

FRIENDS OF PIONEER CEMETERY

The Salem Foundation Charitable Trust
Pioneer Trust Bank, N.A., Trustee
PO Box 2305, Salem OR 97308

Inventory Opens Way for Tree Care Protocols

An urgent goal to improve maintenance of the cemetery's natural asset in tree cover was given an all-important boost at the end of the year when Patricia Farrell, Manager of the Parks Planning and Natural Resources unit of the Public Works Dept., authorized a comprehensive tree inventory to be conducted as complement to the City's broader tree stock-taking efforts.



In November, Don Gunther (*pictured to the left*), tree-trimmer in the Parks Operations and Recreation Services unit, was tapped to do the field work. With the help of Rob Romanek of the Parks Planning unit,

who modified the City's database attributes for the project spread sheet, Gunther produced a summary report, a map, and spread sheet to identify the type, species, and condition of each of the cemetery's 229 trees, whether naturally-seeded or an introduced ornamental, such as the Kwanzan cherry trees that line the central drive.

In recent years, the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery had noted a die-off of several cedars in the lower grounds closest to the Commercial Street arterial. It was not clear whether these were casualties of long exposure to
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Donors Sustain Growth of Endowed Fund

Earning power of the Pioneer Cemetery Fund of the Salem Foundation Charitable Trust was boosted considerably in 2019 by a generous contribution of \$10,000 from the **Yoshikai Family Trust**. Together with support from sixty-five community donors, the input amounted to \$18,105 in total. At year's end, the fund's market value exceeded the recent baseline level of \$800,000 at \$892,990. In calendar year 2019, endowment proceeds provided the City of Salem (cemetery steward and titleholder) with \$12,834.26 that supplemented budgeted public monies to cover headstone repairs and start-up of a schedule for periodic repair and repainting of cast-iron burial plot enclosures.

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Cemetery Fixture Sheds Light on Historic Chinese Funerary Customs

In 2019, the Salem Community Development Dept. added significantly to its ongoing efforts to document the funerary traditions of Salem's historic Chinese community. Under the direction of Kimberli Fitzgerald, Historic Preservation Officer and City Archaeologist, a modest test excavation showed the concrete platform that functioned as a ritual table on Plot 660 from the late 1800s into the 1920s was placed on a foundation that included fired brick.

On April 6, the second annual Qingming Festival engaged the Chinese community and public-at-large as traditional rituals were conducted, including presentation of flowers to honor ancestors and burning of incense and paper by which means smoke symbolically conveys prayers for the departed souls to the spirit world. Salem Mayor Chuck Bennett opened the ceremonies, and Myron Lee, Juwen Zhang, and Raymond Lin addressed the gathering to explain the symbolism of time-honored customs and reflect on the contributions and life experiences of the Chinese in Oregon history.

Subsequently, the Community Development Department affixed durable, all-weather vinyl posters to front and back sides of an irrigation control box standing within view of the ground-level ritual table situated adjacent to the north fence line. The project resourcefully enlisted an existing utility fixture on the grounds to serve a second purpose: that of bilingual interpretive kiosk for the benefit of visitors.



Left: Looking NE from the irrigation control box to site of funerary table adjacent to the north fence line.



Right: Vinyl wrap poster, north side of control box located off north side lane.

Improving the Grounds Contractor of Record and FOPC Field Volunteers



During the 2019 field season, contractor of record Jeff Hilts and Bob Oakes, subcontractor, undertook the first steps in carrying out the City's plan for repair, treatment, and cyclical maintenance of historic metal craft in the cemetery. The plan was prepared in 2018 by consulting

architect Robert Dortignacq for the Salem Public Works Department with a match-fund grant from the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries. Fencing for the graves of Joseph and Ruth DeVol was manufactured by the Oregon Iron Works of East Portland from a popular pattern of the 1880s. Since the Oregon manufacturer is no longer in operation, the consultant located in-stock panels of matching pattern at a foundry in Alabama. Subsequently, Jeff Hilts ordered panels to fill gaps in the damaged fence (he is pictured above at the DeVol enclosure, Plot 887, planning the sequence for dismantling the assembly).



Oxidized paint of the E.N. Cooke Mausoleum forecourt fence before treatment by Bob Oakes was completed in 2019.



The cemetery's finest example of decorative cast iron encloses the forecourt of the mausoleum erected in the 1870s for pioneer industrialist E.N. Cooke, Plot 116-117. The fence had been refurbished last in 2012 by Bob Oakes, then on the City Parks Operations staff. After eight years, it was due for the advised surface preparation and application of protective rust-inhibiting primer and paint layers. Treatments completed in 2019 included resetting several stone foundation blocks to bring the downslope fence line back into proper alignment.

In 2019, the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery (FOPC) field unit continued grounds work on a schedule of three days a month, March through October under the direction of co-leaders Dale Palmquist and Mark Fields. Eliminating invasive vines and weeds, trimming hedges, removing moss and other biological growth from pavements and headstones, pruning overgrown shrubbery, and seasonal tending of the cemetery's heritage roses, was carried out by twelve regular volunteers with occasional support from area youth fulfilling community service goals. Between them, the FOPC volunteer cohort and Jeff Hilts Marker Setting tallied fifteen headstone straightening and repair projects to their credit.



FOPC volunteers and Jeff Hilts, the City's contractor for professional headstone repairs, paused during field work on October 12 for a group portrait. Left to right, front row: Dale Palmquist, Pat Norman and Claudine Shaw. Back row: Mark Fields, Harold Otto, Rosa Frank, Fred Klatz, Gloria Hilts, Jeff Hilts, and Brian Sund. Others who regularly joined the field work in 2019 were Virginia Slaughter, Sue Apodaca, and Ellen Stevens.

In Memoriam

Respectfully, and with regret, we note the passing of our friends and supporters as information is available.

Jean West McHugh	(July 6, 1918-July 20, 2007)
Mary A. Magers	(Jan. 5, 19-Nov. 29, 2011)
Audrey M. Theurer	(Jan. 28, 1928-Mar. 16, 2018)
Ann Graham Rolander	(Nov. 23, 1924-Dec. 28, 2018)
Betty L. Corey	(March 8, 1921-Jan. 14, 2019)
Norma Paulus	(Mar. 13, 1933-Feb. 28, 2019)
Frances A. Cooper	(Jan. 1, 1918-March 29, 2019)
Ruby Zetterberg	(Aug. 24-1922-Mar. 31, 2019)
Robert L. Maxey	(July 27, 1929-April 9, 2019)
Henry M. Yoshikai	(Nov. 6, 1926-April 20, 2019)
Evelyn Melson Franz	(Nov. 30, 1919-May 1, 2019)
Alice Crane Verret	(April 21, 1930-May 19, 2019)
Catherine Olcott	(1925 – 2019)
Marylou McKay Green	(March 27, 1927-Aug. 5, 2019)

Tree Inventory and Sudden Oak Collapse

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tail pipe emissions from traffic on the Commercial Street arterial, irrigation issues, blight, or a combination of factors. Adding to the sense of urgency for getting a



Don Gunther examines old fungus brackets on mature native white oak.

grip on the overall condition of trees in the cemetery had been the sudden and spectacular collapse, due to a biological inclusion (decayed heartwood), of a 170+ year old white oak on S½ Plot 636 in June.

When the tree crashed to the ground, its massive limb fall and debris were spread across a plat grid of as many as sixteen burial plots on the south side of the central drive. No one was present at the time, and although several monuments were skewed or overturned, each escaped damage and was slated for resetting.

At the time of the first five-acre plat acquisition from the land claim of Methodist missionary David Leslie in 1854, native oaks, seemingly mixed with Douglas fir,

were cleared by cemetery founders, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. As the grounds expanded, non-native conifers were introduced to cleared areas by natural process.

Naturally-seeded Douglas fir, Port Orford cedar, and



incense cedar, *White oak with decayed trunk core exposed.* along with white oaks, and madrones, are dominant members of the tree cover today.

Now that an inventory is in hand with which to monitor the health of the trees, expert guidance and cooperation from the Public Works Department's Urban Forester and Horticultural Technician will be sought for applying best practices to appropriately care for the natural assets that distinguish the Pioneer Cemetery landscape.



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Two days after the June 22 weekend collapse of the mighty white oak on Plot 636, crews of Mountain View Tree Service finished the final phase of clearance and clean up. The grey granite monument of Peter and Sadie Emerson on Plot 665 had been swiveled on its base by heavy limb fall. It was later restored to proper alignment by Jeff Hiltz and the FOPC crew.

ABOUT THIS MAILING

Friends of Pioneer Cemetery provides this annual report for your information in association with the City of Salem Parks Operations and Recreation Services section, Public Works Department. If you wish to contribute to the Pioneer Cemetery Fund, make additions or corrections to the mailing list, or request that your name be removed from the list, a return envelope is provided for your convenience.

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