

THE HISTORIC *Union Cemetery* REDWOOD CITY, CA



Winter newsletter

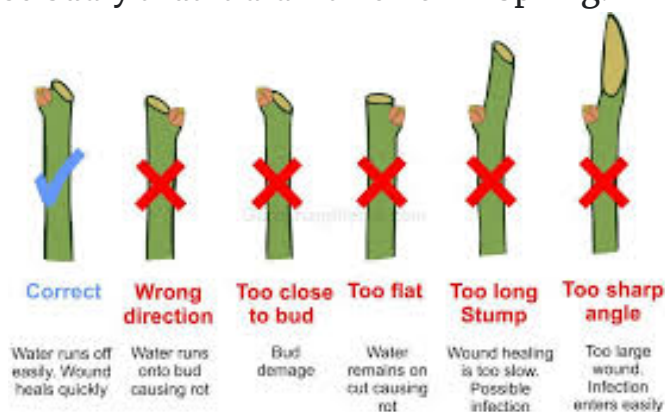


Hello Union Cemetery Enthusiasts,

First, we are holding our annual membership drive (last page) and we hope you will renew or join as HUCA members.



Our biggest winter event will be the annual Rose Pruning which will take place every Saturday in January at 10am until we're done. If you've never done it before, we will teach you. Below is starter information....believe me, it's easy and no one has ever damaged a rose bush so badly that it didn't flower in Spring.



If you'd like to help, no matter how briefly, we'd really appreciate it. All you need to bring is clippers and good gloves-those thorns can hurt! Just show up; remember we don't have toilets or water fountains available.

Once again this year, Union Cemetery will work in cooperation with Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and Wreaths Across America to honor our ~ 185 Veterans at Union Cemetery. The cemetery is truly beautiful after the wreaths are laid in place from December 14th to about mid January. We hope you will come and see it.



At our annual meeting in November, we held elections and myself, Janet Lawson and Bridgett Cotrell remain in our former positions. Tim Lawson will become treasurer. Jean Tomatis held the treasurer position for dozens of years and we are eternally grateful for her long and excellent service to HUCA.



THANK YOU JEAN

We had a wonderful concert in the Cemetery on November 10. The Wandering Bow, playing Civil War era music, entertained us for a couple of hours with the beautiful autumn leaves as a backdrop. Thanks to those who attended.



At our last membership report, we were just shy of 100 members. We work very hard to keep the Historic Union Cemetery an interesting, safe and peaceful community asset. We are committed to continuing and your membership supports our efforts. We'd be very gratified if you'd join HUCA and raise our membership to closer to 200. The details are on the last page.

Please enjoy this fascinating history of our beloved Palmer family and come join us on a tour in 2025!

Happy Holidays

Kathy Klebe - President Kklebe@historicunioncemetery.org

Janet Lawson - VP

Bridgett Cottrell - Secretary

Tim Lawson - Treasurer

Maggie Coleman - Membership

Barry Kuhl

Roy Klebe

Don Bach

Dana Montoro

Ellery Dake

Jean Tomatis

Don Tomatis

The Palmer Children: One Family's Story of Resilience and Remembrance

Nestled within the historic Union Cemetery lie the graves of the Palmer children—a poignant reminder of the challenges and tragedies that shaped early California life. The Palmer children, siblings whose lives were cut tragically short, are memorialized by a beautiful marble obelisk along Central Avenue. In the spring, when the roses are in bloom, a large, fragrant pink rose bush hugs the side of their memorial. Six of the seven children of Jesse and Emily Palmer are buried in this plot, each of their names and dates etched into the stone to ensure they are remembered.

At the base of the stone, an inscription reads:

*These lovely buds so young and fair
Called hence by early doom
Just came to show how sweet those flowers
In Paradise could bloom.*

The Palmer Family

Jesse and Emily Palmer, natives of England, married in the late 1860s and lived on the coast in San Gregorio. Jesse was instrumental in the development of the coastal community, building bridges and fences for neighbors and farming the land. According to one newspaper report, Jesse was known for growing cauliflower weighing over 16 pounds! The Palmers were also good friends of San Mateo County coroner James Crowe, whose handwritten records documenting burials in Union Cemetery continue to guide preservation efforts today.

Despite their contributions to the community, the Palmers' family life was marked by profound loss. Their first child, baby Joseph, died in 1870 at just 20 days old. Three years later, little William passed away at 1.5 years old. Cemetery records do not list a cause of death for either child; however, childhood diseases were the leading cause of death among children at the time. In 1880, up to 43% of children did not live to their fifth birthday.

The Christmas Time Tragedy of 1886

The family's most devastating loss came in December 1886 when four of the five remaining children contracted diphtheria, a highly contagious bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. Vaccines for diphtheria did not become widely available until the 1920s. Up until then, the disease was a death sentence for those who contracted it.

Within a span of 11 days (Dec. 5-16), diphtheria claimed the lives of Lottie (age 9), George (age 13), Albert (age 6), and Jesse (age 4). Eleven-year-old Rebecca was spared, as she had been staying at the home of a family friend during the outbreak. Rebecca's survival brought some solace to the grieving parents, and she lived into adulthood, eventually running the San Gregorio hotel alongside her father. The hotel building still stands today, though it has been repurposed.

A Legacy of Remembrance

When Jesse Palmer passed away in 1921, 35 years after the loss of his four children, he was buried in Cypress Lawn in Colma. Emily ensured that the names of all six of their deceased children were inscribed on his headstone so that they would always be remembered. Emily joined Jesse in 1931, and Rebecca and her family were later buried alongside them. Emily's obituary lovingly lists all seven of her children by name, honoring her wish that their memories live on.

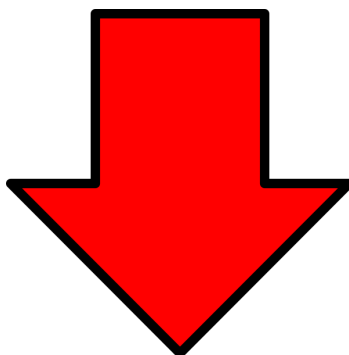
Reflecting on the Past

When you stroll through Union Cemetery, take a moment to sit on the bench near the Palmer plot and reflect on the lives cut tragically short. The rose bush that blooms each spring stands as a silent testament to the love and loss that defined the Palmer family's story. Their history is one of resilience and remembrance, offering a window into the hardships faced by early California settlers.

The Palmer family's story is one of countless narratives woven into the fabric of Union Cemetery, each offering a glimpse into the lives and legacies of Redwood City's earliest residents. By remembering them, we honor not only their lives but also the enduring spirit of our shared history.

Contributed by Janet Lawson, VP - H.U.C.A.

MEMBERSHIP INFO



2025 Membership in the Historic Union Cemetery Association

We are grateful to those of you who have supported us in the past and encourage non-members to join as well. We offer a few perks for membership such as a special event or two during the year. We hope you will renew your HUCA membership for 2025. Individual membership is only \$25 per year and family/organization membership is \$50.

Monies raised help our organization achieve our goals:

- Maintaining this important landmark now, and for future generations by replacing and repairing damage following appropriate state and federal guidelines.
- Through written, verbal and online communication we promote public awareness of the Cemetery's value as a historic resource. This includes outreach to local schools.

Maggie Coleman, Membership Chair, maggiecoleman@comcast.net

You can renew or join three ways:

1. Online via the HUCA website www.historicunioncemetery.org under the Contribute>Membership tab. You can pay with a Debit or Credit card.

2. Mail a check to:

Historic Union Cemetery Association

P.O. Box 610033

Redwood City, CA 94063

3. Pay via Palpal at hucamembership@gmail.com

Many thanks for your continuing support,

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___ Individual \$25

___ Business/Organization/Family \$50

___ Donation \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Do you have family buried at Union Cemetery: _____ Who? _____

