 20th anniversary in 2012.

And if I forgot something outstanding, mea culpa and kudos to the Archives, Adopt, Tours, Photos, Restoration and Board of Directors volunteers without whom our beloved cemetery would still be languishing as that desolate, weed-choked piece of ground.

Lois Dove researches Cemetery Archives



Cemetery Gardens—What's New?

Historic Rose Garden Anita Clevenger

The Historic Rose Garden will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. In March, 1992, the first group of volunteers planted about one hundred roses in the area along Broadway, consisting largely of roses collected by botanist Fred Boutin and roses donated by a number of supporters. In 20 years the collection has expanded to nearly 500 roses, mostly varieties grown in California during Victorian times.

This year's **Open Garden**, scheduled for April 21, will recognize the people involved in the early stages of the garden, and will also feature Louisiana rosarian, Peggy Rose Martin. She will speak about "Peggy Martin Rose," a repeat-blooming, smooth-caned pink rambling survivor of Hurricane Katrina. We have one of these roses growing on the Broadway fence, and will have others for sale.

In October, we will host a symposium in celebration of 20 years of rose preservation. It is co-sponsored by the Heritage Rose Foundation, the Heritage Roses Group, and the Old City Cemetery Committee, Inc. We plan a Friday evening tour and reception in the cemetery, an all-day Saturday event at the California Automobile Museum including speakers and a celebratory dinner, and a relaxed Sunday morning in the rose garden, enjoying the roses and touring the cemetery.

The Sacramento Historic Rose Garden is internationally recognized as a beautiful, unique, all-volunteer garden in which we have gathered many of the roses found in old cemeteries and historic sites. The value of our garden as a place to study these roses was underscored during Dr. Wang Guoliang's recent visit from China, in which he studied, photographed, and took cuttings of our roses to compare them with similar roses in China. Some of the roses in our collection

Hamilton Square Perennial Garden Sharon Patrician

In looking back at 2011, I realize my omissions, errors and follies. I hereby resolve in 2012 to:

- Put more effort into recruiting volunteers to help
- Keep on top of the weeds, especially nut grass!
- Continue my quest for unusual, interesting and drought-tolerant perennials
- Try for publicity which will make Hamilton the go-to destination for perennials nicely grown and beautifully displayed
- Work with my colleagues at the cemetery to share resources and volunteers
- Continue planting things tasty to native bees
- Finally, to enjoy the beauty, complexity of habitat, sounds and sights in this peaceful garden



were introduced to the Western world in the 18th and 19th centuries, but have been known in China since the Song dynasty, a thousand years ago or more.

We are hopeful that our collection will continue to expand and improve, and that this first 20 years will be just the beginning.

Lantern Tours 2011

Judy Eitzen

As in prior years, all tickets were sold out weeks before the popular Lantern Tours in October. More than 40 volunteers worked hard to make the tours successful.

We made several changes this year – each of which worked well. Thanks to Jeanne Baldwin's hard work, guests were able to order tickets through a commercial ticketing firm. This simplified work required of volunteers and permitted guests to use credit cards for the first time.

We limited the number of guests on each tour which permitted tours without the use of the rolling sound system and allowed tour times to overlap which kept things moving.

Connie Clark and her troupe of superb actors put on a great show; with new stories plus a couple of old favorites told from different points of view. It was evident to the audience that the actors had as much fun putting on the show as the guests did in viewing it.

Conducting the October Lantern tours is the primary fundraising effort for the Old City Cemetery and we raised sufficient funds to continue with headstone restoration, archival research and other tasks designed to support this important historical place. As always, we reviewed the event with an eye to making the 2012 tours even better.

Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all who worked to make 2011 Lantern Tours a great success.

*Been looking for
just the right
Cemetery
activity?
Here's your
opportunity!*

Volunteer Coordinator Needed

Sharon Patrician, our long-time volunteer coordinator, resigned from that position in November. She is still greatly involved in various cemetery projects and will assist a new coordinator to get started.

Though it will be difficult to fill her shoes, we do need a volunteer (or volunteers) to perform the tasks which Sharon so ably handled.

Tasks

- Recruit, interview, assign, and track new volunteers.
- Train some volunteers (many are trained by those already working.)
- Supervise the Visitors Center .
- Supervise the Adopt-A-Plot program.
- Assist various cemetery teams to recruit and assign volunteers for special events and tours.

The position requires a person who can devote about 10 to 20 hours a month.

While specific tasks can be divided among volunteers, a single person is needed to coordinate volunteer activities.

So...are you a people person? Enjoy variety in your volunteering? Sounds like you? Then, this is the task for you.

You must be a member of the Old City Cemetery Committee in good standing and willing to become a member of the Board of Directors.

Contact Sharon at patricianone@att.net or call 916 455 8166 if you want more information and/or an application.

2012 Events Planned

Judy Eitzen

The Tour Planning Team and Garden Leaders have been busy planning 2012 events and tours. With our 25th Anniversary celebration included, it should be quite a busy year.

History Tours

- February 18—Black History Tour
- March 3—Pioneer Women
- April 7—Symbolism & Victorian Mourning Practices
- May 5—Police, Fire & Legal Lore
- June 2—Stonecutters—Sacramento's First Artists
- June 16—Sacramento History
- July 7—Close Calls & Calamities
- August 4—Horsing Around
- September 1—Early Labor History
- September 22—Educators Tour
- October 13—Children's Tour
- November 10—Country Divided, City United

Garden Tours

- March 11—Early Bloom in the Native Plant Garden
- March 31—Early Bloom in the Rose Garden
- May 19—What's Blooming?
- September 16—Wildlife Gardening With Native Plants
- October 20—What's Blooming?
- November 17—Fall Color in the Rose Garden

Special Events

- March 31—Gardens Gone Wild
- April 21—Open Garden
- May 5—Old Garden Roses class
- May 12—Twilight Tour
- May 26—Memorial Day
- May 20—Elixirs, Potions & Other Notions
- June 2—New Helvetia Dedication
- June 24—Pollination Sensation
- July 13—Friday 13th Evening Event
- September 8—Rose Propagation
- October 12-14—Rose Garden 20th Anniversary Symposium
- October 13—Firefighter's Event
- October 19, 20, 26 & 27
Lantern Tours
- December 1—Rose Pruning Class

Note that the Saturday morning history and garden tours are free, while some special events require tickets and/or reservations. Details will be posted on the Old City Cemetery website as events approach.

Volunteers are needed to assist with many of these tours and events.

Call 448-0811 or email to info@oldcitycemetery.com.

History Tours—Jeanne Baldwin
Rose Garden—Anita Clevenger
Native Plant Garden—Sabrina Okamura-Johnson
Hamilton Square Garden—Sharon Patrician.



**Old City Cemetery
Committee, Inc.**

1000 Broadway
Sacramento, CA 95818
916-448-0811

Mission Statement

To join hands with the community to restore, beautify, preserve and protect the Historic City Cemetery, while maintaining access by descendants of the deceased, and to provide educational services to all visitors to the Historic City Cemetery of Sacramento.



Museum Day—February 4

The Historic City Cemetery is a member of SAM (Sacramento Association of Museums) and is proud to participate in the 14th annual Sacramento Museum Day. On Saturday, February 4, twenty-eight museums in the greater Sacramento area will be offering free or half price admission for this day. Sacramento Museum Day is proudly supported by Umpqua Bank. We expect many visitors to the Cemetery that day, some who have not visited before. Come join in the fun.