



In general, power tools aren't used during cemetery restorations, according to Marion "Mick" Hersey, National Historical Preservationist. However, exceptions are sometimes made. Here, Roy Harlson grinds away old mortar from a base stone which had been combined with an unmatched headstone in a memorial corner created in the corner of Sequim Pioneer Memorial Park.



Using a chisel and hammer, Chris Smith chips away white mortar from the headstone of the infant son of R. and Eleanor Irwin, "God for him his angels sent," can be read. The inscription will gradually become more legible thanks to work from Sequim Prairie Garden Club members and volunteers. Next to the infant's headstone sits that of George W. Caskedy. "Not a lot of information is available on Caskedy," said Priscilla Hudson, the club's historian, "because he was such a young kid. His father was W.M. Caskedy, born in Ohio. His mother, Emma, was born in Minnesota." Caskedy was 15 when he died. Hudson said that there was no death certificate or newspaper reference, and nothing at the LDS family history center. George Caskedy's headstone was cleaned and reset in the corner of Pioneer Memorial Park with a collection of other headstones from the late 1800s to the early 1900s by volunteers this autumn. Sequim Gazette photos by Emily Matthiessen

# 'Gone but not forgotten'

## Sequim Prairie Garden Club members, helpers using modern methods to honor the dead

BY EMILY MATTHIESSEN  
Sequim Gazette

"George is gone but not forgotten," reads the inscription on George W. Caskedy's headstone. The 15-year-old George died July 8, 1904, his exact age meticulously carved into limestone.

Members of the Sequim Prairie Garden Club and the Michael Trebert Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and other

volunteers, under guidance from National Historical Preservationist Marion "Mick" Hersey, have been working to ensure that his inscription stays true 117 years later, although all who knew him have now passed on.

"When you're doing restoration, your ultimate goal is to make it better and more visible than what you started with," said Hersey, who came several times from Kitsap

County to volunteer his help improving the memorial of more than two dozen headstones clustered together in the southwest corner of Pioneer Memorial Park.

Last Saturday, a group of about a dozen volunteers — including 3-year-old Addy — gathered to reattach headstones to matching bases and continue cleaning and piecing together broken headstones.

When the memorial was

first created in 1967, the headstones were mortared to improperly matched foundations, and the concrete they were placed in was poured without much preparation of the ground.

Each generation of preservationists did the "best it could," according to Sequim Prairie Garden Club historian Priscilla Hudson, during the era in which they were responsible for the remains of the cemetery located on the 4 acres deeded in 1888 to Clallam County by John Bell — which over time became the verdant park on East Washington Street.

The Garden Club has been caring for the property for more 70 years, since January 8, 1951, "(when) the club voted to improve the old cemetery grounds ... to give the town of Sequim a park of which to be proud," according to "Sequim Prairie Garden Club and Pioneer Memorial Park: the Early Years," a history compiled by Hudson and Laura Singer.

Today's preservationists are working on the possible last phase of a century long intermittent effort to preserve the headstones of Pioneer Memorial Park, following modern methods taught by Hersey.

Using a combination of

hand tools, power tools, Orvus detergent, epoxy and a cleaner called D/2 Biological Solution, they detached headstones from mismatched foundation stones, cleaned them, chipped or ground away old white mortar and epoxied broken pieces together, then epoxied them to matching bases in an effort to preserve the memory of these people who once walked the streets of Sequim — people once known and beloved, whose stones are now a reminder of the passage of time and the transience of human life within the city.

Hersey said that next spring when the air is warm enough, Lithomex will be applied to seal the uneven areas between the headstones and bases.

Members of the Garden Club said they are considering repainting the parts of

the headstones that originally had color in spring as well.

### Closing time

According to Hudson and Singer's history, by 1909 the little Sequim Cemetery had been Sequim's only cemetery for 20 years. But by 1919 it was closed.

"The high water table at that time was causing problems — caskets would sometimes float to the surface," the history notes. "The land was next to a field occasionally flooded by run-off from Bell Creek and at times became a marsh."

The Sequim Cemetery Association decided to close the cemetery and relocate as many of the burials and gravestones as they had family permission and ability to do. Many of those are now

See GARDEN CLUB, A-17



Priscilla Hudson of the Sequim Prairie Garden Club compiled a history of the club and Pioneer Memorial Park in Sequim with Laura Singer in which readers can find more information about the headstones clustered in the corner of the park, a reminder that the 4 acres was a cemetery at the turn of the 20th century. Behind Hudson, volunteers work to restore the headstones of people who died more than a hundred years ago.



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