



# HERITAGE NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION OF THE CYPRESS LAWN HERITAGE FOUNDATION

A FOUNDATION DEDICATED TO EDUCATION & PRESERVATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY

Summer 2016

Volume 8 No. 2

## 2016 CALENDAR JUNE- AUGUST

### WALKING TOUR

June 4, 1:30 pm\*

*Introduction to Cypress Lawn*  
Docent: Terry Hamburg



### HERITAGE SUNDAY LECTURE

June 5, 2:00 pm\*\*\*

*THE CALIFORNIA MISSION MYTH –  
Like Peasants in an Italian Opera*  
Professor Michael Svanevik



### SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURE

June 12, 2:00pm\*\*

*THE UNTOLD STORY  
OF THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE*  
Lecturer: Author John Hansen



### WALKING TOUR

June 18, 1:30 pm\*

*PAUL BUNYAN, BABE AND  
THE CALIFORNIA FOREST—  
Lumber Kings*  
Professor Michael Svanevik



### SPECIAL EVENT

June 18, Sold Out

*CYPRESS LAWN  
NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY SEMINAR*  
Ticket holders only



### ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR

June 25, 12 noon -2 pm\*\*

*HOW TO CREATE A  
COMPREHENSIVE ESTATE PLAN*



### HERITAGE SUNDAY LECTURE

July 3, 2:00 pm\*\*\*

*INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY—  
San Francisco Grabs Center Stage, 1945*  
Professor Michael Svanevik



### WALKING TOUR

July 9, 1:30 pm\*

*OFTEN NEGLECTED NOTABLES —  
Little Known Names; Great Contributions*  
Professor Michael Svanevik



### SUNDAY AFTERNOON LECTURE

July 17, 2:00\*\*

*DISCOVERING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY*  
Genealogist Ron Filon

*Calendar continued on next page*

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE  
Light Refreshments Served

#### EVENT LOCATIONS:

\*Meet at Green Tent, East Side,  
Cypress Lawn.

\*\*Reception Room, Cypress Lawn

\*\*\*Crosby N Gray, Burlingame

## How Colma Became a Necropolis: A San Francisco Tale

Imagine a city banning new burials a mere fifty-one years after incorporation. Then imagine that city taking the next and drastic step little more than a decade later, doing the “unthinkable”—issuing an eviction order for all the dead.



*Oddfellows Cemetery*

That is exactly what happened in a metropolis that went from a raucous birth to rugged adulthood virtually overnight. Gunther Barth in his classic study called it an example of a rare “instant city.” San Francisco exploded from a hamlet of perhaps 800 inhabitants in 1849 to almost a 150,000 in two decades, and reached 342,782 by 1900. Boston had required two and half centuries to reach that population figure.

Of course, it was “gold in them thar hills!” that created San Francisco, which lay thousands of miles from the continent’s population, not to mention the Chinese, Australians, South Americans and Europeans who migrated to the gold fields. The formidable effort to get there and the urgency to build an urban complex combined with the peculiar geography of San Francisco to forge a unique urban cauldron. Everything that happened in such a setting was “time compressed,” which is a critical factor in understanding how the eviction of the dead unfolded.

Because of the arduous journey to the West coast, it remained for many years a population of males, not women or families. Of the estimated 34,000 people who sailed through the Golden Gate in the first year of the gold rush, only about 700 were female. Men who came wanted to grab fortune first and figure out the

*Please turn to page 6*

## From the President’s Desk

*Kenneth E. Varner*



As a Grand Victorian Cemetery with its roots in America’s Garden Cemetery movement of the 1800’s, Cypress Lawn has many assets that make it one of the best examples of its kind on the West Coast. Starting with the Arboretum, Cypress Lawn has a collection of trees native to the east coast, not the west coast, in concert with the garden cemeteries of the east coast. Then there is our Noble Chapel designed from the St. Giles Chapel in Pokes Stokes, England, which is another element of a Grand Victorian cemetery. Additionally, there is the art, architecture and monuments of Cypress Lawn with their Beaux-Arts influence and features that are reminiscent of the original garden cemetery—Pere Lachaise in Paris. A very

*Please turn to page 7*

**2016 CALENDAR  
JUNE- AUGUST**

*continued from page 1*

**WALKING TOUR**  
July 23, 1:30 pm\*  
**NEW TALES ABOUT  
OLD ACQUAINTANCES** —  
*What Books Don't Reveal*  
Professor Michael Svanevik

**WALKING TOUR**  
August 6, 1:30\*  
**INTRODUCTION TO CYPRESS LAWN**  
Docent: Terry Hamburg

**HERITAGE SUNDAY LECTURE**  
August 7, 2:00 pm\*\*\*  
**WHO BUT HOOVER?** —  
*The Nation's Neglected Giant*  
Professor Michael Svanevik

**WALKING TOUR**  
August 13, 1:30 pm\*  
**ANNUAL VICTORIAN  
RE-ENACTORS TOUR**  
Docent: Terry Hamburg

**ANTIQUES APPRAISAL EVENT**  
August 21, 2:00 pm\*\*  
Appraiser: Terry Hamburg

**WALKING TOUR**  
August 27, 1:30 pm\*  
**LEGENDARY PERSONALITIES:  
More Than Merely the Facts**  
Professor Michael Svanevik

**ALL EVENTS ARE FREE**  
*Light Refreshments Served*

**EVENT LOCATIONS:**  
\*Meet at Green Tent, East Side,  
Cypress Lawn.  
\*\*Reception Room, Cypress Lawn  
\*\*\*Crosby N Gray, Burlingame

**Cypress Lawn  
Cemetery Association**

Cypress Lawn is a 501 (c)(13) not for profit corporation established in 1892 by a group of prominent and responsible citizens, headed by Hamden Noble, determined to provide a decent cemetery for all creeds and races as well as "an attractive and pleasing place for meditation of the living." Today, over a hundred years later, Cypress Lawn stands as a testament to the vision of these men when they proclaimed, "... in the fullness of time, the cemetery...will form an extensive park, rich in foliage, flowers, mausoleums, statuaries and other works of art ... a handsome gift to posterity."

**Woodsmen of the World at Rest in Cypress Lawn**

Tucked away in Section F on the East Side of Cypress Lawn lay more than a dozen Woodsmen of the World monuments, products of a "fraternal benefit society" that administers a privately held insurance fund of which a main benefit is funeral coverage. Beginning in 1882, it has undergone many mergers and transformations and still operates today.

The Cypress Lawn examples are all prior to 1940, when the distinctive stumps, memorials, and emblems were in vogue. Local groups are organized into "camps." The original inspiration for the group came from the founder, who hearing a sermon about "pioneer woodsmen clearing away the forest to provide for their families," wanted to start a society that "would clear away problems of financial security for its members."



**? WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT CYPRESS LAWN ?**

Which of the following dozen are at rest in Cypress Lawn Memorial Park?

- Mayor Joseph Alioto
- Mayor James Van Ness
- Joe DiMaggio
- Lefty O'Doul
- Eddie Fisher
- Family of Tony Bennett
- Family of Johnny Mathis



- Lawrence Ferlinghetti
- Hiram Johnson
- Emperor Norton
- Ellis Brooks
- John McLaren

*Answers to quiz on page 7*

**THE CYPRESS LAWN HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

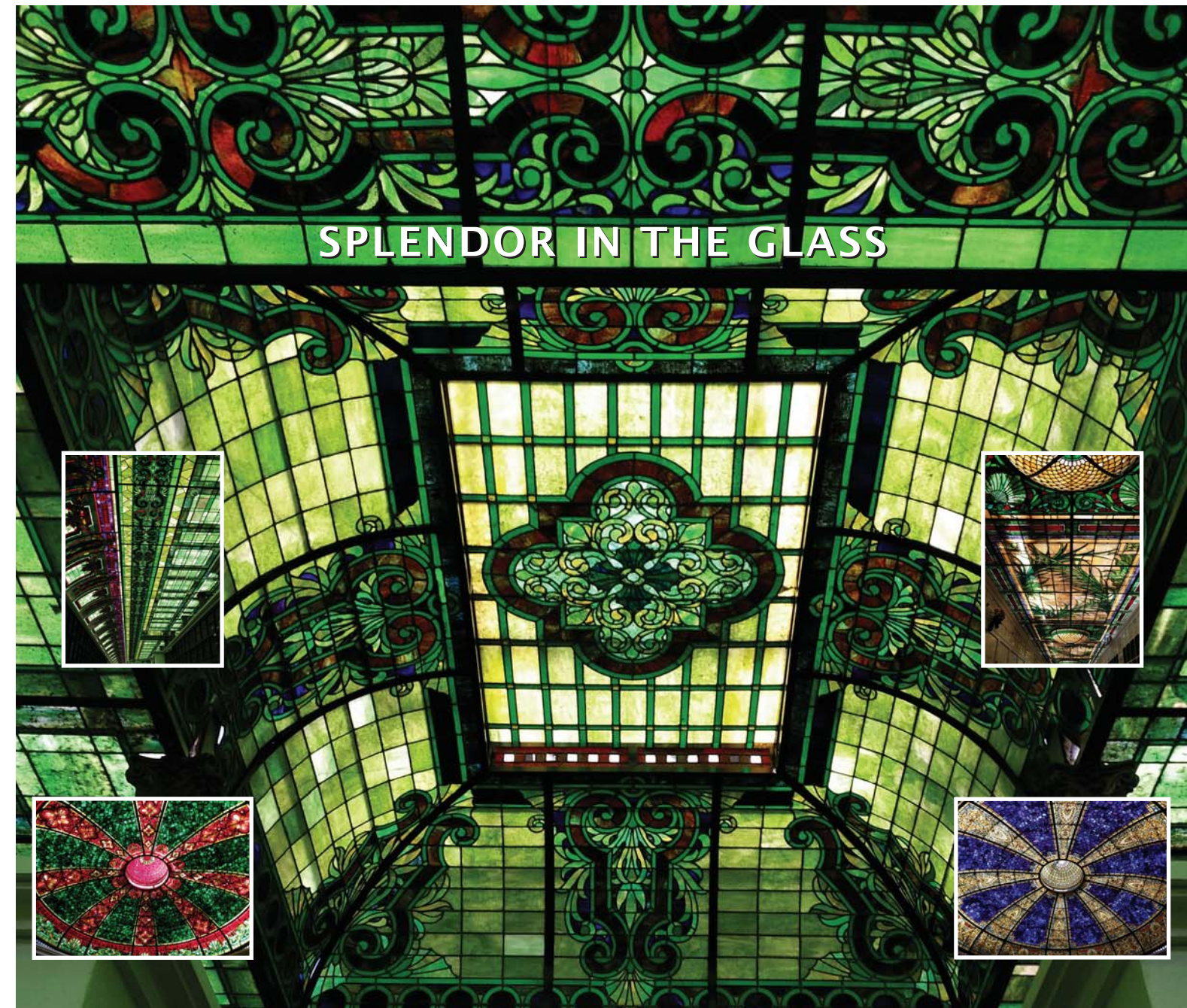
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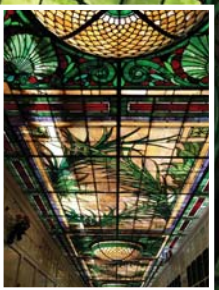
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**SPLENDOR IN THE GLASS**



When the original Cypress Lawn Cemetery offices in San Francisco were destroyed in the earthquake of 1906, founder Hamden Holmes Nobles hired eminent architect Bernard Cahill, a specialist in mausoleum design and mortuary architecture, whose body of work includes the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (San Francisco), Evergreen Cemetery Memorial Building (Oakland), the St. Mary's Cemetery mausoleum (Sacramento), and the Diamond Head Memorial Park in Honolulu.

For Cypress Lawn, Cahill designed a Mediterranean, single-story, smooth stucco-covered columned office in Colma and, continuing the architectural scheme, a public mausoleum and catacombs on the knoll behind. That mausoleum was acclaimed, especially for its elaborate ceilings, planned by Cahill to be composed of colored glass set in artistic patterns that

would allow natural light to penetrate and filter through the ceiling. Cahill believed that the antidote to the darkness of death should be an abundance of light and color. Notably, not one of the four acres of catacomb ceilings is ecclesiastical in nature.

The most dramatic of these works are in the earliest catacombs, completed prior to World War I when further export of the valuable stained glass from England and Germany was forbidden. The opalescent ceilings were constructed by West Coast artists, most prominently brothers Harry and Bert Hopps of San Francisco's United Glass Company. Other stained glass masterpieces from the company are the dome at the City of Paris Department Store (preserved by Nieman-Marcus) and domes at the Hi-bernia Bank, the Palace Hotel, and San Francisco City Hall.



## PAST EVENTS

### What do Bay Area Ohlone Indians, Fung Shui, and the World War II San Francisco Homefront have in common?



All were topics at our last three monthly Sunday Afternoon Lectures.

### Understanding Cremation

Our first informational event on cremation as a personal choice was very well attended. Mary Ann Cruz, the Director of the Cypress Lawn Cremation Society, fielded a surprisingly large array of questions from curious participants. In the recent \$5.2 million renovation of historic Noble Chapel, the adjoining crematorium also was updated with start-of-art equipment. The Chapel can provide a beautiful and convenient place for a cremation memorial service. Although scattering remains continues to be a popular option, glass niche placement is more and more common. The group went on a post-talk tour of such niches in our Columbarium.

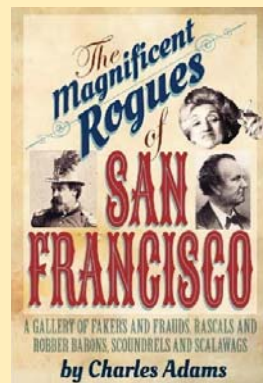
Since there is an obvious demand for more knowledge of cremation, Cypress Lawn will host this event again.



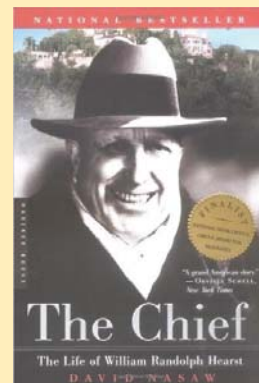
### CYPRESS LAWN BOOK CLUB

We continue to turn the page on a new book every month and have a lively time talking about it.

Join our Book Club. For more information contact Terry Hamburg at [thamburg@cypresslawn.com](mailto:thamburg@cypresslawn.com) or 650.550.8812



April Selection



May Selection

Answers to Cypress Lawn Quiz on page 2

#### At Rest in Cypress Lawn

- Mayor Joseph Alioto
- Mayor James Van Ness
- Lefty O'Doul
- Eddie Fisher
- Family of Johnny Mathis
- Hiram Johnson
- Ellis Brooks
- John McLaren

## Upcoming Events

### Free ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR

*A Loving Gift to Family and Friends: How to Create a Comprehensive Estate Plan*

**Date & Time:** Sunday June 25, 10 am-12 noon

**Location:** Cypress Lawn Memorial Park, 1370 El Camino Real, Colma

Learn how to use estate-planning tools and other strategies that protect you during life, and at death, and support those you love.

We spend hours planning life-changing events but often leave the details of the one inevitable event to grieving relatives.

This seminar will:

- ✓ Explain ways of seamlessly transferring what you own at death to those you love
- ✓ Give you practical tools for financial management if you suffer disability
- ✓ Allow you to control your future health care
- ✓ Help you guide and support your loved ones at a time of great stress

An Estate-planning attorney will discuss essential documents that control your future: wills, living trusts, powers of attorney, and advance health care directives. One on one with speakers is available after the Seminar.

The event is for educational purposes only. No financial instruments or services will be offered.

All participants will receive a complimentary estate planning guide. The seminar is free but reservations are requested. For reservations, please call 650.755-0580 or for additional information, email Director of Development Terry Hamburg at [thamburg@cypresslawn.com](mailto:thamburg@cypresslawn.com). *Light refreshments provided.*



### Return to Those Exciting Days of Yesteryear Annual Victorian Days Re-enactors Tour

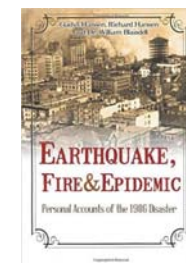
**Date & Time:** Saturday, August 13

**Location:** Cypress Lawn, 1370 El Camino Real, Under the Green Tent on the East Side

The public is invited to come in costume (or modern garb). Each year Cypress Lawn in association with the San Mateo

County Historical Association hosts a Victorian Days Walking Tour of the grounds and monuments. You never know what historical figures will show up to entertain you! *Light refreshments served.*

### Entertaining & Educational



#### Story of the 1906 Earthquake & How New Research is Done

**Speaker:** Author Richard Hansen

**Date & Time:** 2:00 pm, Sunday June 12

**Location for all 3 Events:** Cypress Lawn Reception Center, 1370 El Camino Real, Colma

*Light refreshments served.*

#### Discovering Your Family History

**Speaker:** Genealogist Ron Filon

**Date & Time:** 2:00 pm, Sunday July 17



#### Antiques Appraisal Event: "Treasures in the Trunk"

Bring up to two items to be appraised before the audience

**Appraiser:** Retired antiques dealer, Terry Hamburg

**Date & Time:** 2 pm, Sunday August 21

**How Colma Became a Necropolis:  
A San Francisco Tale**  
*continued from page 1*

future later. Even those who set down roots—such as the merchants who “mined the miners”—were uncertain how long this burgeoning Wild West outpost could endure. As many people seemed to depart as to arrive.

Even after some stability emerged in the 1860s, there remained a stunted sense of tradition, family, and legacy. Notwithstanding the mansions of Russian Hill and the importation of art and artifacts from the East, San Francisco was in many ways a glorified transient mining town. The worldwide Depression of the 1870s hit San Francisco hard and reinforced this uneasy perception. It would take a worldwide recovery and the discovery of the Nevada Comstock Silver Lode financed by San Franciscans to calm doubts and propel The City into a second wind of ascendancy.

In the early years, there was little time for urban planning, which resulted in the often rough and unceremonious disposal of the dead—numerous projects of “bury and move” from one location to another.

Much of what is now San Francisco was then regarded as God-forsaken sand dunes and marshes—called appropriately the Outside Lands—that few believed could become an integral part of city life. Here seemed to be the perfect place to permanently locate The City’s cemeteries. After all, there was skepticism that this area, home to dairy farmers and squatters, would soon, if ever, be cultivated for extensive residency.

Cemetery developers were the among the area’s pioneers. Citizens in more inhabited parts of The City clearly wanted the cemeteries and graveyards out of sight and out of mind. Between 1854 and 1867, the 160-acre Lone Mountain Cemetery was subdivided between the Masons, Oddfellows, the

Catholic Archdiocese, and a group of wealthy investors who named their section Laurel Hill. All the cemeteries were well appointed and landscaped. They were away from the heart of urban life yet close enough for an easy day trip by horse. At that point, these institutions seemed secure. As late as 1889, the San Francisco Examiner described the Outside Lands as “sand and lupin and lupin and sand and nothing else until the cliff’s hanging over the ocean.”

Just a little more than a decade later the Board of Supervisors determined that “the burial of the dead within The City is dangerous to life and detrimental to public health.” Mayor James Phelan approved Ordinance No. 25, which made it illegal to bury or cremate a body anywhere in San Francisco after August 1, 1901.

What happened to change public opinion so quickly? “Instant city” time compression was at work. The Outside Lands developed more rapidly than anticipated, spurred in part by streetcar lines. In the 1890s, the emergence of centralized, pro-active city planning—part of a nationwide movement—hastened the rate of residential expansion in what was now dubbed the Richmond District. A pro-growth, anti-cemetery stance was associated with “progressivism.” The timing of the first formal “improvement club” that called for the removal of the cemeteries coincided with the opening of Golden Gate Park during the Midwinter Exposition of 1894. A few years later, San Francisco converted the City Cemetery on the western edge of Outside Lands into Lincoln Park.

The garden cemetery movement of the 19th century was an effort to replace dilapidated church graveyards with cemeteries resembling a gracious arboretum city park. These cemeteries were intended as civic institutions designed for community use. Before the widespread development of municipal parks in the late 19th century, they



*Masonic Cemetery*

provided a place for the public to enjoy refined outdoor recreation previously available only to the wealthy. The Lone Mountain properties, especially Laurel Hill, were garden cemeteries and for a brief time did serve that civic function. However, not only did the new municipal parks take over the recreational purpose once filled by the Lone Mountain garden cemeteries, it also signaled The City’s commitment to investing in the development of the Outside Lands.

Among city leaders there was a sense of playing “catch up” with established cities, a psycho-emotional by-product of the instant city mentality—a melding of vision and mania that also provided a way for business leaders who had developed a big financial stake in city growth to protect and expand their positions. Gunther Barth observes that San Francisco “bred a state of mind that worshiped the useful and elevated the practical to a culture.” Tradition and continuity were often sacrificed in the process. A cemetery was something that got in the way, not a tribute to the past that for most San Franciscans—unlike those in settled parts of the country—consisted of less than a generation on their adopted land.

Although not universally perceived as such at the time, Ordinance No. 25 was the de facto end of cemeteries in San Francisco, a goal that was likely in the minds of those who promoted the Ordinance. In order to accrue revenue to maintain grounds and monuments, a cemetery needs to sell property. Backed by fraternal organizations, the Catholic Church, and in the case of Laurel Hill, some of the wealthiest families in The City, the cemeteries had not anticipated the need for a formal endowment system, which was a relatively new idea where each person purchasing a property is accessed a fee that goes into an interest-bearing fund that provides a stream of revenue independent of sales. The once proud cemeteries began to deteriorate.

The earthquake of 1906 added to Lone Mountain’s woes as tombstones and statues tumbled down and few were ever repaired. In 1914, the Board



*Laurel Hill Cemetery*

of Supervisors reiterated its conviction that The City’s cemeteries were a health hazard but this time mandated their removal. Much to his credit, Mayor James Rolf, although he agreed with the idea, refused to implement such a drastic measure without public approval. A vigorous election produced a clear mandate to keep the cemeteries. Another attempt to remove them failed in 1924, but that election result was a razor thin majority.

By this time, southern land just outside the jurisdiction of San Francisco, which would eventually be incorporated as Lawndale and then Colma, were in full development. With the handwriting on the tombstone clear well before the 1901 vote to ban new burials, the Catholic Archdiocese, Jewish congregations, and non-denominational visionary Hamden Holmes Noble had begun their cemeteries between 1887 and 1892. Others soon followed. And many individual memorials and mausoleums during this time were moved from the Lone Mountain cemeteries to Colma.

In 1930, the courts decided that San Francisco had the right to remove all cemeteries under zoning laws to “abate public nuisances.” When the Board of Supervisors set its deadline for complete cemetery removal in 1937, the Masons and Oddfellows were gone and only Calvary and Laurel Hill were left to fight. Calvary surrendered and agreed to move to Holy Cross in Colma. Laurel Hill, home to many important pioneers and builders of San Francisco, resisted. Residents rejected historical and sentimental arguments, even refused to envision a reduced memorial area to celebrate San Francisco culture and draw tourists, as was done in New York, Baltimore, and New Orleans. Again, it was put to a vote. The proposition lost by a 2-1 margin. Some 35,000 souls were removed from Laurel Hill and interred at Cypress Lawn in a special area called Pioneer Mound.

Was San Francisco the only city

that relocated cemeteries for the living? Hardly. It happened in New York, Chicago, Boston and other urban areas. San Francisco was the only one that completely removed the deceased. The Presidio National Cemetery remained but this was federal property. There are three major factors that led to the eviction of the dead from San Francisco.

The City was set on a 47.3 square mile peninsula with nowhere to expand. It was the City and County of San Francisco, and its southern jurisdiction stopped at what would become San Mateo County.

San Francisco grew at an unprecedented pace, which set in motion an “instant city” time compression mentality. Other urban areas had the opportunity for thoughtful evolution. As a wealthy, ambitious upstart city that yearned to join the historic national urban elite as soon as possible, San Francisco never allowed itself that luxury. Ultimately, it was a choice, not a destiny.

The constituency for cemetery preservation was weak. Even by the early twentieth century, San Francisco lacked a substantial genealogical heritage. A young man arrives in 1860. Unlike some contemporaries, he finds a wife in a city where men far outnumbered women. But his mother, father, uncles and aunts, and perhaps his siblings and nephews and nieces are back East. If the public wants to move all the deceased from the city limits, how much does he care? He isn’t a stakeholder in that decision. Without history you can touch, without familial roots, without local community tradition, why not get rid of that run down cemetery across the street so your son has the chance to set up his bicycle shop right near home? Your immediate family can be buried in one of those beautiful new cemeteries in Colma. And the streetcar line goes right to their gates. ❖

— Terry Hamburg  
Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation

**From the President’s Desk**

*continued from page 1*

influential and most visited asset of Cypress Lawn is our collection of stained glass, one of the largest on the west coast. In this edition of the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation’s newsletter, we are featuring a part of this grand collection of stained glass.

A project that Cypress Lawn has undertaken and our Board of Directors has recently approved and funded is the photographing of all the burial sites, features, architecture, buildings inside & out, which will be placed on the Association’s website for families and interested individuals to view. This will allow you to see all of our gardens, arboretum, art and architecture from a ground level position. You will be able to walk into our buildings and view our stained glass, all from the comfort of your home. Of course, we want you to come to Cypress Lawn to experience our wonderful assets in person but this new feature that is being developed will allow you to have a virtual experience of Cypress Lawn. We are very excited about this new project and all that it offers.

The virtualization of Cypress Lawn is part of a bigger project that includes a private family website where Cypress Lawn families can store and view family pictures, videos, documents and memories. Coming soon, you will also be able to add a family tree to your family website, all supported by the largest endowment care trust in Northern California. Cypress Lawn is very different than other cemeteries; please explore and ask questions about what is possible at Cypress Lawn.

Lastly, I would encourage you to be in contact with the Foundation’s Director of Development, Terry Hamburg, who is a wealth of knowledge on all programming including schedules, membership, major gifts and planned gifts. If you would like to be a contributor to the stewardship and history that is Cypress Lawn, Terry can explain all the different ways you can contribute.

All the Best,  
Ken



*Removal of remains at Masonic Cemetery*

**CYPRESS LAWN  
HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

A non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation promoting Cypress Lawn Cemetery as a historical and educational resource for the Bay Area community

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The *Heritage Newsletter* is published by the Cypress Lawn Heritage Foundation, a subsidiary corporation of Cypress Lawn Cemetery Association

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## Views of Cypress Lawn

