

# Union Cemetery site of holiday ceremony

5-22-1985

Times

By DUANE SANDUL

Times Staff Writer

REDWOOD CITY — Rep. Tom Lantos, D-San Mateo, will be the guest speaker Memorial Day at ceremonies at Union Cemetery on Woodside Road.

The ceremony, arranged by the American Legion Post 105 of Redwood City and the Archives and Local History Committee of the Redwood City Library, also will feature music with members of the McKinley School Band, a flag raising, and the playing of taps. Boy Scout Troop 91 of Redwood City will present the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Bob Bury will serve as master of ceremonies. Starting time is 8:30 a.m.

Union Cemetery, established in 1859, has not been used as a burial grounds since 1936, according to Fran G. Hutchinson, chairman of the Archives and Local History Committee.

He said that the city's Parks and Recreation Department is about to spend \$175,000 to restore the cemetery, including landscaping and a fence.

"The general intent," Hutchinson said, "is to restore the place to a condition resembling its former state: a non-denominational, small-town graveyard."

The intent also is to preserve the cemetery's historic status.

According to Hutchinson, who is the retired principal of Woodside High School, Jean Cloud and Nita Spangler have been prime movers in the restoration project.

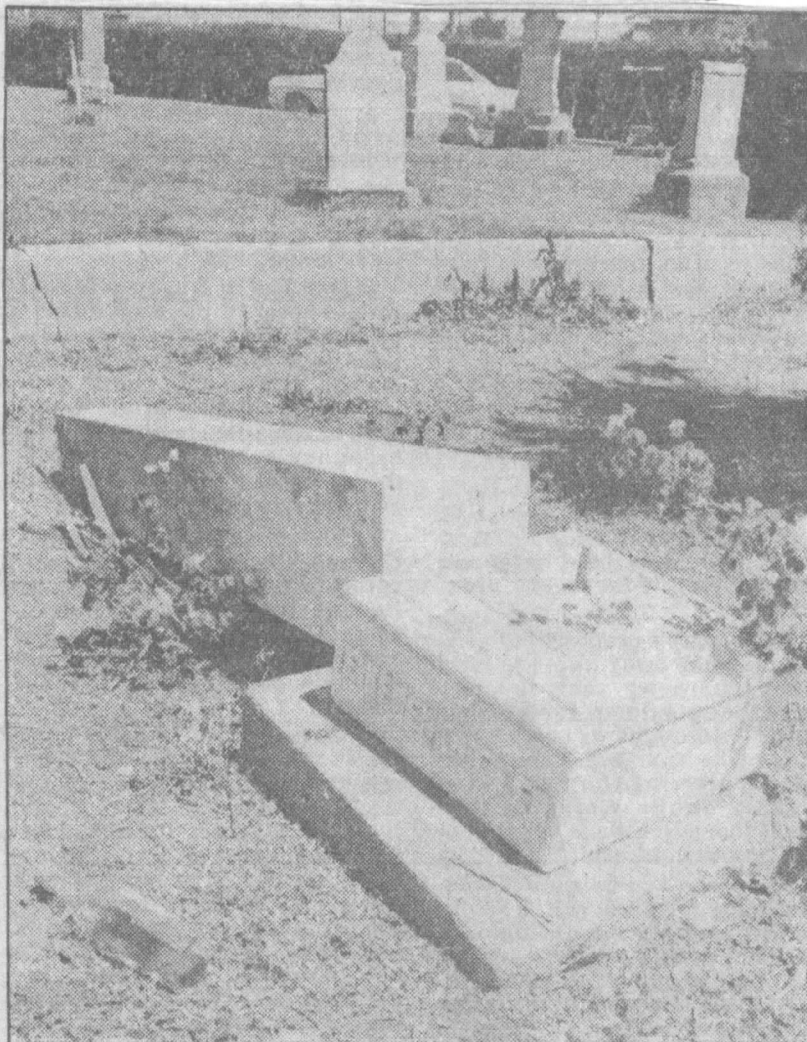
The cemetery is on the National Register of Historic Places and is California Historic Landmark No. 816.

"Along with the physical restoration, there is an effort to increase the community's interest and participation in the Memorial Day ceremonials," Hutchinson said.

One way, he said, is to offer free ice cream to participating youngsters.

"I remember the 1927 observance," Hutchinson recalled. "There was an assembly of participants, VIPs and others in the Sequoia Theater, which was then located on Broadway. After introductions and speeches, there was a municipal band for a parade.

"I cannot recall if there was a Civil War veteran with us, but I recall the Spanish-American War vets rode in a car. There were World War I vets, Masons, Native Sons and Daughters, the Order of the Redmen, the Woodmen of the World, the Fire Department, Boy Scouts and other young kids, including me.



The Times

Times file photo

The Union Cemetery will undergo restoration

May 22, 1985

"At the cemetery we had a prayer, someone blew taps, there were some more speeches, and we put the flowers on the graves. And then the kids got ice cream. Only I didn't get any because it ran out before I got mine."

Decoration/Memorial Day began as an occasion for the Civil War dead and began in 1868 when Gen. John Logan, commander in chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (a Civil War Union veterans organization), issued a general order designating May 30th as the day for decorating the graves of those killed in the Civil War, according to Hutchinson.

The practice became widespread in Redwood City when Civil War veterans began dying in the 1880s. Since 1887, the designated day generally has been Memorial Day.

In 1889 a metal statue of a Un-

ion soldier leaning on his rifle was erected in the Grand Army of the Republic plot but after repeated vandalism and damage to it in the 1960s, it now rests in pieces in storage.

According to Hutchinson, there are about 2,000 bodies buried at Union Cemetery.

He said use was halted in 1936 partly because the cemetery was nearly full and partly because of competition with cemeteries in Colma and Palo Alto.

The cemetery was neglected for several years, according to Hutchinson, primarily because no organization took care of it.

The property has been in the domain of the city's Parks and Recreation Department since 1962. The restoration project has begun with a land survey, including an aerial photo session, and the solicitation of proposals from landscape designers.

# Traditional Memorial Day rites

Community-wide observance  
planned at Union Cemetery

By Janet McGovern  
Times Tribune staff

A very old-fashioned Memorial Day observance — complete with ice cream for schoolchildren who lay flowers on the gravesites — is planned at Redwood City's landmark Civil War cemetery.

Instead of a service run solely by veterans, organizers of Monday morning's ceremony at Union Cemetery are trying to draw the whole community into the observances that mark not just Memorial Day, but the 100th anniversary of the observances there.

Although Union Cemetery was established in 1859, it was not until 1885 that members of the newly organized George S. Evans Post of the Grand Army of the Republic first placed flowers on the grave of one war veteran known to have been buried there.

On Decoration Day in 1886, there were three known veterans' graves and, a year later, there were six.

For more than 50 years, members of the American Legion Post 105 have carried on the tradition of honoring veterans at Union Cemetery, but it has been many years since the whole city turned out — trailing along after the town band in a parade down Main Street — to honor the war dead, according to Francis Hutchinson, the retired principal of Woodside and Sequoia high schools.

Hutchinson remembers well the hoopla that accompanied the observances during his boyhood in Redwood City, when VIPs and other participants assembled at a downtown theater for speeches, introductions and a parade.

Veterans of the Spanish-American War rode in a car and World War I veterans, as well as Masons, Native Sons and Daughters and members of the Order of Redmen and the Woodmen of the World, joined forces with the municipal band for the parade.

Hutchinson is one of the organizers of this year's anniversary event, an attempt to revive some of those traditions. It will begin at 8:30 a.m. with remarks by U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos at the cemetery, located off Woodside Road.

A chorus of elementary schoolchildren will sing and Boy and Girl Scouts will decorate the gravesites with flowers. The local chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution will provide ice cream, a treat that used to highlight the Decoration Day festivities of years ago.

The ceremonies will also include prayers and speeches, Hutchinson said.

"What has been happening is that a group of veterans have had a brief observance and put out flags on the graves and gone back to the post for breakfast," he explained. "What we have in mind is to get more of the community involved."

Hutchinson, who is president of the Archives Com-

## rites

Continued from Page 1

mittee of the Redwood City Library, said a secondary purpose is to generate more enthusiasm for the ongoing efforts to restore Union Cemetery, which is on the National Register of Historic Places and is listed as California Historic Landmark No. 816.

The cemetery has been in a progressively neglected state since 1930 but the city's Parks and Recreation Department has begun work on restoring it.

By Adrian Vore  
Times Tribune staff

3/25/86

Redwood City's Union Cemetery, which looks as if it was on the receiving end of the Confederacy's cannon balls, may soon be revitalized.

Redwood City officials Monday night reviewed a proposal by Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco to renovate the historic landmark.

Although the City Council took no action on the plan, council members and Mayor Brent Britschgi seemed pleased at what they saw.

"I like it. Let's start tomorrow," Britschgi said following the presentation on the cemetery, which is on the National Register of Historic Parks and is a California Historic Landmark.

The cemetery, established in 1859, has been in a chronic state of disrepair since the 1930s with overgrown vegetation, broken headstones and mounds of trash.

Located on Woodside Road near El Camino Real, the cemetery also has been a favorite target of vandals with a statue of a Union soldier being the most abused.

Charles McCulloch, landscape architect for Architectural Resources Group, showed the council a series of slides on the present condition of the cemetery and then showed the planned improvements using an illustration.

The cemetery has a small entrance on Woodside Road, consisting of nothing more than an opening in a fence. There are dirt paths marred with tire tracks, some of the fences bordering the cemetery have giant holes and vegetation is out of control.

McCulloch also pointed out that

# RC may upgrade old site

## Mayor favors renovating historic Union Cemetery

lighting must be improved, parking is poor, headstones are knocked over and the cemetery needs better signs identifying it.

McCulloch's plans call for greatly improving the entrance using an arbor and providing a parking area for at least 10 cars on Woodside Road.

He broke his proposal into two phases.

Phase I would include lighting, fence repair, an entrance and signs

with the estimated cost totaling \$185,000.

Phase II, he said, would be the interior with its vegetation, pathways and plots being shaped up at an estimated cost of \$175,000.

McCulloch said he would use "hearty plants that will be self-sustaining."

He also said the firm does not want to make a replica of the cemetery the way it appeared in the 1800s. For example headstones that are broken will be cleaned up

but not brought back to their original condition.

"We're not going to recreate what it was 100 years ago," McCulloch said.

Jean Cloud, a longtime supporter of the cemetery and Redwood City's Citizen of the Year, stressed outside the meeting that security is the largest concern of local supporters because of vandalism.

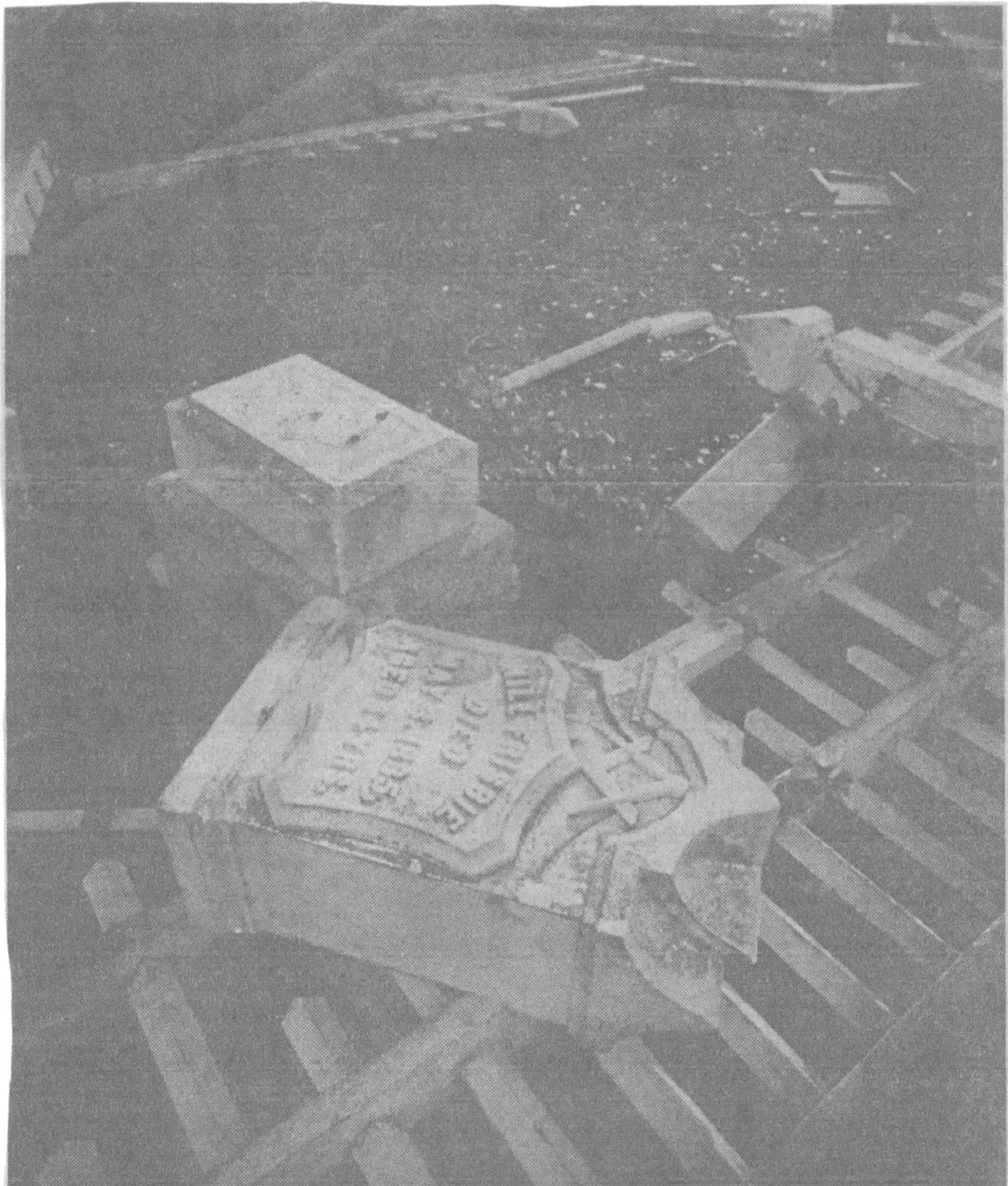
Francis Hutchinson, of the Red-

wood City Archives Committee, remembered several incidents where the statue of the Union soldier was knocked over and broken. The final straw, Hutchinson said, was in the late 60s when a Woodside High School student stuffed the statue in the trunk of his car and drove off. The statue was later recovered but was never put up again.

George Gaddy, commander of American Legion Post No. 105 of Redwood City, said his organiza-

tion would pay for repairs to the statue, which is in 19 pieces, "only if there is security."

Architectural Resources Group, which was chosen by the Redwood City Parks and Recreation Commission over two others at a meeting a year ago, will now have to prepare its final report and present it to the City Council in five to six weeks, according to Pete Griffiths, the city's parks and recreation director.



Times Tribune staff photo by Bob Andres

Redwood City's historic Union Cemetery, now in disarray, could be substantially renovated under the terms of a proposal by the Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco. Although the City Council took no action Monday on the plan, the idea has been promised additional review.

**EDITORIALS**

ref - RC - Cemeteries  
plan

3/26/80

# Dignity for a landmark

**S**OMETIMES 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.

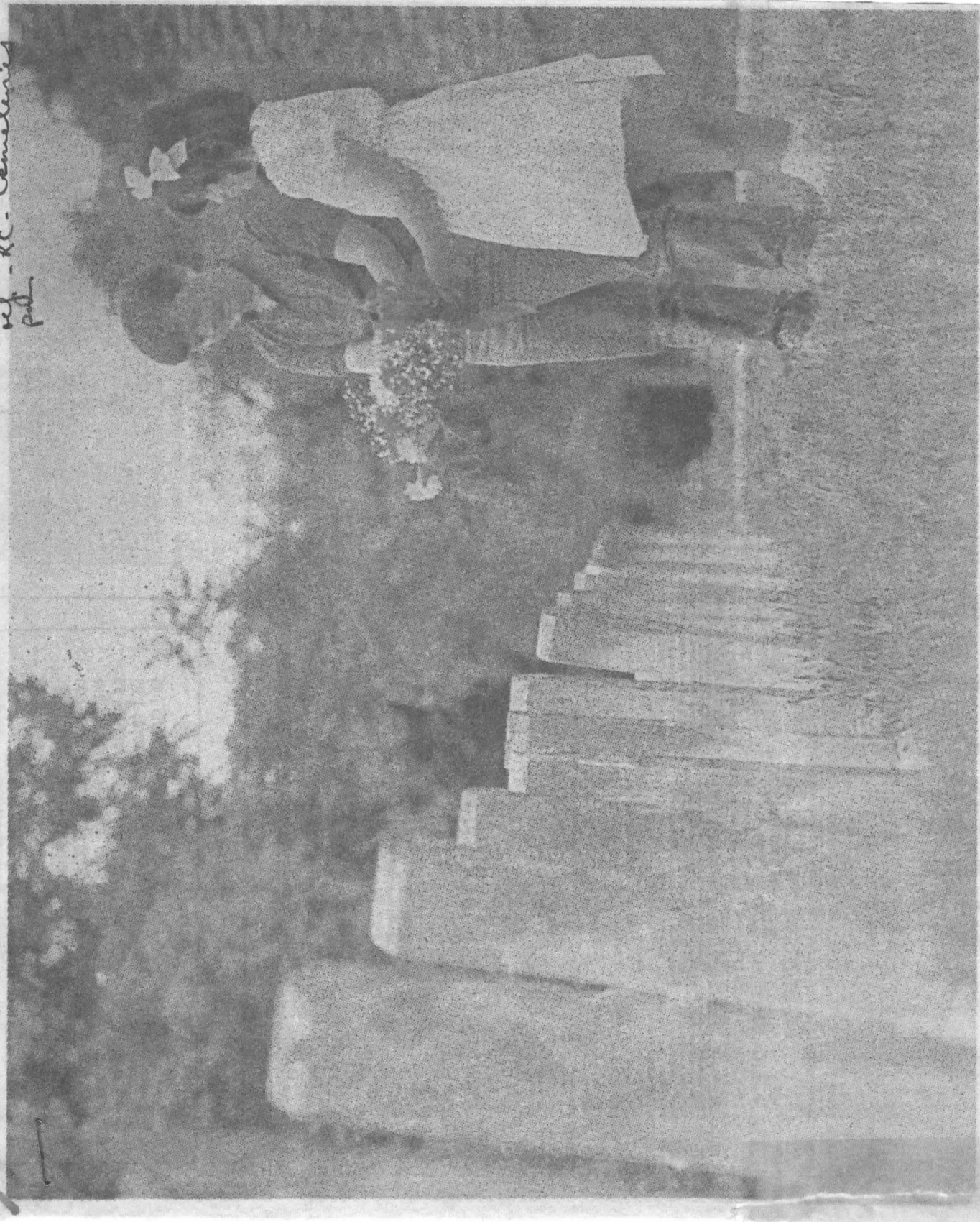
On Monday the council reviewed proposals by Architectural Resources Group of San Francisco for putting the cemetery back in shape, ranging from a worthy entrance and lighting to paths and landscaping. The total cost would be about \$350,000.

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.

5-26-1986

ref - R.C. - Cemeteries  
photo



Clifford Elementary School students Mike Casey, 12, and  
A vianca Verdugo, 8, both of Redwood City, place flowers

at the grave site of a Union soldier at Union Cemetery in  
Redwood City in preparation for Memorial Day services.

Times Tribune staff photo By Joe Melena

5/26/86

5-27-1986

# Peninsula praises its fallen

By Mary T. Fortney  
and Adrienne Edgar  
Times Tribune staff

5/27/86

Men and women from World War I to the Vietnam War who died serving their country were remembered and honored Monday at Memorial Day ceremonies at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto and Union Cemetery in Redwood City.

At Alta Mesa, Ernest Lewis, past commander of Palo Alto American Legion Post 375, read the names of 16 World War I veterans who died during the past year.

As he called each name, Axel Johnson, 90, a white-bearded World War I vet, responded in a deep voice, "Absent."

Lewis also read the names of eight veterans from later wars who died since last Memorial Day.

At Union Cemetery in Redwood City, Vincent Rios, a decorated, disabled Vietnam veteran who now heads the California Veterans Job Training program, read the names of men and women from Redwood City who died in Vietnam.

Rios said he hoped the city would add them to the war memorial in front of City Hall.

He also urged his audience to honor the men and women currently serving in the armed forces, commenting, "How sad it is to recognize our guardians of freedom only after they are no more."

Each ceremony had its special touch.

The avenues at Alta Mesa cemetery were lined with large American flags fluttering in the breeze, contributed by the American Legion.

The flag project started in 1980 with 35 flags. By Monday there were 152 flags. In addition, tiny

## PRAISE

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flags decorated many of the graves.

Redwood City's Union Cemetery had fewer flags but made up for it with a living statue. Veteran Dino Wedgwood, dressed in an authentic Civil War uniform, stood on top of the memorial throughout the ceremony in place of a statue that was destroyed by vandals several years ago.

About 70 people attended the Redwood City ceremony, which was sponsored by American Legion Post 105.

Rios urged them to pay tribute America's fallen war dead.

"The Marine Corps has a saying: 'We are looking for a few good men,'" he said. "Look around and see the graves of a few good men, dating all the way back to the Civil War."

Rios' voice broke with emotion as he reminded his audience of the horrors of war seen up close, recalling "the tearful stares of dying young men crying for their mothers and begging you not to let them die as that final veil of darkness falls forever over their faces."

Boy Scouts from Troop 149 raised the flag to half-staff over the veterans' graves as members of Post 105 and other veterans' groups stood at attention.

Post Cmdr. George Gaddey laid a wreath at the base of the cemetery's monument to war dead.

Rudy Rohr, Post 105 member and coordinator of the event, said the wreath was made of artificial poppies fashioned by veterans in VA hospitals.

About 50 people, ranging in age from infants to 90-year-old veterans, heard retired Navy Flight Cmdr. Sanford Gum Jr. speak at the Alta Mesa ceremony planned by the United Veterans' Council of Palo Alto.

Gum, who was giving his second Memorial Day speech, recalled he made the first one in 1945 when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt died.

He was in the mid-Pacific aboard the USS Detroit at the time, and since there was no chaplain aboard, he was pressed into service.

"What is Memorial Day all about?" he asked. "Holiday specials ads are in the newspapers. The Indy 500, perhaps. The first great three-day weekend of the season. Spring at its brightest."

"Memorial Day to me is a day of remembering," he said.

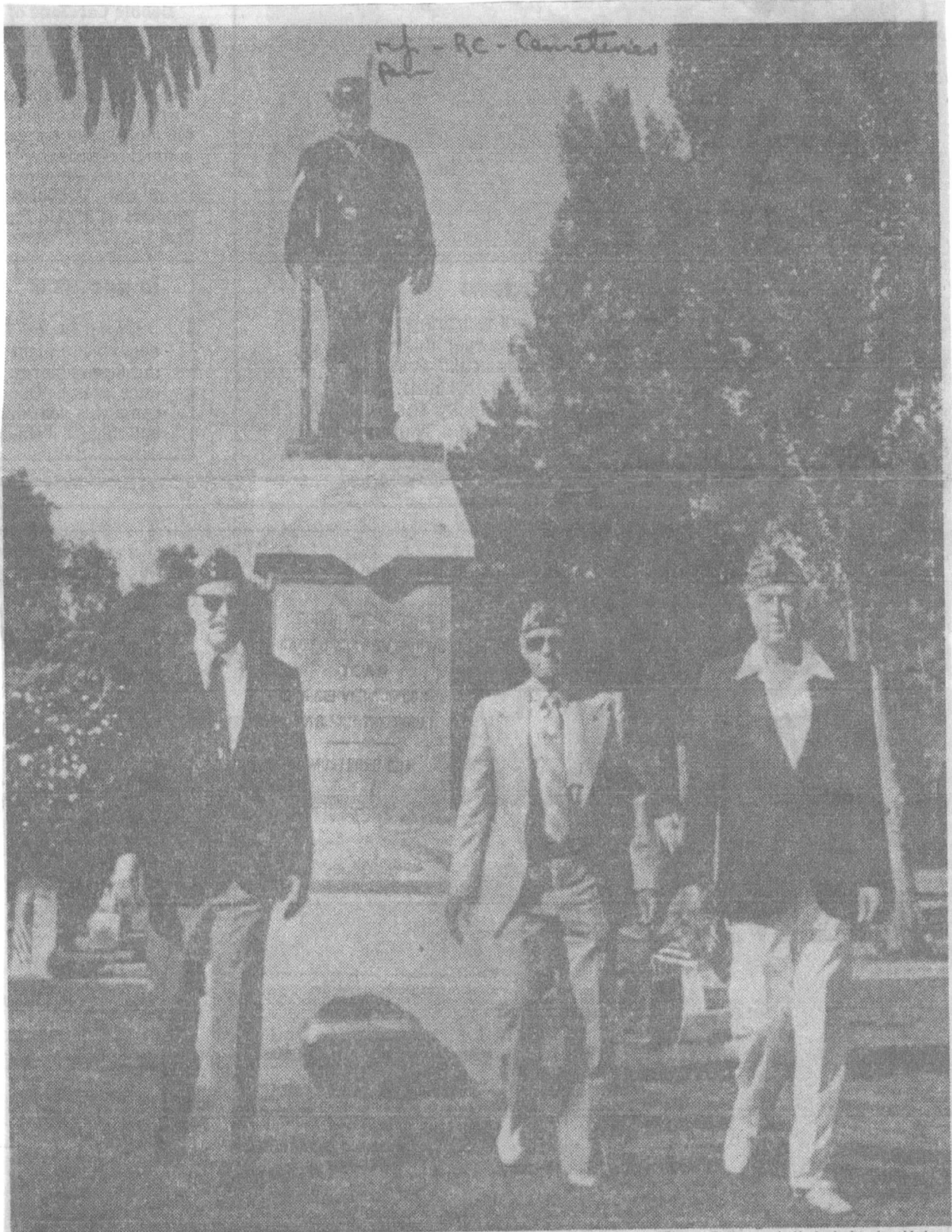
"It is a day to think back on what happened before, to reflect on what is really important in our lives. With the confusion of the world we live in today, we must make it the best we can."

Gum warned his audience not to become complacent about the freedom and liberty enjoyed by Americans. He urged them to study the people and the issues in the June 3 primary election so they can vote intelligently "and preserve that freedom."

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5-27-1986



Times Tribune staff photo by Joe Melena

Among those on hand for Memorial Day ceremonies at Union Cemetery in Redwood City Monday are (left to right) city residents Joe Paynter, George Gaddey and Stan Haynes. American Legion Post 105 Cmdr. Gaddey laid a wreath at the cemetery's monument.



## A day to remember

6/14/86

**THE ARCHIVES** Committee of the Redwood City Public Library would like to thank publicly those organizations that planned and supported the historic Memorial Day Observation at Union Cemetery on Monday, May 26th.

Those who attended could not but feel pleased and proud that this lovely six-acre cemetery/park is being preserved for future generations.

The afternoon program mingled the younger generation with those of earlier years. The opening ceremony included the Boy Scouts and the Pledge of Allegiance being led by James De Beneditti, the oldest living man born in Redwood City and a veteran of World War I, and the delightful songs of the pupils of Clifford School and the older students of the band from Redwood City Intermediate Schools.

The revival of this old-time Memorial Day Observance was judged a success by those who attended and those who were responsible for the activities are already thinking about next year. So sincere thanks goes to the Redwood City School Department, Heritage Association, Historic Resources Advisory Committee, Native Daughters Bonita Parlor #10, D.A.R., IOOF-Bay View Lodge #109, and Redwood City Parks and Recreation Dept., who helped plan the activities.

Also, we wish to thank the Times Tribune for its generous coverage of the event.

*ref - RC - Cemeteries*  
*park* **Jean Cloud**  
Union Cemetery Chairman  
Archives Committee

REDWOOD CITY



**Civil War salute** 11-4-86

Gordon Mann (left) and Dave Morrison, dressed in Confederate and Union uniforms from the Civil War, help clean up Union Cemetery in Redwood City. Volunteers from the National Civil War Association and the California

Arborists Association spent Saturday preparing the cemetery for future renovation. Union Cemetery is designated as a California Historical Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historical Places.

Times Tribune photo by Michael K. Chow

REF DAN RC - CEMETERIES

11-4-86

# Grave robbery

1-20-1988

By TERRY ROBERTSON  
Times Staff Writer  
REDWOOD CITY — Vandalism at Redwood City's Civil War-era Union Cemetery has been recorded as far back as 1900, but not until last November has there ever been a report of grave robbery there.

"It's the first time it's happened to our knowledge," said Redwood City police Sgt. Keith Harper. "At least it's the first time it's been reported."

Monday police announced the arrests of two juveniles and a young adult suspected of breaking into two crypts during a drinking binge on Nov. 13, ripping the skulls off of two adult female skeletons and crushing the skull of an infant buried there about 100 years ago.

Harper, one of the investigating officers, said the suspects admitted smashing the adult skulls to remove gold teeth and fillings, which they hoped to trade for methamphetamine. A fourth suspect is being sought.

Grave robbery is nothing new to San Mateo County, said Tony Kingstone-Hunt, general manger of Cypress Lawn Cemetery in Colma. The last one occurred there about three years ago, he said.

As in November's desecration at the Union Cemetery, the motive was to find valuables to barter for drug money, Kingstone-Hunt said.

"There's been talk of Satan worship being involved whenever someone breaks open a grave," he said. "I think that's nonsense. It's all drug-related."

"A couple guys on dope are sitting next to a crypt and they say, 'Let's break it open.' That's all it is."

At the Union Cemetery the vandals apparently used a metal post from a fence that once surrounded a nearby family plot to chisel and pry their way into the crypts.

"It appalls me that anybody could have such disrespect for the dead," said Harper, who claims to be a descendant of at least two people buried in the cemetery. "It's just offensive."

It bothered him, too, that

## was first at cemetery

someone from the nearby houses or apartment buildings that border one side of the triangular-shaped, six-acre burial ground must have heard the noise, but failed to notify police, he said.

After investigating the case, he's no longer surprised, he said.

"We've got people there who just could care less about what goes on in that cemetery," he said.

During the course of his investigation, he said he found rubbish up against a rear fence,

obviously tossed there by neighbors.

One neighbor has used the cemetery as a dumping ground for at least a year's supply of cat litter, he said.

"The people buried there died for their country and they have cat (litter) dumped on them," Harper said disgustedly. "If we knew who it was, he'd be prosecuted."

Among the 2,000 people interred at the Union Cemetery are veterans of the Civil and Spanish-American wars.

Although it began in 1858 as a "working man's" cemetery and stayed that way through the last burial in 1963, it is rich in early Redwood City and Woodside history, according to Nita Spangler, a local historian who is on Redwood City's Archives Commission which is trying to preserve the burial ground.

Benjamin Fox, San Mateo County's first judge, and Andrew Teague, one of its first attorneys and an early Redwood City official, are among those laid to rest there among some of the

area's early families, she said.

It has been registered as a national and state historic landmark.

Still, the vandalism has gone virtually unchecked.

Marble and wooden tombstones and monuments, which once stood at the heads of graves, have been broken for some time and are lying unattended facedown on the ground.

Same with fences that used to surround family plots. And

See CEMETERY, Page D2

1-20-1988

marble crypts encasing the remains of entire families are sealed now with plywood sheets to keep out the mischievous and malicious.

A statue of a union soldier guarding the cemetery's entrance at Woodside Road near El Camino Real was knocked down and destroyed twice in 1969 and has not been replaced.

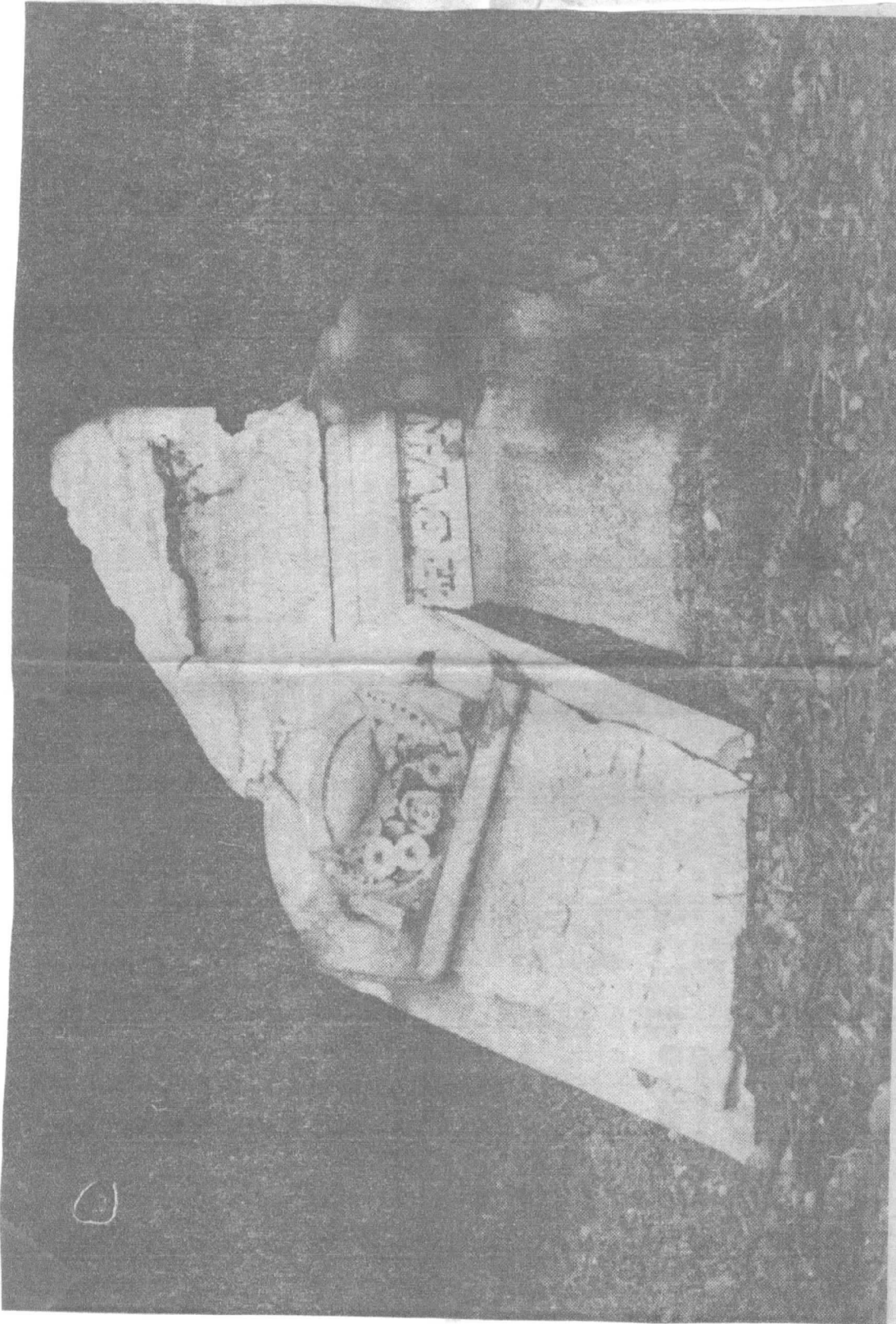
The difficulty in keeping up with the damage is that relatives of those buried there are two or three generations removed and simply don't have the emotional ties, Spangler said.

Additionally, security and upkeep in a cemetery is expensive and Redwood City hasn't established it as a priority, she said.

Police patrol the cemetery on a routine basis, but it is too costly to assign a patrol officer there full-time, Harper said.

The Archives Commission, through the city's Park and Recreation Committee, is working on a plan to add security lighting and replant vegetation to block out Woodside Road and the surrounding buildings.

"It's not a restoration," said Spangler. "What we want to do is preserve the spirit of the cemetery."



Times Photo by Mike Russell

This broken tombstone rests on one of the vandalized gravesites in Redwood City's Union Cemetery.

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5-3-1988

# A cemetery 'put on hold'

5/3/88

CU - cemeteries



This battered headstone in Redwood City's Union Cemetery marks the grave of Benjamin F. Fox, first county judge of San Mateo County, who died in 1869. Fox came to California in 1850 with a group

that was caught by snows in the Sierra where they suffered from cold and starvation to such an extent that several of the party died. He brought his family to Redwood City in 1853.

Tribune staff photo by Bob Andros

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# Delays in Union Cemetery

By Mario Dianda  
Tribune staff

Historians are losing their patience with Redwood City's reluctance to spend committed funds to renovate historic but deteriorating Union Cemetery.

Although the City Council last year had budgeted \$359,000 for the project, none of that money has been spent because the city is facing financial hard times.

"The cemetery sits there in disarray," Jean Cloud, a member of the city's Historic Resources Advisory

Committee, told the council in frustration a week ago. "The only new story is vandalism."

Describing the 129-year-old cemetery as a "national treasure," Cloud lamented that it lately has become a target for grave diggers as well as vandals.

Last January, police reported that someone broke into two crypts and left behind a human skull. The alleged culprits have been arrested.

"This has been on the backburner already," Nita Spangler, a member of the Union Cemetery Committee, said in an interview about the proposed

tioned, "the sad thing about it is that it's easy to put that kind of project (cemetery) aside and never do anything about it."

If nothing else, La Berge said she hopes the council will erect a large sign to tout the cemetery's placement on the National Register of Historic Places, and replace some of the grave headstones that have been knocked down or broken off.

"It's all really part of the whole beautification program," La Berge said, referring to efforts to improve the city's appearance. "That can be a very nice looking area," she added.

Spangler said a group of town residents formed a cemetery association in 1858 when a local citizen asked them to stop burying impoverished squatters on his property.

With the landowner's help, the association managed to have state legislation enacted for creating rural cemeteries. As a result, it obtained burial rights to the current cemetery site for \$500, and charged \$10, \$15 and \$20 for plots from 1859 to 1919.

The cemetery had been deeded in trust to the governor, transferred to state ownership in 1947 and finally transferred to the city's ownership in 1962.

Today, the cemetery is officially known as California Historical Landmark No. 816.

Spangler said about 2,000 people have been buried at the cemetery over the years, including about 50 Civil War veterans. As far as she can tell, none of the veterans were Confederates, Spangler added.

"This was the only cemetery available for quite an area around," she said.

No one has been buried there since 1959, historians say, and the cemetery steadily has deteriorated from near neglect.

Peter Griffiths, director of the city's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, said his maintenance workers try to control the weeds, pick up trash and do some selective watering.

What the department would like to do with the \$359,000 is landscape along the cemetery's Woodside Road approach; build a 4-foot-tall galvanized fence around the property; install an automatic irrigation system; erect a 12-foot-high, low-level lighting system; and build an entry road into the cemetery from Woodside Road near Wegman's Nursery with a parking lot for three to five cars.

# renovation bring new objections

renovation.

"That's six acres of prime land in a very highly visible area that needs open space, so it's not a wasteful project at all," she said.

City Manager Jim Smith said the anticipated improvements have been put on hold due to a "leveling of revenues" that will force the city to defer many needed projects.

He presented council members with a list of 27 capital improvements for which funds had been reserved this fiscal year, and asked them to rank them according to priority.

Without diminishing the impor-

tance of Union Cemetery, Smith said he believes that priority should be given to installation of storm drains at the Fifth Avenue neighborhood, reconstruction of track-damaged Chestnut Street, construction of a new police station and establishment of a sidewalk repair program.

Councilwoman Georgi La Berge agreed that those projects may appear more important than renovating Union Cemetery "because people aren't using the cemetery."

On the other hand, La Berge cau-

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Four-foot fence asked

6/20/88  
**New idea to guard Union Cemetery**

RC - CEMETERIES

By Michael Shapiro  
Times Tribune staff

To halt the deterioration of Redwood City's Union Cemetery, officials are urging the city to erect a fence in hopes of deterring vandalism.

The 4-foot fence is part of an approved \$359,000 package to refurbish and secure the 129-year-old cemetery, which is a state and national landmark.

City officials have put the plan on hold until next month, when they will learn the limitations the city's budget.

Planning Commission Chairman Dick Audsley said the commission has urged the city to install a fence immediately and complete the project when the budget allows.

But he conceded that a low fence without security lighting might be "window dressing" and would not inhibit vandalism.

Jean Cloud, who heads the city's Archives Committee, said the proposed 4-foot fence would be worse than useless.

"It would just be a challenge for kids to climb over it. I don't think it would do anything," she said.

But Parks Director Peter Griffiths said the purpose of the fence is not to keep people out of the cemetery, located on Woodside Road, just west of El Camino Real.

Anyone could get into it through an entrance, which would remain open, he said.

The fence would keep vehicles

out and give a "protected sense" to the cemetery, Griffiths said.

Cloud has called the cemetery a "national treasure," and said it contains "folk art of America."

Nita Spangler, another project advocate, lamented that the cemetery has suffered from deterioration and desecration since the turn of the century.

Cloud has become impatient with the city's reluctance to complete the project after approving funds for it and plans to complain to the City Council on Monday.

Funds for the project were included the city's fiscal 1987-88 budget, a city clerk said.

The council "agreed two years ago to do this — they haven't been broke for two years," Cloud said. "We've had the runaround. We need honest talk."

Councilman Dick Claire said the city could not decide whether to proceed with the cemetery improvements until it assesses the 1988-89 budget.

"We must understand fully what we'd be giving up" before proceeding with the project, he said.

If city officials had to choose between the cemetery project and remedying the flooding problems in its Fair Oaks neighborhood, Claire said he would choose flood relief.

Other council members said a new main police station is also a high priority.

Cloud said advocates for the

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TIMES TRIBUNE

**FENCE**

Continued from A-3

cemetery renovation have waited long enough.

"Tombstones are in pieces; they're being carted away. It's sickening to think how that cemetery deteriorates every year," she said. "There's no redoing what you lose."

Spangler said Union Cemetery was founded after landowners became tired of squatters burying dead relatives on their land.

"It's not just an old graveyard. It's on the National Register of Historic Places," she said. "And it's six acres of prime real estate in an area that needs open space."

Spangler said recently that about 2,000 people have been buried over the years, including about 50 Civil War veterans.

As far as she knows, she said, none of the veterans were members of the Confederacy.

5-25-1988

# Citizens Haven't Forgotten Cemetery

By Suzy Shimek

Local residents concerned about the fate of Union Cemetery on Woodside Road spoke before the city council and the planning commission last week, encouraging city officials to take action to both protect and upgrade the cemetery.

"It's a minimum to get some kind of security to prevent further decay," Ken Rolandelli, chairman of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee told the

planning commission.

The cemetery, which was built in 1859, is a registered historic site where many of Redwood City's pioneer families are buried.

The cemetery has been a frequent site of vandal attacks over the years, including an incident last November when thieves broke into two tombs and stole gold teeth and fillings from three 100-year-old skeletons.

Jean Cloud, a member of the Historic Resources Advisory Committee, told the planning commission that neighbors on one side of the cemetery have also been throwing their garbage onto the property.

Planning commission members expressed concern about the state of the cemetery and agreed that some sort of security precautions, such as installing a

**Continued on Page 11**

## Citizens Demand Repair Of Historic Cemetery

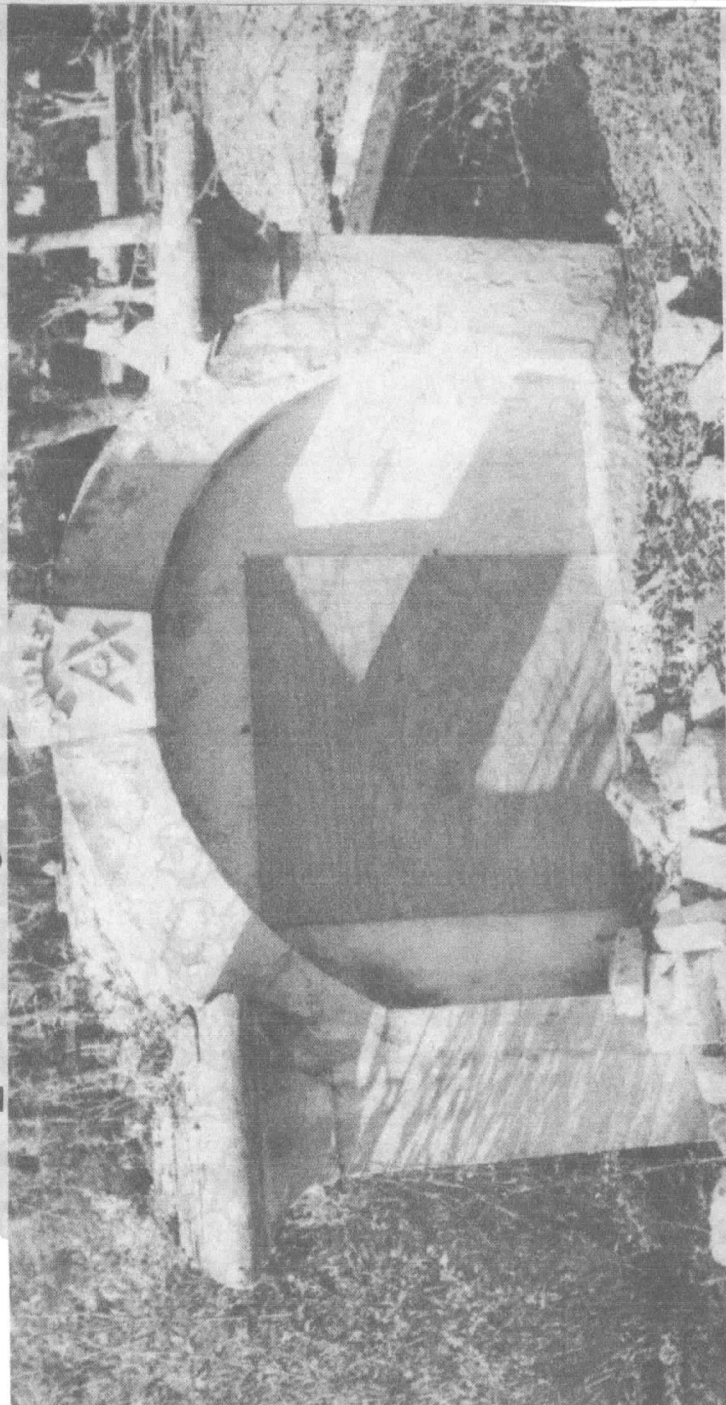


Photo by Ciro Buonocore

Vandals and neglect have left Union Cemetery on Woodside Road in disrepair.

**Continued From Page 1**

fence, should be taken to protect the land.

"There's a lot of history going down the drain because we're so casual about our priorities," said commission chairman Richard Audsley.

"If we don't do a minimum right now, there might not be much left to preserve in a few years," he added.

The planning commission agreed to draft a letter to the city council, urging members to set aside funds in the coming year's budget to protect the cemetery.

Last year, the city council budgeted \$330,000 to fully renovate the cemetery. Plans include installing lighting, fences,

*"We need to recognize that it's our past that makes us what we are today."*

an access road, parking spaces, landscaping and an irrigation system.

On the recommendation of city staff, however, the funds were never spent, said mayor Jack Greenalch.

"It was prudence on the part of staff," said Greenalch. "They recognized that the council was going to face important budget decisions this year."

But for Greenalch and several other councilmembers, renovation of Union Cemetery is still a high priority.

"I'm a firm believer in the importance of history," said Greenalch. "We need to recognize that it's our past that makes us who we are today."

Councilmember Georgi LaBerge said that she would like to see much of the renovation work on the cemetery done in the coming year.

"What I recommend is that we do all of it except the irrigation and landscaping — because of the drought."



5/31/88

# A day to pay tribute

War veterans honored  
throughout Peninsula

By Irene Chang  
Times Tribune staff

Children from Redwood City schools sang patriotic songs and recited a historical speech Monday as families, war veterans and residents gathered at Union Cemetery to observe Memorial Day.

About 200 Redwood City residents attended the service, which began at 10 a.m. and followed an earlier service held by American Legion Post 105.

"It's really a whole community effort," said Jean Cloud, president of the Redwood City Archives Committee, which sponsored the event along with the Redwood City public schools and other community agencies.

Although a strike by a cemetery workers' union began Monday, most Memorial Day services on the Peninsula were undisturbed by picketers.

"The union leaders told us to cool it for today," said Chris Berryessa, a groundskeeper at Alta Mesa Cemetery in Palo Alto.

Groundskeepers and greenskeepers throughout the Peninsula and East Bay are complaining about the management's practice of subcontracting out work that could be carried out by union members.

Berryessa said that he and another striker, John Borrego, were at Alta Mesa since 10 a.m. but stayed in their car and did not interfere with the Memorial Day observance, which began at 11.

"It's Memorial Day. We respect the dead," said Berryessa.

Representatives of the Alta Mesa management were unavailable for comment.

Memorial Day services at Olivet Memorial Park in Colma were canceled Monday because of possible disruptions by strikers.

The best weather of the three-

Please see TRIBUTE, A-4

# TRIBUTE

Continued from A-1

day holiday weekend Monday brought throngs of picnickers to parks and beaches.

The sunny weather will continue this afternoon with low clouds moving in this evening, according to the National Weather Service.

On the highways, 23 people died in California, seven of them in the Bay Area, according to the California Highway Patrol.

At Union Cemetery, which was unaffected by the strike, Redwood City Mayor Jack Greenalch spoke about the history of Memorial Day.

Greenalch, who has served as mayor since April, said the holiday originated with the honoring of soldiers who fought in the Civil War.

In 1919, 20 World War I veterans met with Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. to discuss setting aside a day in honor of those who had fought in the war, said Greenalch.

Shortly after, the first post of the American Legion was founded in Washington, D.C., said Greenalch.

"But today is not only a day of memorial. It is also a day of commitment and a day of looking ahead," said Greenalch, as he turned towards a crowd of young faces.

"I am pleased there are so many young people in the audience. Memory is kept alive through them," Greenalch said.

Musical performances were given by the Henry Ford School chorus and the McKinley School orchestra.

About 30 Henry Ford students, led by teacher Wynnette Levinson, sang a variety of patriotic songs, including "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again" and "Let There Be Peace on Earth."

Carol McNamara directed the McKinley orchestra in playing "Battle Hymn of the Republic," "The Star Spangled Banner," and "America."

During the performances, parents and grandparents ran around with cameras and video cameras, filming those singing or playing instruments.

After the musical numbers, six students from Kennedy School and Roy Cloud School recited Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Girl Scout Troop 1089 and Boy Scout Troop 149 and some Henry Ford students participated in the decoration of the soldiers' graves.

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Times Tribune photo by Ted Fink

Members of the Henry Ford School choir place flowers on the graves at Union Cemetery in Redwood City Monday during a Memorial Day observance.

About 20 Scouts in uniform and Henry Ford students, some wearing flower wreaths in their hair, placed red, white, and purple geraniums on top of the graves of 40 Civil War veterans.

The veterans, all Union Army soldiers, are buried in a special plot at the east end of the 6-acre cemetery.

One student in the orchestra played "Taps," and three cannon shots were fired to conclude the

Memorial Day observance.

Redwood City residents said they were touched by the schools' performances.

"The ceremony was wonderful, especially when the children put flowers on the graves. It was very special," said Margaret Gleason, whose son sang with the Henry Ford School chorus.

"We're moving out of Redwood City. This was a nice ending for us here," Gleason said.

7-1-1988

# Elegance is set for cemetery

By Shannon Rasmussen  
Times Tribune staff

Redwood City's historic Union Cemetery is finally going to receive the "elegant treatment" it deserves, according to one historian.

With the City Council's approval of a tentative budget Saturday, a cemetery renovation project will receive \$200,000 in city funds.

"We were delighted because we have been waiting," said Jean Cloud, a member of the city's Historic Resources Advisory Committee. "We have been in the budget before and nothing happened."

Cloud also is chairwoman of a local archives committee.

"It really should have elegant treatment," she said about the 129-year-old cemetery that today is officially known as California Historical Landmark No. 816.

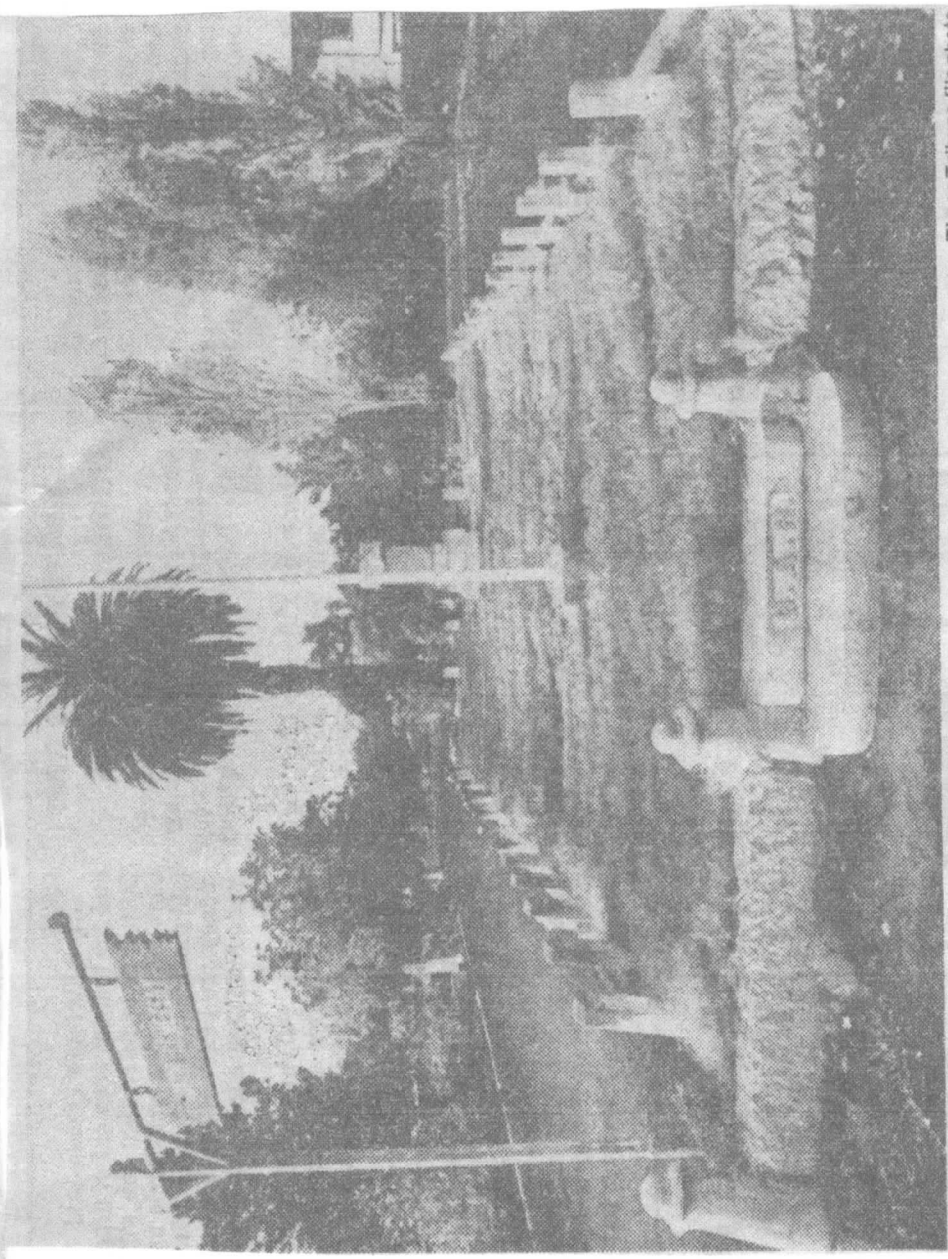
The funds will be used to construct a security fence around the cemetery and install a lighting system, said Peter Griffiths, director of the city's Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.

An entrance to the cemetery off Woodside Road also will receive some additional work, Griffiths said.

An arbor will be added to the entrance.

Although the budget request was \$330,000, Cloud said she was pleased with the funds the city did allocate to the project.

City Manager Jim Smith said the city will move ahead with the planning stages for the renovation.



Times Tribune file photo  
Funds have been obtained to perform a much-needed makeover on the Union Cemetery in Redwood City.

The final budget is scheduled to be adopted Aug. 8, and he said the funds would be included.

In recent months, advocates of the project have pleaded with city officials to move toward making improvements to the cemetery, which has deteriorated over the years.

Cloud said the fence that will surround the cemetery is necessary to protect the aging site from vandals.

Last January, police reported that someone broke into two crypts and left behind a human skull.

A 4-foot fence will be built along Woodside Road. A 6-foot, chain-link fence will be put up against an existing wooden fence toward the rear portion of the cemetery, separating it from nearby apartments.

The plan calls for 15 lights to provide ground lighting so police officers patrolling the area can view the cemetery, Griffiths said. The lights will be situated in such a way as to not bother nearby residents.

Minor irrigation work and new plants also are part of the plan.

"There is a possibility that (all) will be done," with the available funds, Griffiths said.

Cloud said a cleanup day July 9 will involve volunteers who will help pick up litter, pull weeds and improve the aesthetics of the cemetery without disrupting its historical significance.

"We are building a historical park," Cloud said. "We really think we have something there people are going to be proud of."

Historians say about 2,000 people have been buried at the cemetery, with the last burial in 1959.

7-6-1988

7-6-88

# City's History

Redwood City Weekly News

By Michelle Kaster

The year before the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter in 1860, Redwood City's Union Cemetery broke ground. Today, the gravestones read like a California history book for the scout troops, American legionnaires and community groups that come to the cemetery to both commemorate Memorial Days and learn about the city's role during the 1860s war years.

While the battles of the Civil War were fought a far distance from the California coast, many California settlers, like prominent Redwood City lawyer and county Supervisor Andrew Teague, felt its bitterness and provided support of secession.

The cemetery's occupants give the site its credentials for membership in the National Register Landmark of Historic Places — as was the resting place of more than 50 Civil War veterans and many Peninsula founders and prominent Californians.

Here the almost 2,000 gravestones reflect the lives of Redwood City pioneers and Peninsulans who created and

*The year before the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter in 1860, Redwood City's Union Cemetery broke ground.*

built a county with its own identity from new territory beyond the city of San Francisco.

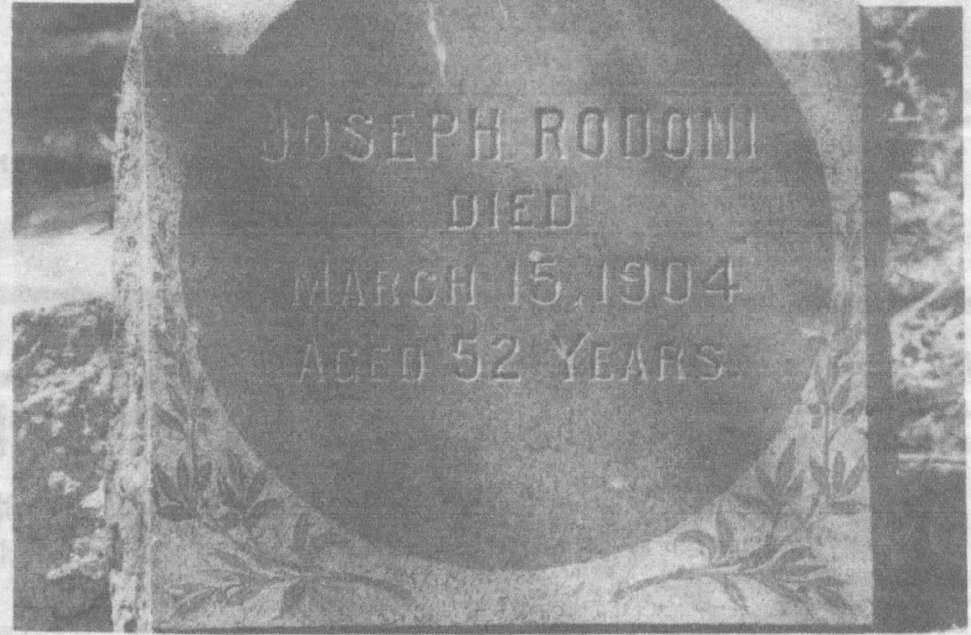
Redwood City founder Simon Monserrate Mezes as the city's first city planner drew a map that shaped today's downtown area.

William Littlejohn built Redwood City's first bridge across Redwood Creek (ca. 1854).

The list continues with Woodside founder Captain John Greer, La Honda founder John Sears, the first San Mateo County Judge Horace Templeton, and Judge George H. Buck, who served 50 years in public office and arrived in Redwood City in 1874 with only 45 cents in his pocket.

For localized trivial pursuit fans, Thomas Durham claimed to be the first person to cast a vote in San Mateo county; William Holder was the first to

## Rests In Union Cemetery



Early Union Cemetery photo (top), one headstone that has survived neglect (bottom).

Top Photo Courtesy Redwood City Public Library  
Bottom Photo By Augustine Buonocore

fly the American flag from a flagpole in Redwood City; and Alpheus Underhill, a fruit peddler, was the first to open a store in Redwood City.

Sarah Armstrong Montgomery Green Wallis was the first person to head the California suffrage organization and hosted Susan B. Anthony and

Elizabeth Stanton, as well as Ulysses S. Grant, in her home.

Back in 1859, Redwood City was a bustling unincorporated lumber shipping village. U.S. Land Commission member William Cary Jones owned the land, now located on the corner of Woodside Road and El Camino Real, and provided the property as a burying ground for the few previous deaths that had occurred.

In the early years, burial plots sold for \$10 to \$20 with an average of 20 to 30 burials per year.

The land was later bought by San Franciscan Horace Hawes, a State Assembly member, who wanted the cemetery off his property and used his political influence by introducing a bill that triggered California's first state legislation on the subject of cemeteries.

By March of 1859, the Union Cemetery Association was adopted. The land adjoining the Hawes property was purchased for \$500 with the deed going to Governor John B. Weller and his successors in trust for the local association, then outright proprietorship.

Ownership of the cemetery was held for more than 100 years by the State of California which in turn contributed for 15 years to its care and maintenance.

But the Union Cemetery Association eventually failed to hold up to its bargain with the state to control the maintenance of the graveyard, so by 1989 the association ceased to function and the cemetery slid into a period of almost complete neglect.

It was not until 1937 before the American Legion took initiative to bring the problem to both the attention of the public and city officials. In 1947, special legislation appropriated \$1,500 to \$2,000 a year for its maintenance.

According to the state's gardener, this arrangement should not go on indefinitely. In 1962, Union Cemetery was deeded by the state to the municipality of Redwood City, with an agreement condition stating the city was obligated to maintain the property as a "cemetery or public park."

This phrase epitomized the dilemma that the city has faced since 1937. To make it a "public park" for recreation and amusement would entail the removal of all the bodies interred; very expensive, and as many feared, initiated numerous protests from a shocked public. There have been some removals but an exact number is unknown.

Burials are no longer permitted in Union Cemetery. It is presently maintained, as a public service, by the adjoining Skylawn Company without cost to the city or the public.

# Vets remembered at Union Cemetery

By Shannon Rasmussen  
Times Tribune staff

Paulette Pardeilhan, whose brother served in World War II and was taken prisoner, spent Veterans Day at Redwood City's historic Union Cemetery Friday.

Pardeilhan, a resident of San Mateo, joined more than 50 people to tour the site, where at least

● A nation honors — A-7

50 known veterans of the Civil War and Mexican War are buried.

In a specially marked area, veterans graves were decorated with small American flags.

A monument is placed in the

veterans' memory in the middle of the Grand Army of the Republic plot. The organization was the main veterans association for soldiers from the North after the Civil War.

Throughout the special tour, sponsored by the Redwood City Archives Committee, Pardeilhan placed small yellow flowers on

graves of the veterans, as well as those of former Redwood City residents who weaved an intriguing history in the community.

Since she cannot visit the graves of her family in France, she said, "To me it's the same thing (to visit a cemetery here). It's in your heart you carry the

memory."

The cemetery, which has deteriorated and suffered from vandalism over the years but retains a historic character, is officially known as California Historical Landmark No. 816. It also is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Redwood City resident Nita Spangler guided the tour, tracing the history of the community and pointing out various graves of well-known judges and residents.

Broken tombstones, fallen picket fences, marble gravestones and large family plots give the site a special quality and a sense of his-

tory, despite being surrounded by modern business, residential buildings and passing traffic on Woodside Road.

"It really is a historical park," said Jean Cloud, a member of the city's Historic Resources Advisory Committee and local archives committee.

About 2,000 people are buried in the 6-acre site, which was officially recognized as a cemetery in 1859. No one has been buried there since 1963, according to historians.

James Peace, who died in 1890, is buried at the cemetery. He is credited for raising the first American flag in San Mateo County. He was a sailor from Scotland, who jumped ship and came to settle in Redwood City.

A marker for Benjamin Fox, who reportedly was the first San Mateo County judge, also can be found at

the cemetery. He lost a number of family members to a whooping cough epidemic.

Other tragic stories accompany the graves, such as the grave of Loviah Starr, who died at age 34, leaving behind a grieving husband and three children.

Cloud said it is uncertain at this point how she died, but a letter from the despondent husband reveals the sadness of her loss.

Spangler explained that a group of town residents formed the Union Cemetery Association in 1858. The group is credited for having state legislation enacted for creating rural cemeteries.

After the association gained burial rights, the cemetery was deeded to the trusteeship of the state governor, until 1962 when it was transferred to the city's ownership.

"We don't know all the people

who were here," Spangler said.

Cloud said that even today a group of people continue to gather a wealth of information about those buried at the site.

Some of the headstones remain broken and some are placed on the wrong graves, she explained.

Spangler said that about 80 men buried at the site remain unidentified.

A section of the cemetery is known as the Masons lot, belonging to the Masonic Lodge. Another lot contains the graves of those who belonged to the International Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal organization.

Cloud said some decisions about the historical site need to be made in the coming months, as renovation projects begin.

1 of 5

11-12-1988

# In memory

11-12-88 RC - cemeteries



Times Tribune photo by Vern F

William Byrd of Redwood City, a World War II veteran, takes a breather during Friday's tour of Union Cemetery.

11/25/1989

Cemetery

Cemetery



VERN FISHER

Headstones and crypts have been common targets of vandals at the Union Cemetery.

# Protecting a historic cemetery

VERONIQUE MISTIAEN / STAFF  
REDWOOD CITY

On a recent crisp morning, Monica Baptista walked idly with her two young sons, Nathan and Matthew, through the historic Union Cemetery.

She often drives by the cemetery on Woodside Road, but this morning she decided to visit it.

"I was very surprised," Baptista said, passing under a yellowing walnut tree. "The graves are very old — some are from the Civil War days. It's incredi-

ble.

"It's very interesting to see that whole families died within a few days. So many people died so young," she continued.

When Baptista happened upon headstones that were knocked down and spray-painted in the 129-year-old cemetery, she said simply: "I hope they do something about this."

The city is well aware of the deterioration of its historical landmark. Last year, the City Council allocated \$200,000 from its capital improvement

fund to restore the site.

The money has been spent on basic improvements, which have just been completed.

A 4-foot-tall fence is now circling the cemetery on Woodside Road and a 6-foot-tall chain-link fence stands against the existing wooden fence toward the rear portion of the site, separating it from the nearby apartments.

A sign welcoming visitors soon will be added at the entrance gate on



11/25/1989

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# PROTECT

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Continued from B-1

Woodside Road, said Peter Griffiths, Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services.

Fifteen lights have also been installed on the site so that police officers patrolling the area can view the cemetery.

"Keeping vandals out off the cemetery was the first priority, Griffiths said.

"Kids come here all the time," he explained, stopping in front of the Gooley crypt. Bricks are scattered in front: The entrance has been busted.

"Somebody went inside. Some remains were removed," he said. A little further, black graffiti has been splashed on a small stone erected for "a native of Ireland."

"It's a lime stone, a soft stone. We cannot sandblast it otherwise it will destroy the stone," Griffiths said.

Hoping to communicate love and respect for the old cemetery, a group of cemetery lovers is organizing annual cleanups and encourages school groups to visit the site.

In addition to the fence and the lights, the basic restoration work included the installation of irriga-

tion water pipes and the planting of more than 200 trees, Griffiths said. These are California pepper trees, coast Redwoods, poplars, and other trees that were commonly found in California cemeteries, he said.

"What has been done is excellent," said Nita Spangler, a member of the group working to improve the cemetery.

"Much thought has now to be given on what should be done in the future," Spangler added. "We want to respect its venerability."

The 6.4-acre triangular cemetery has earned recognition from state and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

The group is now discussing whether and how to restore the broken headstones, the vandalized crypts and statues. Funding for the work will have to come from grants and from the community, Griffiths said.

"There is a great deal of interest among people who have relatives buried there to contribute," he noted.

"This cemetery is a wealth of information," he added.

Among the approximately 2,000 people buried there are the founders of the towns of Woodside and Searsville, as well as the first white child born in Redwood City.