

Lee Mission Cemetery Newsletter

June 2014



Lee Mission Cemetery 2204 D Street Salem, OR 97301

From the President:

As being a part of the cemetery Board of Directors for over 36 years, it is very gratifying to see how the grounds have been improved over those years. Prior to the time I had begun to serve on the board there were many articles on the newspaper editorial page complaining about the neglect and disrepair of the cemetery. It has been through the efforts of the Board of Directors, though many have come and gone over the years, the consistency of concern regarding the appearance of the cemetery remains constant. It takes a concerted effort to maintain the area including but not only, repairing holes cut in the fences, headstones either vandalized or tipping from age, trimming shrubs, and the regular mowing and edging of the grass. None of this work is accomplished without help from Jerry Shay, our grounds keeper, and the volunteers who come annually to assist us with whatever needs to be done.

Salem Frist United Methodist Church put together a work party on May 10th as part of their Heritage Day. Eight volunteers came to work in the "Diamond Square" area hoeing, raking and spreading bark dust. In addition, some time was spent along the west fence clearing the driving area of blackberries and other vines. Thanks to each of the workers for their great effort in cleaning the area.

The Fairgrounds Latter Day Saints church group came to work on May 17th with a work party of over 30 volunteers for their annual support of cleaning the cemetery prior to Memorial Day. The center circle received much of the attention. It was in need of weeding and raking. Headstones were trimmed and other areas of the cemetery were cleaned up as well. This group has helped us each of the last 6 years and they are so much appreciated. This year the project was under the direction and supervision of Kevin Rack.

The Board of Directors appreciates all the efforts on our behalf.

A special thank you is due cemetery neighbors, John Merrill and Page Merrill, for their help in opening our gate each morning and securing it in the evenings. John has spoken to several of the neighbors regarding looking out for the cemetery and some have agreed to watch for unauthorized visitors after the gates are closed. We think this will be a great help to prevent vandalism and other activities that are not healthy.

The 2013 George Strozut Award for Preservation granted by Willamette Heritage Center at the Mill, is a testament to the support and efforts of many people over the years to protect this historical site.



Willamette Heritage Center Board President Ted Stang presents the 2013 George Strozut Award for Preservation to Lee Mission Cemetery. Jim Momyer accepts the award on behalf of the cemetery. The award is “In recognition for their maintenance, preservation, and interpretation of the legacy of this historic Salem cemetery.”



Pillar Restoration

As most of you know who have received this newsletter in the past, I have written often about the need to repair the brick pillars at the opening of our driveway. It is now beyond time that we seriously get down to making a plan for restoration. Money is always an issue when it comes to a project as large as this and a budget has not yet been set, however if you wish, you may contribute to that specific project. We are looking for a Brick Mason organization willing to give us a hand in doing the work. If any of our readers know of some resource we would appreciate hearing from you. Once we get an idea of actual costs we will solicit grants to help fund the project. Jim Momyer can be reached at (503)871-5639. All restoration must meet board approval.

Memorial Day 2014

WHAT ARE ALL THOSE “OTHER” FLAGS?

by Mimi Stang



Working at the cemetery on Memorial Day weekend, one of the most common questions was, “What are all those other flags; the ones with the red cross?”

These flags are Christian flags and they denote graves that are very special to our Lee Mission Cemetery. They are marking the graves of the nearly 100 clergymen who are buried there. Many of them were early day Methodist missionaries, beginning with Rev. Jason Lee, of course. Diamond Square at the back of the cemetery is the burial site of Jason Lee, his first wife Anna Maria Pittman Lee, who died in child birth, and his second wife Lucy Thompson Lee, and a number of early day pioneers and clergy.

During the early years of the cemetery, probably because Jason Lee and his wives were already buried there, Lee Mission Cemetery became the most prominent burial site for many of Salem’s clergymen. Today these clergy graves are scattered throughout the cemetery and include at least one woman, Rev. Grace Weaver, who died in 2006.

We are very proud to have so many clergy buried at Lee Mission Cemetery and are pleased to note their legacy each Memorial Day weekend by placing these Christian flags on their graves. Combined with about 100 Veteran’s flags it makes a very colorful display.

Found!

by Mimi Stang



Anna Maria Pittman headstone

After disappearing some years ago we thought that Anna Maria Pittman's tombstone was lost forever. We have Rev. Jason Lee's original stone in our cemetery storage shed and have put it out on display a few times. It is broken but can be displayed flat; but we did not have hers.

What a wonderful surprise to get a message recently from Kylie Pine, the Curator at Willamette Heritage Center, that she had found Anna Maria Pittman's tombstone at WHC. Seems it was stored up in the rafters and no one had climbed up for years to look and see who it belonged to. We had been told that it was at WHC but no one seemed to know just where it was. And we had never seen it.

So, the lost is found, and, hopefully, one day in the near future in conjunction with WHC, we can display both Jason Lee's and his wife's, Anna Maria Pittman Lee's, side by side. It is a good feeling to know that it is really not lost after all. Both stones are truly treasures.



Donations

Lee Mission Cemetery is a 501(c)13 not-for-profit Corporation. All donations are tax deductible.

100% of donations made to the cemetery go toward improvement and maintenance. Officers and board members volunteer their time.

Lee Mission Cemetery
P O Box 2011
Salem, OR 97308

Lee Mission Cemetery is licensed through the
Oregon State Mortuary Board
Phone: 971-673-1500

Board of Directors:

Jim Momyer, President
Mimi Stang, Secretary
Tom Bowers
Phyllis Gillis
Pat Glass
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for lot purchases and concerns about the cemetery

Web Site:

<http://www.leemissioncemetery.com/>
Webmaster: Stephenie Flora
email: SLFlora47@msn.com to share information
about those buried at the cemetery. Questions,
comments and corrections are welcome.

Newsletter:

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