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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2011 Lantern Tours	1
Volunteer Recognition	1
President's Message	2
Editor's Word	2
Fran Pendleton	3
Upcoming Events	3
Volunteer News	4
What's In An Epitaph?	5
Cemetery Garden Repairs	7
Wilder Burning	8

## 2011 Lantern Tours

October is here and that means the Lantern Tours are just around the corner. The evening tours at the end of October comprise the major fundraising effort in our support of the Cemetery, and it is gratifying to know they have sold out.

A hardworking group of volunteers have labored to put the 2011 tour program together and this year's plan includes some new tales presented by our special cadre of actors plus a couple of old favorites.

It's not too late to volunteer to help with the tours; we need all the help we can get. Please notify Sharon Patrician if you can assist. (916-455-8166 or [patri-cianone@att.net](mailto:patri-cianone@att.net)) Volunteers are encouraged to wear 19th century costume to put our guests in the mood. We also have new t-shirts for those who prefer. It's a great new design, prepared by artist John Robins. (Available at the Archives for \$15.)



Tour volunteers are also expected to attend a rehearsal on October 9 at 3 p.m. The rehearsal will help ensure that tour nights run smoothly. Come join in the fun. Lantern tours are coming!

## Volunteer Appreciation

It's the time of year to thank Cemetery Volunteers for all their hard work throughout the year.

All Cemetery volunteers and guests are invited to join us for an ice cream social on Saturday, October 8 from 3-5 p.m. Please RSVP to Sharon Patrician (916-455-8166 or [patricianone@att.net](mailto:patricianone@att.net))

This year's event includes induction of Anita Clevenger on the Roll on Honor Stone.

Anita has been a Cemetery volunteer since 2003, starting in the Rose Garden and serving as a member of the OCCC Board. She is presently Manager of the Historic Rose Garden and has been instrumental in expanding and increasing the success of the annual Open Garden, promoted participation in the Sacramento Rose Show and speaks to a variety of groups about the Historic Rose Garden.



Connie Bettencourt  
OCCC  
President

*“Volunteers  
working  
together really  
make a  
difference.”*

## President's Message

As we approach Lantern Tour season, I am pleased to report that a number of volunteers have stepped forward to help with this, our largest fundraising effort of each year. This year's tours promise to be great.

Thanks to Jeanne Baldwin (Archives), we have a new method of taking tickets. In past years this has been one of the most time-consuming jobs. This year, we employed Brown Paper Tickets, an online ticketing service, to handle the job. As of this writing, ticket sales are brisk, with most tours sold out, and with minimal work for volunteers.

Connie Clark and her intrepid troupe of actor-volunteers have planned several new stories for our spots along with a couple of old favorites.

With the heavy spring rains bringing out more weeds plus the reduction in

the number of workers in the Sheriff's Work Crews, we thought for a time that we couldn't keep up. However, Tom and Butch (City staff) and Adopt-A-Plot and gardening volunteers worked hard to keep the weeds down and the paths clear. Our twice-a-month meetings with City staff also help keep us on track. The Cemetery is looking fine.

I wish to thank Native Plant and Rose Garden volunteers for assisting with plot and headstone maintenance in their areas. It has made a big difference. And of course, that's what it takes to keep the Cemetery in good order—to make it a place for people to visit and learn about the history of their City. Volunteers working together really make a difference.

Thank you all.

## Editor's Word

This newsletter is the third since I became Epitaph editor and I need your input. Please send suggestions, ideas and stories to be included in our next issue (due January 1, 2012).

We'll be celebrating the 25th year of our volunteer activities here at the Cemetery in 2012 and I'd like to publish stories of how far we've come in that time.

With the formation of the OCCC non-profit, we've been able to fund-raise to do accomplish a variety of

things; headstone repair, installation of informational and commemorative plaques, and various items (benches, etc.) in the Cemetery. We've also established the Adopt-A-Plot program and three formal gardens, opened and staffed the Archives and Visitor's Center.

What's your story? Let me know and we'll include in next year's Epitaph.

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

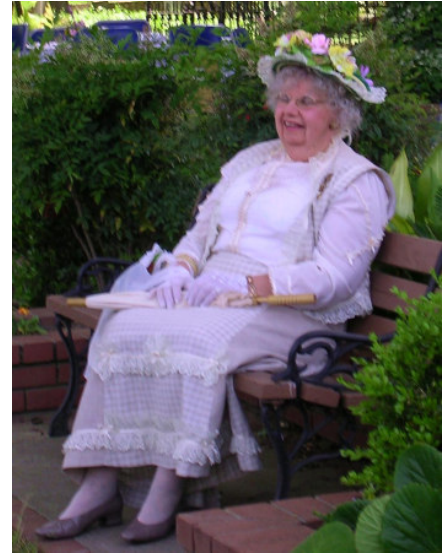
## Fran Pendleton—Volunteer Extraordinaire

We lost a dear friend and volunteer this spring with the passing of Fran Pendleton who was laid to rest in the Historic City Cemetery in June.

One of the original Cemetery volunteers, Fran was an original herself. An inveterate baseball fan, she knew more statistics about the game than a sports almanac. Her Cemetery tours of baseball players were always popular.

She was an excellent seamstress, and constructed her own historically accurate costumes. She offered ideas and suggestions to ensure the verisimilitude and historical accuracy of our events.

Over twenty years, Fran participated in a variety of activities; conducting tours, researching stories, and playing parts with panache—from Margaret Crocker to Queen Victoria. We will miss her.



## Upcoming Events

### OCTOBER

October first kicks off Fall with the Archives Crawl, an opportunity for visitors to view rare historic documents from twenty-two historical archives on display at four sites: the Center For Sacramento History, the Sacramento Room (Central Library), California State Archives and California State Library.

The same day, Dr. Bob LaPerriere will conduct a medical bag tour at the Cemetery (10 a.m.) Other October events:

- October 8—Firefighter Memorial Program
- October 8—Rose Classification Class—Part 2
- October 15—What's blooming tour
- October 15—Family History Day
- October 21,22,28 & 29—Lantern Tours

### NOVEMBER

- November 12—Medal of Honor Recipients Tour
- November 19—Fall Color in the Rose Garden

### DECEMBER

On December 3, Rose Garden volunteers will conduct a hands-on class on pruning of old garden roses. 10 a.m. in the Rose Garden

### 2012

2012 is the 25th anniversary of the Old City Cemetery Committee and of our volunteer efforts in the Historic City Cemetery. It is also the 20th anniversary of the Historic Rose Garden. A number of events are in the planning stages for next year. Details will be posted on the website and in this newsletter.

# Volunteer News

*from Sharon Patrician*

## Volunteers Needed For:

- LANTERN TOURS
- VISITOR'S CENTER
- ARCHIVES & RESEARCH
- HISTORY TOURS
- HAMILTON SQUARE GARDEN
- ROSE GARDEN
- NATIVE PLANT GARDEN
- ADOPT-A-PLOT
- OCCC COMMITTEES—RESTORATION, PUBLICITY, SALES, ETC. ETC.

### BIWEEKLY CITY MEETINGS

You are all welcome at the City staff and Adopt A Plot volunteer meetings held the second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 9 a.m. at the Visitor Center. If you have any questions or concerns and cannot attend, please pass them to me and I'll inform City staff.

### VISITOR CENTER NEEDS VOLUNTEERS

Please contact Sharon for more information about working in the Visitor Center. We are considering a weekend only schedule for the winter months (November through February) and can always use more help.

### VOLUNTEER HOURS

Please call or email me to report monthly volunteer hours. Volunteer hours are reported to the City and tell just how hard we're working at the Cemetery, so it's important to report your hours.

### LANTERN TOUR VOLUNTEERS

Our fabulous October Lantern Tours are fast approaching. We need volunteers to usher our guests on 16 tours (four tours a night, four weekend nights – October 21, 22, 28 & 29), help with food service, take tickets and other tasks as needed. Contact Sharon to sign up.

### THINKING OF SNEAKING INTO THE CEMETERY....

...on Wednesdays or Thursdays when it's closed? Please don't!! The worker's compensation coverage provided by the City would not be effective should you be there on closed days and you are injured. We are working with the City to have the cemetery open seven days a week; until we have accomplished this goal, please cooperate with the Old City Cemetery Committee and the Historic City Cemetery management.

### GOT A WEEDEATER??

We could use some serious help from those volunteers who have gas-driven weed eaters and want to put in a few hours at the cemetery. The past six months have seen a steep decline in the number of Work Release persons doing their time at the cemetery instead of jail. Blame it on the economy, the budget, politics – whatever. We simply don't have enough people to keep the grass groomed around the plots.

Interested? Contact Sharon or City staff supervisor Tom Thornton at [tthornton@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:tthornton@cityofsacramento.org). You can do the work anytime the cemetery is open, with knowledge by the City or Sharon. Alternatively, you may come in on the weekend and get an assignment. We hope this is a temporary situation, but your help would be so appreciated.

### CONTACT SHARON PATRICIAN VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Phone:  
916-455-8166

Email:  
[Patricianone@att.net](mailto:Patricianone@att.net)

Or leave a message:  
916-448-0811

OCCC Email:  
[info@oldcitycemetery.com](mailto:info@oldcitycemetery.com)

# What's In An Epitaph?

by Judy Eitzen

“What biography is to *history*, an *epitaph* is to biography.”<sup>1</sup>

For thousands of years in cultures around the world, the epitaph has been a significant part of death rituals. Before the development of written language, graves were marked with such items as sticks and rocks or crude marks scraped into stones. As we have learned through archaeological evidence and written records, memorials were an important part of ancient societies – Greek, Egyptian, Roman, and others. Egyptians used hieroglyphs to inscribe the name of the deceased on sarcophagi together with a prayer for the journey into the afterlife. Greeks specified eight forms of grave markers; round columns, rectangular slabs, stelae (carved stones), shrine-shaped stones, huge rectangular stone blocks, marble vases, receptacles for cremains and sarcophagi. Many of these included carved scenes of the lifetime of the deceased as well as written inscriptions.

The epitaph as we know it today became popular as stone carving technology advanced and as reading and writing became prevalent throughout western societies. Markings on gravestones usually provide information about the individual, memorialize his or her life and provide messages for the living. Headstones today may include an encapsulated photograph. The usual information is minimal – due to the size of the stone and the cost of carving – and may include the name of the decedent, date of birth and date of death in addition to an epitaph.

Many famous – and infamous – epitaphs have passed into folklore and are worth sharing. They often give a capsule summary of the person and his or her life. One wonderful example is the epitaph on the grave of Mel Blanc who gave voice to cartoon characters, Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck and others at Warner Brothers. His reads, “That’s all folks!”

Exactly what Porky Pig t-t-t-ried to say at the end of each cartoon.

19<sup>th</sup> century epitaphs however, were often serious and religious in nature. Many include a prayer for ascent to heaven and an end to earthly toil. The content and wording of epitaphs varied by culture, societal norms and cost. One- two- and three-word epitaphs include, “Rest in Peace”, “In Remembrance,” “Gone but not forgotten” or the simple “R.I.P”. Common religious phrases were often used in 19<sup>th</sup> century cemeteries as well. Phrases such as, “Precious Lord take my hand,” “Prepare to meet me in Heaven” and “The Lord is my Shepherd...”

Though most were serious in nature, some early epitaphs include humorous statements such as, “Gone, but not forgiven” and the well-known epitaph from Boot Hill Cemetery in Tombstone, Arizona, “Here lies Lester Moore. Four slugs from a forty-four. No less and no more.”

Sacramento’s Historic City Cemetery contains many stones and markers with a variety of epitaphs from simple ones with names and death dates to the more biographical, such as the stone of Dr. Henry Wayne Nelson, “Dr. Nelson was one of the pioneers of California and stood at the head of his profession in life and died regretted by all.” (Not sure the humor was intentional.) Others tell poignantly of the death of a youth such as the stone of Frank H. Harding who died at 16. “It was wonderful bloom for his years. This promising flower was cut down. And parents drop pitiful tears. While dust unto dust must return.”

Still others hint at some conflict. On a large monument in the plot of Mary Olsen and her husband Jens

(Continued on page 6)



**TYPICAL MARBLE  
CEMETERY HEADSTONE**



**HEADSTONE OF A YOUNG LAWYER INCLUDES JUST HIS NAME AND AGE.**

**THE STACK OF LAWBOOKS SAYS IT ALL.**

## Epitaphs, con't.

*(Continued from page 5)*

is carved, "This is in memory of the wife of Jens R. Olsen who was a true wife to me but she left me to the ways of the world. Eternal rest to you my wife." Interestingly enough, though it includes her age, Mary's name is not carved on the monument and only appears on a smaller stone nearby.

While the majority of headstones and monuments are quite serious, a few hint at humor. The epitaph on the stone of Judge Thomas Conger reads, "I know nothing of a future life, but I have my hopes."

The headstone and monumental epitaphs in Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery are inscribed with hints of the stories that lie behind the stones – epitaphs as an abstract of biography. These are stories of Sacramento's pioneers and epidemics, murders and accidents, the loss of children and the stories of those living well past the 'threescore and ten' of the Old Testament<sup>2</sup>.

When you visit the Cemetery, take time to really look at the stones and read the epitaphs to get a brief idea of how our 19<sup>th</sup> century forbears lived and died. Many stories of these early Sacramentans are available through newspapers, court records and other official documents. Many have been researched by the Cemetery's volunteer archivists. They would love to share some of the stories of our early residents, so do visit...and ask for a story.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Kett wrote the above in *Olla Podrida* ("hodgepodge") a collection of articles printed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by English Clergyman Thomas Munro. Kett went on to say, "It is a sketch which marks the great outlines of character, and excites curiosity to view the portraits as painted on the pages of history."

<sup>2</sup> "The days of our years are three score and ten". *Psalm 90*

*Over the centuries, people have referred to death, graveyards and cemeteries by a variety of slang and euphemistic terms. They include the serious and the humorous:*

Take a dirt nap	Barrow	Marble orchard	A real dead beat
A little slumber	Body dump	Zombie zone	Resting grounds
Truffle Inspector	People Farm	The dread abode	Reaper's paradise
A Place in the Sun	Bone Garden	Motel Deep 6	Worm Farm
The Undiscovered country	Shuffle off this mortal coil	Ye old fossil collection	Dust to dust reunion
A really grave situation	Climb the Golden Stair	Permanent retirement park	Last Pit Stop on the Highway of Life
Assumed Room Temperature	Checked into the Wooden Waldorf	Visiting Davy Jones' locker	Solitary Confinement
Deep 6 Garden	Headstone Park	I told you I was sick	Home to stay
Captive audience	Join the angels	City of Eternal Rest	Bone Orchard

# Repairs in Cemetery Gardens

## NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

from Sabrina Okamura-Johnson

Summer time at the Native Plant demo-garden was reinvigorated by the return of Cassandra Nguyen Musto as a co-chair. On June 24, during National Pollinator Week, we welcomed new Sacramento Valley chapter members and other native garden lovers to "Wine & Cheese with the Bees." This was our first social held in the Garden, and it was a big hit with our raffle prizes, wine and appetizers, great people, and wonderful weather. We look forward to doing this again next year.

As some know, the most coveted service in the historic cemetery is the mason crew. As Cassandra says, "its been several years since the native plant garden received any brick-love". When the City ran out of mortar/cement supplies for weekend mason work in July, we bought our own supplies and were able to get brick work done in the south garden area. The first plot to receive "brick-love" is planted with a California Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*). As indicated in the photo below, the new masonry work provides long overdue structure and bones in this area, where we have quite a bit of work left to do. The brick work continued through August and will continue this fall until the rains stop us.



### Volunteers Needed

Please contact Cassandra if you have mason skills and are willing to work on a plot or two, or if you 'happen' to have bags of cement or mortar you could donate (cassandra\_musto@yahoo.com).

(Continued on page 9)

## HISTORIC ROSE GARDEN

from Cemetery Rose:

Recognizing even permanent structures in cemeteries deteriorate over time, members of the Old City Cemetery Committee established as a primary function, fund-raising for the repair of Cemetery headstones. Cemetery volunteers work with the Ruhkula Monument Company (conveniently located across Broadway) to identify damaged stones and prioritize their repair. Such repairs include re-standing fallen stones, adhering broken stones together, and replacing broken or missing pieces.

As this is an ongoing venture and funds are limited, volunteers from the Rose Garden have taken on plot repairs and repair of some broken stones. Anita Clevenger, Rose Garden Manager, toured the Garden with RoyceAnn Birks of Ruhkula and identified three stones for repair. In July, Ruhkula workers did the work and now three more are completed.

The marble Tieman stone was epoxied in the past and the edges pretty worn, so the repair is not perfect, but fixing it now should prevent further weathering along the break. Peter H. Tieman was born in Prussia and died February 15, 1871 at Mace's Ranch of a congestive fever. Mace's Ranch, in what is now Davis, was the eastern part of a Mexican Land Grant, Rancho Laguna de Santos Calle made to Marcos and Manuel Vaca.

One of the roses on the plot was found at the Elder Creek Cemetery under the found name, "Carlson-Posy Plot", referring to the cemetery plot in that cemetery. It was identified as 'Fun Jwan Lo', a rose imported to California by Frank Meyer. The second rose is 'R. Spithamea', a recent planting of a species rose known as a 'fire follower', often appearing after wild fires.

The Seth and Elisa Boswell stone in plot 71 had to be reset in cement and is now upright again. The Boswells were born in England and immigrated to California in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of the 1870 census they resided in Elliott – now a ghost town in San Joaquin County. Nancy died of typhoid twelve years to the day after her husband. The two

(Continued on page 9)

THIS STORY IS  
ONE OF SEVERAL  
RESEARCHED AND  
WRITTEN BY  
RILEY HUDSON,  
SUMMER INTERN  
IN THE CEMETERY  
ARCHIVES.

# The Wilder Burning

by Riley Hudson

On the day of August 6, 1902, an improvised court-room was established beneath the trees of a ranch situated about four miles out of Galt in San Joaquin County, just across the Sacramento County line. Justice Garretson held the inquest there. In sight sat the charred and unrecognizable remains of Mrs. Katie Wilder, and her children Beth, 5, Richard, 3, and Frank, 3 months, as well as the Wilder ranch house. Just hours before, the previous day, the house and all its inhabitants stood whole and healthy.

George Wilder, 35, husband and father to the deceased, spilled the events of the tragic night in sobs with the help of corroborating witnesses. Wilder's story went thus; throughout the past year, Mrs. Wilder had expressed a fear of breast cancer, a fear purveyed by the occurrence of her father's death by throat cancer, though there was nothing to confirm her conviction but a small inflamed elevation of the skin (or pimple).

The night before, she had complained of breast pains and, embracing her husband of six years, told him that she and the children would all soon be going to a happier place. He had suggested getting a doctor, but she refused. She kissed him good-night around 1 a.m. and left for her bedroom, which she shared with the children. Mr. Wilder retired to his own room, and slept until smoke woke him about two hours later. He immediately went to the room where his family lay, and yelled to them, but received no answer. Flames 'burst in' and he rushed out of the house and went around to a

side window. There was nothing he could do.

Dressed only in an undershirt, Wilder went to the granary to put on a cast-off pair of overalls and old shoes before running to his neighbor, Mike Howery, for help. He met Howery, who had seen the flames, on the way over, and they went back to the fire together. They saved nearby buildings. All that remained to be salvaged in the house was \$200 worth of gold and change all melted together. Wilder, appropriately grief-stricken, thought his wife had set the fire, and others speculated that she must have drugged herself and the children to prevent their waking up amidst the flames. Wilder claims that he was not aware of any drugs in the house.

However, on August 8, another inquest was held because the District Attorney and some jurors were suspicious of Wilder. Wilder admitted to nailing down the windows in the house before it was destroyed as well as to arguing with his wife until one o'clock in the morning, and he emphasized his wife's despondency and talk of a 'better place'. Some were convinced Wilder had not made any real effort to save his family. Also, Mrs. Wilder's mother and sister testified to her usual good spirits the day before she died. Speculations were of the opinion that perhaps Wilder himself was the culprit.

On August 10, the very depressed George Wilder committed suicide before breakfast and was found by his nephew, who had been sent to fetch Wilder to the table to eat un-

*(Continued on page 9)*

## Gardens, con't.

*(Continued from page 7)*

To lighten weekend management work, we really need more volunteers willing and able to come out one Saturday or Sunday a month at 7:45 a.m. to muster with Sheriff work crews and manage a team of 2 to 4 men in the Native Plant Garden. Please contact Sabrina (soj@surewest.net) for more info about weekend garden management. As always help with our ongoing garden activities: pruning, mulching, weeding, deadheading, plantings and seed collection is always appreciated.

### NEEDS

We are currently in need of: new or lightly used garden tools and equipment (rakes, shovels, hula-hoes, hand tools, etc.), and masonry equipment and supplies (stakes, trowels, string, and bags of mortar/cement).

Thanks to all our dedicated summer volunteers: Bridgette Dinaberg, Renate Sperlich, Dana Nolan, Jessica Yoder, Margaux McClure, Andy Phillips, Jennifer Hogan, Bernadette Balics, Bonnie Ross, Paul Barth, Mitchell Alford, Chris Johnson, Michael Okamura, John Alatorre, Michael Musto, Paul Townsend, and our weekday weeders.

As always, we hope to see you in the garden soon.

*(Continued from page 7)*

Polyantha roses on the plot, 'Pink Soupert' and 'Eglantine' were donated by Fred Boutin and are part of the 1992 planting.

The Kirkpatrick stone has a beautifully carved and preserved piece that lay face-down for years. Typical of the period the carving depicts a husband and wife handclasp. It is wonderful to have it be visible again. Nancy (from Kentucky) and James (from Indiana) Kirkpatrick settled in Brighton, an area just south of what is now CSU Sacramento where James was a farmer. 'Shailer's Provence' a strongly scented centifolia rose found in Minnesota is planted on this plot.



## Wilder Fire, cont.

*(Continued from page 8)*

der the watchful eye of his family. Wilder had tied a rope to a rafter over a large pile of mowed hay, fastened a noose around his neck and jumped off, falling a distance of seven feet, breaking his neck. Wilder was cut down quickly, and was still alive when was found. He survived only a few moments.

Katie McLanahan Wilder is buried in the Old City Cemetery. Her husband is buried elsewhere. (see box) Wilder's full name was George Donner Wilder, and his mother had been a member of the ill-fated Donner party, one of the few survivors. Wilder's father was well-known and highly respected in the locality.

**George Wilder was born in El Dorado County and is buried in the Elk Grove Consumnes Cemetery in Elk Grove.**

**His epitaph reads,**

**Farewell, loved one, farewell,  
To-day our hearts are sad,  
We part on earth to meet in heaven,  
Where all shall be made glad.**

**His parents, Elitha C. Donner Wilder and Benjamin W. Wilder (both of whom survived the death of their son) are buried there as well.**



**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.*

We're On the Web  
[www.oldcitycemetery.com](http://www.oldcitycemetery.com)

# Volunteers

## OPPORTUNITIES

If you are a history buff, interested in preservation and love old cemeteries—join our volunteers. You will have an opportunity to learn and share your knowledge of Sacramento's Outdoor Museum with visitors and students.

There are many ways to use your time and talents at the Historic City Cemetery:

- Share your passion for learning—research historical tales in the Archives and conduct Saturday history tours
- Host the Visitor's Center—greet and orient visitors to the cemetery.
- Share your research skills—spend time at the Archives researching stories of our residents.
- Love native plants? Roses? Perennials? Spend Saturday mornings in one of the formal garden areas.

## PERKS

Cemetery Volunteers have many perks:

- Opportunity to use your own special talents as a gardener, researcher, historian, teacher.
- Spend time with others who share your interests in roses, native plants, history or cemeteries.
- Knowledge that your work helps preserve an important historical resource and artifacts from the early days of Sacramento.
- Appreciation from your fellow volunteers and the City.