



# The Epitaph

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>President's Message</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>History Tour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Invite to Future Board Members</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Members Meeting</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>In Memoriam - Roy Ruhkala</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cemetery Volunteers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>TAC Update</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Open Garden</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Early Days in City Parks</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Rose Garden Tours</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Before &amp; After</b>	<b>8</b>

## Memorial Day

Let history entertain you on Saturday, May 25th at 11 AM brief ceremony honoring our Veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Speakers and the VAC Honor squad will honor our fallen comrades, relatives and friends, with a rifle salute and taps. Gravesites of all Veterans will be adorned with US flags.

A tour of the Historic City Cemetery follows the ceremony, led by Doc Kauffman, a Vietnam veteran, who will include a visit to a Medal of Honor recipient, the Spanish-American War monument. The tour begins at 12 PM.

The event is held near the Memorial Chapel; parking is available on the street. Donations are shared with OCCC to support the Cemetery. Further information: 916-359-5224 or 916-524-1984.

City of Sacramento  
...at your service

VETERANS AFFILIATED COUNCIL  
Sacramento, CA and VICINITY  
Serving Veterans Since 1921  
P. O. Box 601536  
Sacramento, CA 95860-1536  
COMMANDER : JULIE BAUMGARTNER  
(916) 955-9520  
[VAC4Vets@gmail.com](mailto:VAC4Vets@gmail.com)  
501(c)(3) ... CA# C1609757; IRS EIN # 87-0803453; FTB Caddy # 071428

**Saturday, May 25th, 2019**  
**11 A.M. V.A.C.'s Ceremony of Remembrance**  
**and Sacramento's Veteran Cemetery History Tour**  
*Tour Guide: Doc Kauffman Sr.*



## President's Message

Springtime is one of the best times to visit the Historic City Cemetery, and it is gratifying to see so many visitors walk or bike through the cemetery daily.

Our fundraising efforts have resulted in the repair of many headstones and artifacts throughout the property and there are plans to continue repairs through the summer and fall.

The TAC has completed a draft Operations and Assessment Plan (see article page 5) and we are pleased to note that the City is now searching for a permanent Cemetery Manager and will explore development of a Memorandum of Understanding with the OCCC, updating the irrigation system and implementation of other elements of the Master Plan, prepared over ten years ago.

We are collaborating with the City to continue our fundraising efforts in support of this historic site; planning for this year's Lantern Tours is already underway.

We encourage those interested to continue to volunteer. One way to do so is to consider serving on the Board of Directors. Please plan to join us in June for the Member's Meeting.

*Questions, concerns, suggestions to  
Judy Eitzen, President, OCCC  
[verlaine@citlink.net](mailto:verlaine@citlink.net)*

## History Tours

May 4—Sacramento: The Soul of the Railroad  
May 18—Stonecutters: Sacramento's First Artists  
June 1—Take Me Out to the Ballgame  
July 13—Extra! Extra! Read All About It!  
August 3—Mausoleums  
September 7—A Dozen Ways To Die  
September 14—Love Found, Life Lost  
October 5—Cream of the Crypt  
November 2—Masons  
November 10 (Sunday) - Veterans of World War II

History tours are free and begin at 10 a.m. near the Main Gate.  
Please park on the street. Donations welcome.

## An Invitation To Future Board Members

The Old City Cemetery Committee is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to support the restoration of Sacramento's Historic City Cemetery. We work with the City of Sacramento to provide beautification and educational and interpretive services to all visitors. We promote the repair and stabilization of cemetery headstones and artifacts through our fundraising efforts. We strive to promote excellence in the provision of educational and informational service to visitors.

The Board of Directors includes participants with a variety of interests in the Cemetery, including the gardens, Adopt-A-Plot, visitors services, restoration of artifacts, research and tours and events.

Ours is a working board with members actively participating in activities in the Cemetery and who serve as active advocates for the Cemetery and the OCCC. Each of us finds participation on the Board a very rewarding way to support the Cemetery. We are fully engaged in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary to continue our mission:

The Old City Cemetery Committee is the 501 (c)(3) cooperating association which supports the Historic City Cemetery. Our mission is to work with the City of Sacramento to develop communication and interaction with cemetery staff, to support the restoration of the Historic City Cemetery, and to provide educational and interpretive services to all visitors.

We encourage OCCC members to apply for inclusion on the Board of Directors. We are looking for Directors who support the mission of the OCCC and the Cemetery. We need Board members who are willing to participate in identifying and developing projects and activities in the Cemetery and who will represent the OCCC in the Community.

Board members should be prepared to attend monthly meetings, serve on one or more committees of the board and actively participate in committee work. Board terms last for three years.

If you are interested, please notify Judy Eitzen at [verlaine@citlink.net](mailto:verlaine@citlink.net) or the OCCC Cemetery office at [info@oldcitycemetery.com](mailto:info@oldcitycemetery.com) or 916-448-0811.

### Members Meeting

Please plan to join us on June 29 at 11 o'clock for the annual members meeting. You will learn about recent OCCC activities and plans for the next year. We will elect members of the Board of Directors at this meeting. Lunch will be served. RSVP to Connie Bettencourt at [doxiechar@outlook.com](mailto:doxiechar@outlook.com) or leave a phone message on the office phone 916-448-0811.

## In Memoriam—Roy Ruhkala

Roy Ruhkala lived to 99 and passed away in March. His company, the Ruhkala Monument Company, provides much of the restoration work completed in the Historic City Cemetery and other cemeteries in the Sacramento Valley.

A native Californian, Roy was born in Rocklin in 1919, the ninth of eleven children. He attended Placer County schools and earned a degree in Forestry from Oregon State University where he met his wife Peggy, before serving as a Field Artillery Unit instructor during WWII.

After the war, he worked in the family business, Union Granite Co. prior to purchasing a Sacramento monument company. As his company grew, so did his family of five children, and Roy's civic activities. He was a Boy Scout Troup Master and member of the Rocklin School Board before being elected to the Rocklin City Council and serving a term as Mayor.

In the 1970's and 1980's he continued his civic activities, including becoming a founding member of the Rocklin Historical Society. He loved camping, fishing and hunting and explored much of the US in his motorhome.

The skills he acquired repairing and restoring cemetery monuments and artifacts were shared with his children who grew up to continue his work with the Ruhkala Monument Company. Over the past 20+ years, Ruhkala has repaired hundreds of headstones and monuments. Today, son Paul continues the work, most recently repairing 30 stones on Gold Hill in the cemetery.



## Cemetery Volunteers

Sacramento Youth Parks and Community Enrichment Department has developed a new Volunteer Agreement which will be used for all volunteers in city parks, beginning with the Cemetery. Current Cemetery volunteers have been required to submit an Interest Form and sign the Volunteer Agreement Terms (VAT). Future volunteers will be required to do the same.

A number of volunteers have expressed concerns about the restrictive nature of the new agreement, (particularly the Cemetery Rules and Code of Conduct) though we have been assured by the City that the Agreement simply follows City Code regarding the Cemetery and volunteer activities on City property.

If you wish to volunteer in the City Cemetery, visit the City's Volunteer website: [www.cityofsacramento.org/hr/volunteer-opportunities](http://www.cityofsacramento.org/hr/volunteer-opportunities). Click on 'Ongoing Volunteer Opportunities' and scroll through to find the Historic City Cemetery. There is a link to the application process.



## TAC Update

A meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee was held on April 8 to consider approval of the draft Operations and Assessment plan for the Historic City Cemetery. The plan was developed over the last year in meetings held with stakeholders and under the guidance of RHAA Landscape Architects firm and L. F. Sloan Consulting Group, with Acting Cemetery Manager Gary Hyden chairing the meetings.

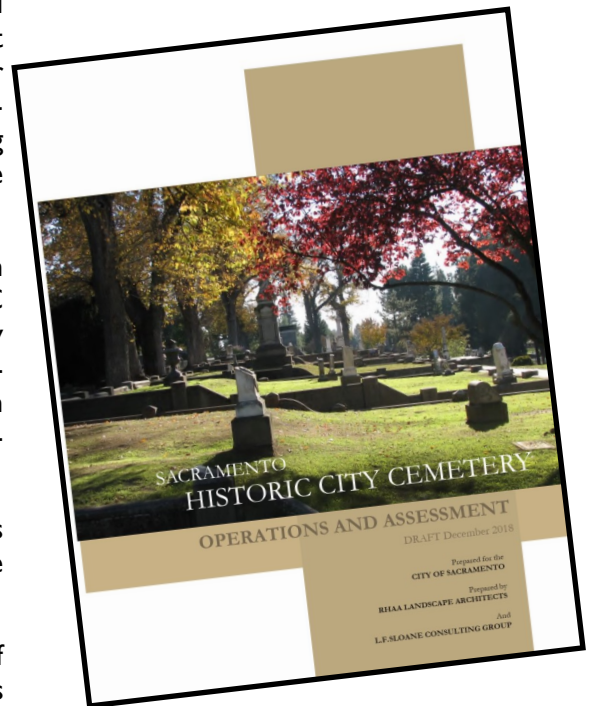
RHAA is the firm that developed the Cemetery's Master Plan in 2008 and L. F. Sloan has focused on historic cemeteries. TAC members included city staff from the Parks Department directly concerned with cemetery operations and maintenance, City Historian Marcia Eymann, City Preservation Officer Carson Anderson and cemetery volunteers representing gardens, tours, visitor assistance and the OCCC.

At the April meeting, the draft plan was discussed, several changes determined and a consensus was reached by the TAC setting the stage for a final plan that would be presented to the City Council.

A lack of centralized control in recent years has led to a lack of uniformity in planning, development and even day-to-day operations at the Cemetery. One of the primary recommendations in the plan is the appointment of a Cemetery Manager. This will be a full-time position with the individual handling burials, supervising city staff on site and coordinating volunteer activities. At the April meeting, we learned that the position has been officially approved and announced. City staff hope to have it filled by the end of summer.

Another recommendation is to develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the OCCC and the City. This will formalize approved activities and responsibilities for us and is something the OCCC has long desired. Other recommendations include development of approved guidelines for horticulture on site, digitizing records and providing a new irrigation system to mitigate potential damage and water waste caused by overhead sprinkling.

As TAC members approached this process from a variety of different points of view—city staff, volunteer, historian, etc.—it is gratifying that we could come to a consensus and have a plan to further continue efforts to preserve this historic site.



## OPEN GARDEN, 2019

Historic Rose Garden volunteers held their annual Open Garden on April 13-14 with more than 300 visitors attending. Over 600 roses were offered for sale with proceeds going to support the maintenance of the garden and headstone repairs. Thirty volunteers participated in the event which included tours of the garden, a cart tour of the cemetery, sales of rosy items, a silent auction, and (best of all) an opportunity to spend time with rose lovers in a beautiful setting. The roses were in full bloom and a great time was had by all.

A special thanks to Karen Jefferson who propagated many roses for our sale and to Dave Andrews who permitted volunteers to propagate roses at Cosumnes River College. Thanks to all those who made this event such a success.

# Early Days in Sacramento City Parks

*Judy Eitzen*

Sacramento Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment Department staff <sup>(1)</sup> are responsible for overall maintenance and operations at the Historic City Cemetery. This includes burials and maintenance of the buildings and grounds. The City Historian and City Preservation Director maintain the historic integrity of the site. Parks have had a long and varied history in Sacramento, beginning with the city's incorporation.

Sacramento's first City Charter was approved in 1850 and the focus on outdoor spaces and public use dates from that time. When City streets were laid out by the Army Corps of Engineers, John Sutter, Jr. deeded ten separate square blocks to the city to be set aside for 'public use'.<sup>(2)</sup> If you look at a map of the city streets, you can still see nine of those squares; Memorial Auditorium, Cesar Chavez Plaza Park, James Marshall Park, etc.



It was not the usual practice in the US for communities to set aside land for public use prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the concept of green spaces or city parks developed later and typically, most cities began building neighborhood parks in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From 1850, however, Sacramento residents had access to open spaces, though many residents traveled to the City Cemetery for a rural outdoor experience as the cemetery was located some miles from the center of town.



Early fires, swampy ground, unpleasant odors and disease outbreaks led early Sacramentans to begin planting trees. Lots of them. Trees provided a shade canopy for Sacramento's hot summers and residents were encouraged to plant trees throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup>, becoming known as 'The City of Trees'. Over the years, though storms and disease have taken many shade trees, Sacramento's Urban Forest continues and Sacramentans planted their one-millionth tree in 2005.<sup>(3)</sup>

While the City Cemetery remained a somewhat rural setting for outdoor activities, the City continued developing parks, acquiring land for McKinley Park in 1901, Southside Park in 1906 <sup>(4)</sup> and the first Regional Park, Del Paso, in 1911.

A Supervisor of Playgrounds was appointed in 1918. George Sim came to Sacramento from Los Angeles and instituted a number of activities that were successful in that city – youth baseball and softball leagues, new playgrounds, musical programs, and with



the advent of the automobile, the acquisition and development of Camp Sacramento as a place for Sacramentans to vacation in the wild. By 1922, the Department of Parks was also established with Frederick Evans as the first Superintendent of Parks.



In Recreation, Sim was followed by Bing Maloney, a sporting goods storeowner, and civic activist who added adult activities for city residents, opening a nine-hole golf course in Del Paso Regional Park. He sought private funding and used federal WPA funds to refurbish city playgrounds.<sup>(5)</sup> After WWII, other golf courses followed, including one near Executive Airport named in his honor.

In 1954, the various departments were combined bringing recreation, parks and trees together under one umbrella; the Recreation and Parks Department. The first director was Reginald G. Renfree.<sup>(6)</sup> The next decades saw development of the first Master Plan and the expansion of parks and recreation opportunities and community service including the 4th R Program, Park Safety Program, and Gifts to Share.

Today, the Youth, Parks and Community Enrichment Department continues to promote recreational, amusement and educational opportunities for Sacramento residents, working with volunteers in sites throughout the city as well as in the Historic City Cemetery.

- 1) Operating under various names; Sacramento Parks and Recreation Dept., Parks Dept., etc.
- 2) Sacramento Union, November 24, 1921, p. 13 "Sacramento Parks Second to None"
- 3) Parks Master Plan 2005-2010, City of Sacramento, Appendix, page 6.
- 4) A former dump site.
- 5) WPA – Works Progress Administration. Federal employment and infrastructure program created during the Great Depression.
- 6) Interred in Masonic Lawn

### In the Historic Rose Garden

May 6—Deadheading at Dusk—6:00 p.m. to dusk. Join volunteers to remove spent blooms in the Historic Rose Garden.

June 3—Deadheading at Dusk—6:00 p.m. to dusk. Join volunteers to remove spent blooms in the Historic Rose Garden.

September 7—Rose Propagation Class—10 a.m.

October 12—October Encore Bloom Tour—10 a.m.

November 16—Fall Color in the Rose Garden—10 a.m.

Garden Tours are free. Donations are welcome. Please park on the street.



## Before and After in the Cemetery



Many think of cemeteries as permanent. The grounds are laid out, people laid to rest with marble or granite markers and plot surrounds to show where individuals have been buried. Many families planted trees, shrubs and flowers on the graves of their loved ones. But, nothing is really permanent about a cemetery more than any other place.

Time can damage artifacts and cemeteries can fall into neglect. This was true in the Historic City Cemetery in the mid-20th century. As these photos show, however, the care given by volunteers and families and city staff have turned the cemetery again into a place of serenity and beauty.

The photo top left of the William Brown plot was taken around 1930 and shows Cemetery plots filled with grassy weeds and little care though a small American flag was placed in front of the monument.

The photo in the middle was taken in the fall of 2010 and shows the care provided by Cemetery volunteers.

The final photo was taken this year after several headstones in the area were repaired.







The photo at top left shows part of the original 10 acres donated by the Sutter family. It was taken in the 1970's after weeds were cleared and before volunteers began planting in the area that became the Historic Rose Garden.

Over the past 25 years small trees and large shrubs seen here in walkways were removed, plots tended and planted, and headstones were repaired.

After volunteers began working to restore and replant the Cemetery in the 1990's, roses and companion plants returned to the site.

The photo at right shows the same area in 2012; the one below was taken this spring.



# Old City Cemetery Committee, Inc.

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Sacramento, CA 95818  
916-448-0811  
[www.historicoldcitycemetery.com](http://www.historicoldcitycemetery.com)

## ***Mission Statement***

The Old City Cemetery Committee is the 501 (c)(3) cooperating association which supports the Historic City Cemetery. Our mission is to work with the City of Sacramento to develop communication and interaction with cemetery staff, to support the restoration of the Historic City Cemetery, and to provide educational and interpretive services to all visitors.