

Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries

Meeting Minutes

Holiday Inn-Portland Airport
8439 NE Columbia Blvd, Portland OR
April 16, 2009 / 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Kendell Phillips, Judy Juntunen-Chair, Dirk Siedlecki-Vice Chair, Robert Keeler, Lynn Reagan, Diana LaSarge

STAFF: Kuri Gill, Roger Roper

GUESTS AND PROPONENTS: Stanley Clarke, Ruth Bishop, Carol Surrency, Judy Goldman, Tammie Phillips, Glen Jones, Peri Muhich, Anne LeVant Prahl, Addie Rickey

Call to Order and Introductions

Chairwoman Judy Juntunen gave opening remarks and called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. All Commissioners, staff and guests introduced themselves.

Approval of March Minutes

There were corrections to the March minutes. Copies of the minutes were headed “Agenda” and should be headed “Minutes”.

Dirk’s comments should read “the next meeting might be a project or tour in one of the attending represented cemeteries”. Also regarding the award for the Jacksonville Cemetery it should read “the Jacksonville Cemetery Living History Tours were awarded an Ovation Award for Oregon’s Best Heritage Event by the Festivals and Events Association.

Diana’s comments should read “completed the grant that funded the documentation of the Catholic Cemetery on the reservation. The CTUIR board of trustees is going to allow her to continue this work on the other cemeteries on Tribal lands”. **The minutes will stand approved as corrected.**

Additions to the Agenda

There were no corrections or additions to the Agenda

The Oregon Jewish Museum Oral History Project Presentation – Judy Margles gave a presentation on how this project came into being, the museum’s collection, photos and how to extract information from cemeteries in a very unique way. The Museum was a recipient of an Oregon Heritage Grant received on their Oral History Project in the Cemetery.

Commissioner Comments/Reports

- **Dirk** reported a tour has been arranged of the Phoenix Pioneer Cemetery and as well as a get-together lunch at the Genealogy Library where people will get to see projects and things that the representatives have been talking about. This will also be a chance for Cemetery and Genealogy folks to connect with each other.

The “Take Care of Oregon” Day and Cemetery Clean-up has had a great response throughout the Southern Oregon area and there’s been lots of coverage in the Press.

There will be a two day “meet and greet” during Memorial Day in the cemetery where volunteers will help family and friends coming for the Holiday to locate gravesites of loved ones. Flags are also put on all of the Veterans graves. May is also National Preservation Month and walking tours are given to highlight restoration/preservation work done & currently in progress by volunteers.

The film “On Paper Wings” has been very successful and Ilana Sol will be coming to Jacksonville to do screenings on Friday and Saturday as a fundraiser for the Cemetery project. Four screenings will be done and it may be extended depending on the response from the community.

A new Heritage Bulletin has been drafted on organizing cemetery clean-ups and/or any other types of clean-ups, which may be out by Memorial Day.

- **Bob Keeler** reported that he is working with Judy Goldman on setting up a Commissioner meeting at the Washington County Museum on the 1st of July. It will be an initial “meet and greet” but future meetings will be planned based on the turn out and expressed interests.

He attended the OPRD Commission meeting along with Kuri, Judy and Roger. Kuri gave a slide presentation about the work of the Cemetery Commission and the Parks Commission was favorably impressed with the Grants and Cemeteries Programs.

He will be attending the Association for Gravestone Studies National Conference in June with Judy. A presentation will be given about the work of the Commission as Oregon is the only state that has a citizen Commission. The Conference will be held in Schenectady, NY and it will be good to converse with people involved in their state and know how their states manage or don’t manage Historic Cemeteries.

There was a class at Clackamas Community College where a course called “Death and Dying” was taught. He gave a lecture in the class on the work of the Commission and the audience was very receptive. He encouraged Commissioners to look at local community colleges, get in touch with instructors and make them

aware of their existence, the work of the Commission and about Historic Cemeteries in general.

- **Diana** reported that she is working on getting a brown bag get-together arranged before the next meeting. Nothing new is happening in her area.
- **Judy** reported that at Crystal Lake Cemetery, their part-time employee has been taking an Access class to do more work on their database. As part of Historic Preservation month on Saturday May 23rd there will be a fact finding mission to have people stationed throughout the cemetery that would have information about a particular person and everyone can go around to different stations throughout the cemetery and answer the questions. The prize will be a year's membership in the Benton County Historical Museum as well as a behind the scenes tour of the new storage facility.

The American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign War will host the Memorial Day Service that will take place at the Crystal Lake Cemetery at 10:00 a.m. This year, The Arnold Air Society might help in flagging the Mt. Union Cemetery.

There are three brochures about Crystal Lake Cemetery: A general History, The Civil War connection and Iconology (Symbolism). There are funds for a fourth brochure and the brochure will be done on children and talk about the high incidents of child mortality and why it was so dangerous of being a child in the 19th and early 20th century.

- **Kendall** reported that he attended a re-dedication of a gravestone in Days Creek on March 20, 2009. He was contacted about the Palome Cemetery and the man who contacted him thought it would be a great project for the Grange to be involved with. Several cemeteries have contacted him to help them write grants.
- **Lynn** reported that he took a trip to the local Cemetery to find out why it wasn't listed and discovered that there are five 1878 graves there. He plans to meet with the board of exhibitors to see what they need to do to get it listed. Shortly after that appointment he received a phone call from a man that turned out to be a distant relative and that his Grandmother was a sister to his great, great Grandfather and was invited to their family reunion.

He mentioned to Judy that he would like to be notified of anything going on at Bellefontaine, a cemetery in her county, as his first original ancestors are buried there as well as his wife's relatives.

Dowsing research report

Kendall reported on his research of dowsing for graves and also showed the dowsing rods that he uses. The rods are copper with free-motion handles that move where motioned to move. He's been very successful and has had his abilities tested by the Laurel Cemetery Association. In his research, he contacted the American Dowsing Society who told him to

contact Mike Doddy. He was sent information that dowsing for graves is not valid and that the procedure of dowsing for graves using any form of stick, rod or any such thing does not work. The scientific community doesn't believe in this but by trying it, he has obtained good results.

During the write-up of his first cemetery book, he had read ODOT's book on Cemeteries throughout the State. He contacted an elderly gentleman that knew of the Old Selma Cemetery location. By using his dowsing stick he had found 5-6 distinct graves out in what might now be the Fort Hayes Cemetery. The gentleman who knew of the cemetery location remembered a white-washed fence being there around the cemetery and during the visit there, just under the soil, was found remnants of the white-washed fence.

Outreach Discussion

The outreach discussion was tabled due to time constraints and to give the public time to give comments.

Public Comment

Carol commented that she wanted to make people aware that the plans are going forward to have Jonathan as a conservator in the area at the end of May. He will be doing a training on Conservation. There will be one in Washington County and one in Coos Bay.

Glenn commented that a Genealogical Society in Washington received a grant of \$8,000.00 to restore the Historic Old Vancouver City Cemetery. The work will begin with better weather and will be completed by the Fall. \$4,000.00 needs to be raised in matching funds. They are partnering with the Masonic Lodge in Vancouver, with the Grange and the Elks Alliance Clubs to help with raising funds. Once done, they are hoping to have a re-dedication. Future projects depend on funding.

Peri commented that in June, the Vancouver Heritage Ambassador will be adding a summer tour on Flag Day, focusing on the patriot military people buried in the southeast and southwest sections of the cemetery. On May 17th there will be a cemetery clean-up at the cemetery with lunch from 12-1 and then a workshop from 1-3 pm. She asked for contacts, guidance and suggestions of people to connect with in Washington. They are currently working with the City of Vancouver which is excited to see people interested to do volunteer work.

Commissioners suggested contacting the Oregon SHPO and in Olympia, Washington contact the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and remind them historic cemeteries are part of the work they do and to ask for assistance. Kuri commented that the legislation to reduce fees to non-profit organizations is still alive and going through the legislative process.

Addie mentioned that everything on their website has been high-jacked and asked for advice on what to do against this happening. Kuri commented that this is a reminder to be aware of those sites that let people just post items on the web so be careful and to look out for yourself. There are several websites that do not have correct information.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.