Honorary Members

The board discussed and approved the Honorary Member for a one year period. The Honorary members was set forth for children and grandchildren or other family members who might find the need for their help in keeping the cemetery going.

We need new “Blood” and new ideas and support of the Union Campground Cemetery Association.

Rob Chandler was elected to position of President. Rob is not a stranger to the Association. He has been on the Board of Directors for several years. The following are newly elected board members: Joan Coonrod, Raymond Ellison & Ben Gravey.

Membership to the Union Campground Cemetery Association is: $15.00 for a single member and $25.00 for a couple.

Condolences go out to the family and many friends of Jim Mott.
February 20, 1966
July 19, 2003

The following article was written by Sarah Overstreet in the Springfield News-Leader June 10, 2003.

You have to fight like a soldier to visit the old Union Cemetery.

On a steep, brush-covered rise over a hill from U.S. 65 near Interstate 44 is a small community cemetery where many local citizens were buried from 1840 to the mid-1920’s. Some of them were Union soldiers.

It’s been named to the Greene County Historic Sites Register after an extensive history search, largely by Jean Rayl with help from other members of the Union Campground Cemetery Association whose ancestors are buried there. But you can’t see it unless you’re physically fit, not afraid of ticks and snakes and don’t mind scrambling through a barbed wire fence.

It’s landlocked. The cemetery association owns a deed to the cemetery, but since 65 blocked its old road in the early 1980s, the owners of land around it have allowed one way into the cemetery.

“That’s to park on the highway, and you can’t get a brushhog across the ravines that have washed away in over 160 years and across a steep drainage ditch,” Rayl said. “You can’t even take a lawnmower down there.” association member Vera Chandler added.

Missouri law states that anyone who wants to visit a private cemetery surrounded by privately owned land, “for which no public ingress or egress is available, shall have the right to reasonable ingress or egress for purposes of visiting such cemetery.”

The law says nothing about mowing, brushhoggging, maintaining it or otherwise making it safe to tread. I sure don’t consider the current “ingress and egress” reasonable, and if they can’t brushhog, how “reasonable” is it to have to grope through small, fallen trees and vines lurking among the ground cover just waiting to hook an ankle?

Still, an attorney told them their only option is to ask a court to grant access for an easement, pay the property owner for the easement, then face court costs and legal fees of up to $12,000. That’s before making a new road for entry to the cemetery.

Now, there’s no way to bury a body there. “Before the highway came, when anyone died, they’d take the wagon as far as they could go, then carry the body the rest of the way,” Rayl said. Pity. The historic cemetery is still so quaint and lovely, sun streaming through the majestic trees as they guard the few tombstones left. A wrought iron gated yard gracefully protects one family’s remains. The three-acre cemetery was started by a body of Cumberland Presbyterians who built a church and campground on 39 acres, where a “union” of many churches held camp meetings.

“They came by wagon from miles away and had these protracted camp meetings, usually in the fall after harvest,” Rayl said. “It was a perfect site. It has a lovely spring running through it, a pond and the Little Sac River, and plenty of timber for their camp fires.”

After the Civil War the campground was sold, but Rayl was unable to find a record of why. “The church burned, and we don’t know why, either.” Still, the Union Campground Cemetery Association isn’t giving up. They hold a yearly potluck and music meeting each June, publish a newsletter and keep the faith that someday they’ll get back into the cemetery and restore their family graves.

“We’d sure like to have dinner on the grounds again,” Chandler said. “Oh, that was fun.”

Editors Note: Rob Chandler has been busy since he was elected President. His message is on page 2. Read it very carefully.
The Rectangular Survey System
by Jean Rayl

Napoleon needed money to finance his military campaigns. He agreed to sell the Louisiana Territory for $15,000,000 (4 cents per acre), and thus enabled the United States to expand its frontier. America grew from 17 states to include 6 more states and portions of 9 more. The territory west of the Mississippi River was an UN-populated wilderness, rich in timber, wildlife and water. All this was accomplished quietly with little notice, with very few diplomatic overtures.

After acquiring the land, the government then set up a system of transferring property to private ownership.

In the summer of 1994, an article appeared in The Ozar'Kin, written by Marsha Hoffman Rising. This article explains the Rectangular Survey System. Portions of her article are included in order to clarify how the government conducted surveys in order to sell land.

"Congress began this process with the Land Ordinance of 1785. They defined the basic steps in transferring the land as (1) survey prior to sale (2) the rectangular laying out of townships and sections (3) sales at public auctions and (4) the orderly recording of titles.*

"By 1835 when the Springfield Land Office opened, the minimum price had been set at $1.25 per acre and the minimum amount of land that could be purchased was forty acres. At each step in this process of converting public land to private, the government created paperwork and records...;"

"The problem for the modern family researcher is that few of those records are maintained by surname—the usual manner employed to search for our families. Instead, the records are arranged by land description and land office. Thus, to be able to use the federal land records created by our ancestor and his associates, we must first understand the rectangular survey system. This will aid us in four ways: (a) we can locate a specific parcel of land and therefore pinpoint the owner's location in the county (b) we can ascertain whose land adjoined and determine distances from one farm to another (c) we gain access to land records that are categorized by land description (d) we can account for the disposition of each parcel acquired by the individual studied. "Initiated in 1786 to survey the public federal land, this system divides the land into square mile sections—a checkerboard. First, a system of north-south meridians and intersecting east-west baselines provided the initial points for the township surveys. However, our focus on the Missouri Ozarks makes it easier for us as there are no base lines, and only on principal meridian in Missouri. (The closest baseline is in Arkansas.) Therefore, all land in the Ozarks is west of the principal meridian. Rows of townships (running north and south) and columns of ranges (running east and west) march out from those base lines and principal meridians. The first township north of the base line is defined as Township 1 N, the first township south of the base line is Township 1 S. The third range west of the fifth principal meridian is called Range 3E and so on. (see Figure 1 on the following page for further clarification).

"The squares that result from these township and range lines crossing are called townships. A township contains 36 sections. Each section contains 640 acres and those sections are divided into quarters. Thus, a complete land description for a certain 160 acres farm is stated as being in the SE 1/4 of Section 27, Township 30N, Range 21 W of the 5th principal Meridian (see Figure 2 on following page)."

GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is my pleasure to write to you at this time as President of the Union Campground Cemetery Association. Since the time of the Sarah Overstreet article in the Springfield News-Leader (see page 1 of this newsletter) we have made some strides toward gaining better access to the Cemetery. Some two years ago Jim Mott, Doug Rayl, and I were able to meet with Burt Pitchford, the Area Engineer for the Missouri Department of Transportation. At the time the meeting didn't seem particularly fruitful, but perhaps some seeds that were sown will bear fruit.

In the past few months Cindy Davison, a descendant of the Jeffries family that has relatives buried at the Union Campground Cemetery, had been working to achieve the same goal as our Association. We recently joined forces, and after another meeting now have the permission of Mr. Pitchford to "quietly" begin work on a walking trail access on the MODOT side of the fence, from Valley Water Mill Road to the cemetery! Quietly is the key word on this, as he doesn't want our work to be discovered by the local ATV enthusiasts before we have a chance to place a locked cable across the new entrance. (A big commotion at the site could jinx this!)

Although we don't (yet) have permission for an easement wide enough to drive a car over, perhaps at some not to distant time in the future (when they see that the access we were granted has caused them no trouble) we will be able to widen the path for vehicles. It also looks good (thanks to Jean Rayl) for us to have some help from a local ATV enthusiasts before we have a chance to place a locked cable across the new entrance. (A big commotion at the site could jinx this!)

Although we don't (yet) have permission for an easement wide enough to drive a car over, perhaps at some not to distant time in the future (when they see that the access we were granted has caused them no trouble) we will be able to widen the path for vehicles. It also looks good (thanks to Jean Rayl) for us to have some help from a local ATV enthusiasts before we have a chance to place a locked cable across the new entrance. (A big commotion at the site could jinx this!)

Please do not contact MODOT regarding this, as we don't have an actual permit in hand to authorize us to begin the work that will be necessary. Speaking of work, any of you that would be interested in helping are more than welcome to participate. Those involved in the initial stages will need to be able to use a trail saw or drag limbs over uneven ground, to then be stacked on a trailer for disposal elsewhere. Later on there will be work that more of you can help with, such as rake work, etc. Call me at 833-4501 for more information.

This good news is in part due to the efforts of Jim Mott, an Association member who passed from us tragically this summer. We want to honor those who have gone before us with our diligence to this and other projects. Thanks! RC
A farm in the top township would have its land description as T3N, R4E. A farm in the bottom township would be described as T4S, R2E.

The land marked here is located in Arkansas—the top parcel in Lee Co; the bottom in Phillips Co.

All townships are divided into 36 sections—never more. We can now get closer to pinpointing the location of a specific land parcel. Note that the numbers run snake-like rather than returning to the beginning of the row. We will now locate a farm in Section 27, Twp. 30N, Range 21W. In 1875, that farm belonged to Erastus McMurry who lived south of Fellows Lake on current Highway AA in Greene County, Missouri.

Townships were then divided into quarter sections that could be divided into quarter sections again. Thus, a 160 acre section could be divided into 80 acre, 40 acre and smaller parcels. For further clarification, these quarter sections are described as being in the northwest, southwest, northeast or northwest part of each township. Using Erastus McMurry again, his farm was located in the SE¼ of Section 27, Twp. 30N, Range 21W and marked by a ◇ in the diagram to the right.

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* From Greene County Archives bulletin entitled Missouri's Public Domain: United States Land Sales 1818-1922, Vol. II, No. 3, page 22: "Authorized by an Act of Congress of March 3, 1811, the actual sale of public lands within the present State of Missouri did not begin until 1818 due to the protracted struggle over the confirmation of Spanish land claims and the concomitant delay in public surveys. Created out of the Louisiana Purchase, the area now comprising the State of Missouri was subject to the laws of both France and Spain during its Colonial Period..."
The Union Campground Cemetery Association
Honorary Membership for 2004
-cemetery established in 1840-

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City: __________________ State __________ Zip __________
Phone: ____________________________
E-Mail: ____________________________
Membership Submitted By: ______________

You have been selected to receive a one-year Honorary Membership in The Union Campground Cemetery Association. This is an Organization that your parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, considers a worthwhile organization. They want to preserve this cemetery where some of their (your) ancestors are buried. The cemetery has been neglected, vandalized and now landlocked. The Missouri Highway Department cut the road off when new Highway 65 was built. There is no Legal access to the cemetery yet. Time has almost eradicated this cemetery. There are not many people who care about this cemetery. We currently have about 75 members. We need younger members, people who have an interest in this cemetery.

Our current dues are:

- Single Membership $15.00
- Family Membership $25.00

Descendants buried at the cemetery:

__________________________________________
__________________________________________
__________________________________________

Members

Send to: Larry Voris
2340 S. Luster
Springfield, MO 65804

You can photocopy this page if you need more copies.
OFFICERS 2003-2004

Rob Chandler, President
Bettie Hickman, Vice President
Jean Rayl, 2nd Vice President
Elaine Mott, Secretary
Larry Voris, Corresponding Sec’y
Pansy Harvey, Treasurer

Directors
James Appleby 2004
Margaret Bredeman 2004
Douglas Rayl 2004
Kay Witherspoon 2005
Jean Rayl 2005
Joan Coonrod 2006
Raymond Ellison 2006
Ben Gravely 2006

Cemetery Location:
US Hwy 65 North of I-44 at Valley Water Mill Road, Springfield, MO.

Address all inquiries to:
Jean Rayl
Union Campground Cemetery Assn.
3856 S. Jefferson
Springfield, MO 65807
417-881-4456

UNION CAMPGROUND CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
TREASURERS REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2003

Balance, April 1, 2003 $3,422.75

Receipts:

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Total Receipts $585.00

Disbursements:

Balance, October 1, 2003 $4,007.75