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EDITORIALS

Dignity for a landmark

SOMETIMES THERE seems to be a statute of limitations on our respect for the dead. After all, the time comes, doesn't it, when they are simply someone else's dead, or the dead of the dead?

No, it doesn't. We hate to think Americans have come to this state of mind, though the disgraceful history of the Union Cemetery at Woodside Road near El Camino Real in Redwood City in recent decades suggests that some of us have. A few Redwood City citizens have pushed for years for maintaining the grounds, but not until Monday did the City Council show signs of doing something serious about it.

The cemetery was established in 1859. There are thought to be something like 2,000 people buried there — most of them before 1930 — including 40 Civil War veterans. It has long been a California Historical Landmark and in 1983 was put on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. When the register classification came through, it seemed to suggest extra protection for the cemetery and a better chance at federal funds for restoration.

Sounds good, doesn't it? But in recent decades the burial grounds have looked like a battlefield of the Civil War or a training ground for the International Association of Vandalism. Desecration has been commonplace amidst strangling weeds and scattered garbage.

On Monday the council reviewed proposals by Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco for putting the cemetery back in shape, ranging from a worthy entrance and lighting to paths and landscaping. The total cost would be about \$350,000.

And who will pay for it? So far the federal and state governments have not helped, and prospects for significant aid in the future are not good. So unless a measure allowing city bond issues is approved by California voters this year, Redwood City will have to pay. The council set aside \$58,000 last year. Obviously much more is needed.

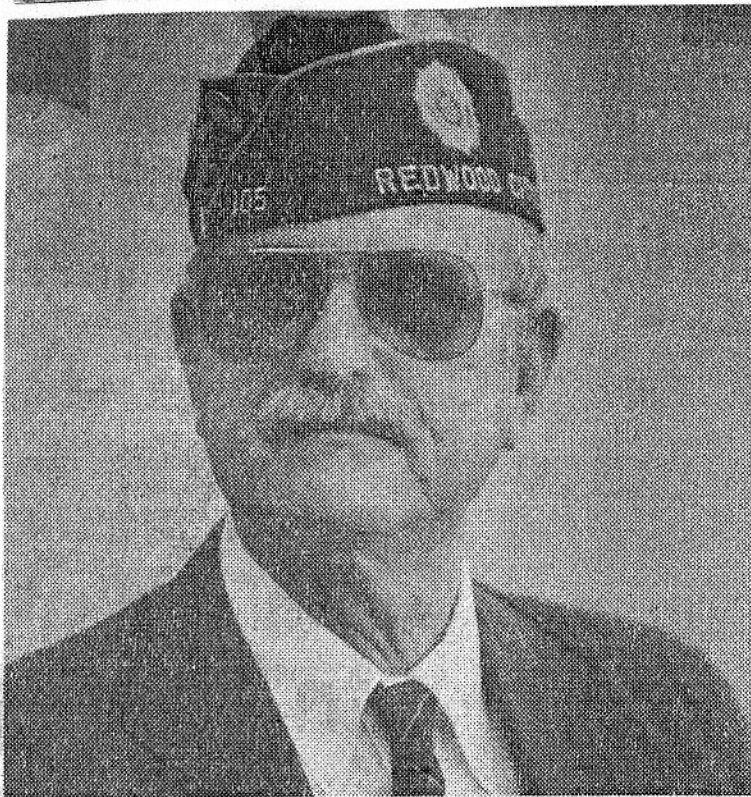
We are particularly pleased that Mayor Brent Britschgi and other council members seem enthusiastic about the new project and hope they will soon make Union Cemetery a true landmark of distinction in the community.

Redwood City July 1, 1987
TRIBUNE

Memorial Day prayer in Congressional

Record
7-21-87
RC
Tribune

July 1, 1987



Tribune staff photo by Bob Andres

Jack Wildman (above) read a Memorial Day prayer at Union Cemetery that U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos, among others, found deeply touching.

Following is the prayer written and read on Memorial Day by Jack Wildman, which has been entered as Vol. 133, No. 89 in the Congressional Record:

Please join me in prayer. Almighty God, giver of all victories, we thank you for the opportunities that abide in our land, and for your guidance in the times of peril when our nation has been threatened. Today, we remember

the men and women who followed the flag during these times of peril and the price they paid for the freedoms we enjoy today.

We gather here today amid the grave markers of those who fought to preserve our nation over 100 years ago at places such as Bull Run, Shiloh and Gettysburg, and our prayer turns to other men in other wars that preserved our nation, the men who stood at Belleau Wood, St. Mihiel and the Argonne Forest. We remember the men and women who served our country a generation later around the world from Guadalcanal and the sands of Iwo Jima to the Normandy beach-heads and the snow-covered village of Bastogne. We stand in reverence to the men who answered their country's call and served at the Pusan perimeter and Inchon and the Yalu River. We hold before you, oh Lord, those who suffered our most recent war and we remember the Tet Offensive and places such as the Mekong Delta and Da Nang.

On May 25 of this year, Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Burlingame, was among those who attended the Memorial Day service held by American Legion Post 105 of Redwood City at the city's Union Cemetery. On June 3, he made the following speech in the House of Representatives:

Mr. Lantos (speaking). Mr. Speaker, on Memorial Day last week, I participated in a moving memorial service at Union Cemetery in Redwood City, California, honoring the many brave men and women who have given their lives for our country through the years.

Union Cemetery was established over a century ago as a final resting place for many Americans who fought in the Civil War, but our service there honored all who have

given their life to preserve our country and the freedom and liberty which it guarantees to all of us.

The Memorial Day service was held in the shadow of the death of 37 brave American sailors who

were killed just one week earlier when the U.S.S. Stark was attacked by an Iraqi fighter while on patrol in the Persian Gulf. This tragedy made this Memorial Day most meaningful.

Mr. Speaker, the prayer offered at the memorial service by Jack Savage Wildman, chaplain of American Legion Post 105 of Redwood City, was particularly appropriate and moving. For the benefit of my colleagues, I ask that this prayer be included in the (Congressional) Record.

Continued

MEMORIAL Day Prayer in Congressional Record.
Vol 133, No 89
1989

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And in recent days, oh Lord, we have been reminded that those who serve our nation in times of peace may also be called upon for the ultimate sacrifice. We pray for the men who died aboard the U.S.S. Stark. We mourn their loss and through prayer grieve with their families.

We pray today with solemn awareness of the sacrifice so many of our men and women have made who answered our nation's call in time of peril.

But we also pray with the blessed knowledge of your great love for us all and your assurance that even though we walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, we need fear no evil, for you are with us.

We pray for your holy guidance as we go forward from this day that we may preserve the high ideals for which our comrades died. May your merciful blessings rest upon those they have (been) left behind. Keep us forever firm in righteousness, humble of heart and unselfish in purpose.

Amen.

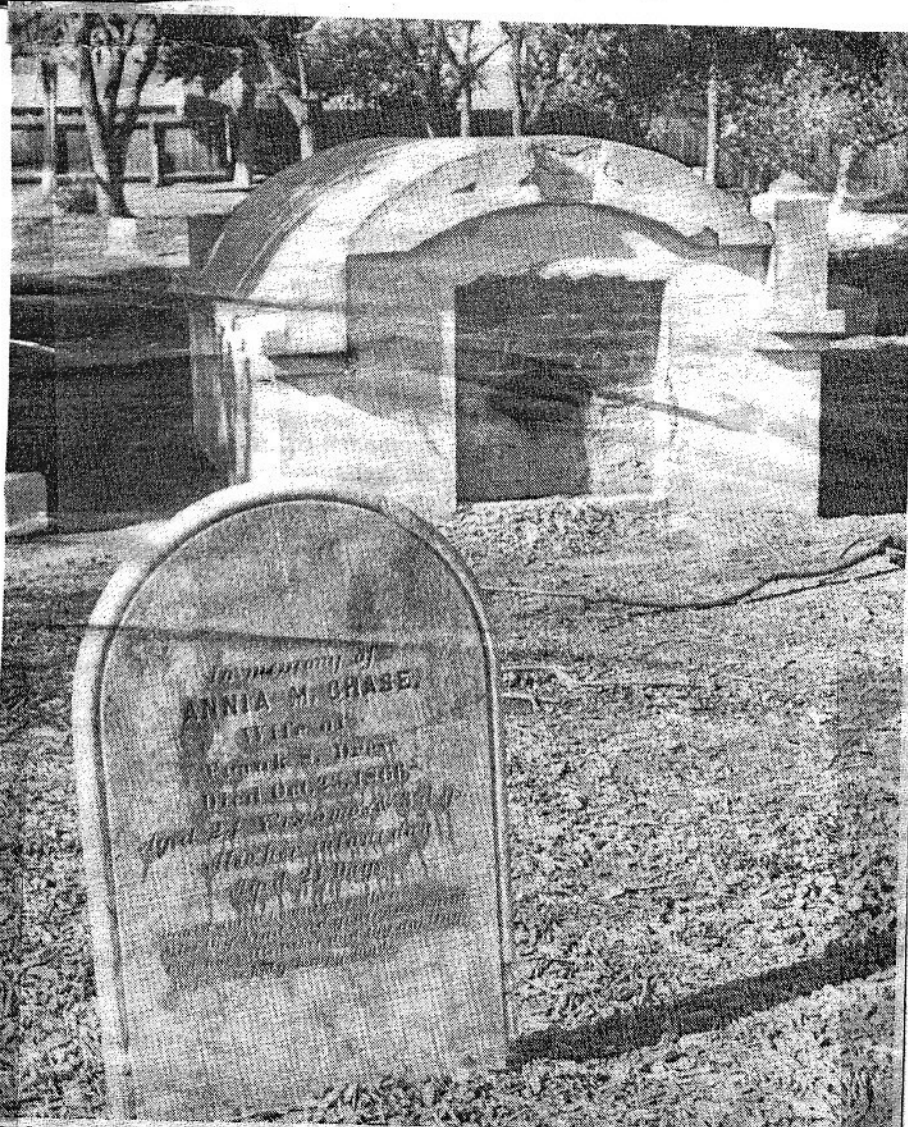
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Jan 27,
OUR
HERITAGE
Gets
Ransacked

Redwood City's Union Cemetery has been a favorite spot for teen parties for years. Last November, however, was the first incident of grave robbery.

Photo By **Ciro Buonocore**

Continued

Union Cemetery: Our Heritage Gets Ransacked

Continued

Vandals and thrillseekers have been making furtive visits to Redwood City's Union Cemetery on Woodside Road almost since the cemetery was built in 1859.

And last November the first incidence of grave robbery occurred when trespassers broke into two crypts and stole gold teeth and fillings from three 100-year old skeletons.

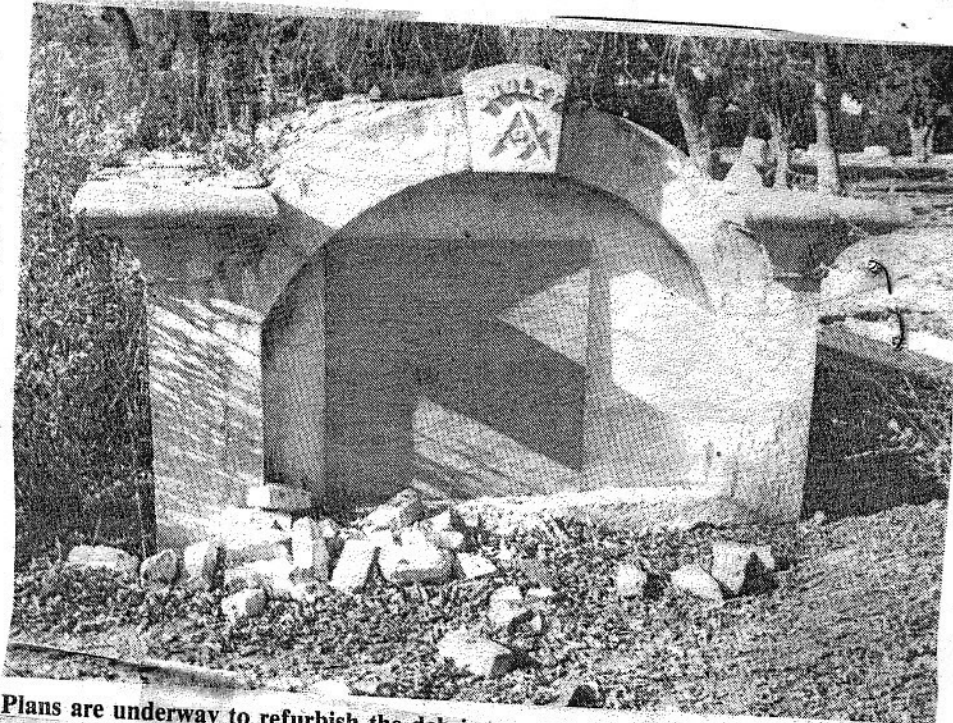
The one adult and two juveniles arrested in the incident admitted desecrating the graves during a drinking spree in hopes of finding valuables. They also admitted that they hoped to sell the booty for drugs.

The overturned tombstones and disarray left from the incident are not

the only evidence of deterioration at the cemetery, however. Fences are broken, garbage has been dumped at the site and many tombstones and memorial statues originally marking the final resting place of the dead have been broken and are lying in the dirt.

Improvements to the cemetery are in the works, however. According to Mayor Dick Claire, approximately \$300,000 was set aside last year towards refurbishing the entire cemetery site. Landscape and design plans have been drawn up, he said, though the allocation of money toward completing the work will have to be discussed at the council's Feb. 6 budget meeting.

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Plans are underway to refurbish the debris-strewn Union Cemetery. Many Redwood City pioneers are buried at the cemetery. Photo By Cirò Buonocore

Locals Hope To Restore Cemetery

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"The city is in a financial bind, so we will have to look at the project then see whether or not we can go ahead with it," he said.

Claire commented that the cemetery has "been a problem for the past 50 or 60 years" due to youngsters trespassing on the premises.

"In my day, teenagers went out there all the time to drink beer," he said.

"It's just the attitudes of kids. They don't respect much, as most of us didn't in those days."

Claire added that he felt it was important that the cemetery be restored.

"It is our heritage, in a way. A lot of fine old families from Redwood City are buried there."

According to Redwood City resident Nita Spangler, who is a member of the city's Archives Committee, vandalism has occurred at the site since 1900, 41 years after the first burial took place. She added that as a member of the Archives Committee, she has been involved in the restoration of the six-acre site for about 20 years, trying "to get the city to recognize it as warranting the distinction of a historical site."

"I think we're getting that now," she added.

According to Spangler, the city has

Prior to that time, the site was owned by the state.

She said she was encouraged that plans were underway to spruce up the cemetery, though she added that the state of disrepair that has overcome the site is a fairly common occurrence.

"It's not unusual for an old cemetery to get neglected. It happens all over the country. The only difference is that ours is in the middle of an urban area and the property is terribly valuable."

However, many people have become concerned over the state of the cemetery in recent years, she said. It is now registered with the state as an official historical site, a fact which Spangler said she thought "put a more enlightened view of what the property is all about."

What the graveyard is about, she said, is tradition. Many pioneers from the early lumber and farming community, as well as their families were buried at Union Cemetery, as for many years it was the only burial site on the Peninsula other than Catholic Cemetery in N. Park.

"It is a reminder of the interesting population that was originally here," she said.

As for the recent arrest of the grave robbers, Spangler said, I'm sorry, it was



Times Tribune photo by Ted Fink

A bit of cleaning up

Volunteers Marilyn Wilson (left) and Millie Cole of Redwood City are a part of a group of hard-working citizens at the Union Cemetery on Woodside Road Saturday morning. The volunteers took part in a special clean-up project that was spon-

sored by the Redwood City Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department, the city's Beautification Committee, the Union Cemetery Committee, the Historic Preservation Committee and Archives Committee.

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Thursday, January 5, 1989

☆ 25 cents

Effort to preserve Redwood City history

By Shannon Rasmussen
Times Tribune staff

Redwood City's Sequoia High School and Union Cemetery have moved a step closer to receiving the local historical recognition that many people believe the two sites deserve.

In an effort to preserve the historical value of both sites, the Planning Commission voted to recom-

mend to the City Council that it designate them as local historic landmarks.

The City Council is expected to review the recommendation soon.

"It's an important statement of the community," said Ken Rolandelli, chairman of the city's Historic Resources Advisory Committee, which made the proposal to the commission.

The designation would mark the sites as "treasures worth preserving," he said.

"We don't want to lose the flavor of Redwood City and its history," added Jean Cloud, a member of the committee and chairwoman of the local archives committee.

Officially known as California Historical Landmark No. 816, the Union Cemetery already has earned historical recognition from the state. It also is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The cemetery, which has deteriorated and suffered from vandalism over the years, is scheduled to undergo renovation to provide more protection to the site, which was recognized as a cemetery in 1859.

About 2,000 people are buried at the 6-acre site, located off Woodside Road near El Camino Real.

"The net effect is an overdue

recognition," Rolandelli said of the proposal to locally designate the cemetery as a historical landmark.

As for the high school, the proposal to designate it locally as a historical landmark is a first, despite the deep history of the grounds where the school now stands at Brewster Avenue and Broadway.

Please see HISTORY, A-8

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Originally part of the Pulgas Rancho granted to Luis Antonio Arguello by the Mexican government in about 1821, the site passed through the hands of at least four families who had some impact on Redwood City.

Former owner Horace Hawes built his home on the property, which later was sold to Moses Hopkins, who constructed what is now known as the Emerald Lake area.

A third owner, William J. Dingee, lived on the property in a 22-room mansion, complete with a large stable, carriage house and extravagant garden, named "Dingee Park." The park was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, according to historical reports.

The property was later sold to Albert Pissis, a talented architect, and his wife, Georgia.

Finally, Georgia Pissis sold the property under the condition that it would be "used for some municipal or educational purpose." It soon became home to the current high school.

At one time, the site's plans included it becoming a university and later a hotel.

"The (majority of the high school's) alumni association is dead set for it," association President Jeffrey Filippi said.

Merle Fruehling, Sequoia Union High School District superintendent, said national historic status for the school could generate funding to preserve the school's historic buildings.

The 39-acre site, with its tree-lined areas and its array of historic school buildings that opened their doors to students in 1924, was once occupied by a mansion and tea garden.

Two city 'treasures' to be honored as landmarks

Jan 11, 1989

Sequoia High School and Union Cemetery on path to historic designation

By Veronique Mistiaen

Two Redwood City "treasures" of the past are on their way to receiving recognition as historical landmarks.

The Redwood City Planning Commissioners last week voted to recommend to the City Council to designate Union Cemetery on Woodside Road and 64-year-old Sequoia High School as local historic landmarks.

The purpose of the designation is to encourage public knowledge and appreciation of the city's past and to protect landmarks representing significant elements of the city's history, said Ken Rolandelli, chairman of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee. The committee initiated the designation process.

The landmark designations are now pending approval by the City Council. The council is expected to review the Planning Commission's recommendations at its Jan. 23 meeting. Public hearings will be held.

Despite previous reservations expressed by the Sequoia district board of trustees, no one spoke against the landmark designations during the public hearing part of the planning meeting.

Sequoia District Superintendent Merle Fruehling went even further in suggesting that, in addition to local designation, state and national recognition be pursued for Sequoia High School, as well.

"Everyone was extremely supportive (of the designations)," said Charles Jany, city staff member of the Planning Commission.

"I am delighted," Rolandelli said about the vote. "But it came as no surprise."

Fruehling said the Sequoia district board of trustees initially questioned the landmark designation out of financial concerns. But when the trustees found out that the high school was under the state's jurisdiction, rather than the city, they enthusiastically supported the designation, he explained.

"We love that school, too," Fruehling said. "We believe that we have a beautiful school here and we want it to be maintained." The landmark designation would "add a little prestige to the school," he added.



Photo by Melissa Marciano

Union Cemetery...with late afternoon traffic in the background

TIMES Tribune
January 11, 1989

The beauty of its buildings set aside, the whole campus with its even earlier history is worthy of attention, the Historic Resources Advisory Committee pointed out.

Once part of the Pulgas Rancho granted to Luis Antonio Arguello by the Mexican government around 1821, the Sequoia campus passed through the hands of several influential owners before becoming the site for "a beautiful modern high school whose first classes were held in late January 1924," according to Jean Cloud of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

As for the Union Cemetery, its designation as an historic landmark is long overdue, according to the Historic Resource Advisory Committee.

The cemetery, which is as old as Redwood City, has already earned recognition from the state and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

About 2,000 people are buried in the 6.4-acre triangular plot off Woodside Road. Among these are the founders of the towns of Woodside and Searsville, as well as the first white child born in Redwood City. Other cemetery guests include "Chinaman" and "unknown man found hung," according to cemetery records.

Grave markers in brick, stone and painted wood can be found among the willows, oaks and cedars. Some are elaborate, with marble patios and statues. Others are simple.

But over the years the cemetery has deteriorated and been vandalized. Last July \$160,000 was allocated for the rehabilitation of the cemetery. The renovation of the site will include tree pruning, repair of fences and installation of pathways and electrical work. The work is expected to start sometime this week, according to Jean Claude, a member of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee.