

Pleasant View Cemetery Tablet Restoration

Winter/Spring, 2014

Many of the hand-carved marble tablets at Pleasant View were broken off by vandals in the 1980's. Since then, most of them have been laying flat or had their remnants stuck directly in the ground. Because old marble is so porous and soft, these positions tend to hasten deterioration of the stone. Many original pieces and bases were missing.

This winter the board arranged with Graves Matter, a cemetery consulting and stone conservation company, to take on the restoration of 16 of our marble tablets with the goal of getting them securely upright using currently accepted best practices for stone conservation.

It has been a long process, but you can now see the results. Long buried monument pieces and original bases were discovered and restored to their originally intended positions. Please take the time to view the artwork and craftsmanship that is evident in so many of these old marble monuments.



Among the most exciting discoveries was the cross for the top of John Agorides. We were unaware that it existed and the rest of his monument and base used to look like a pile of rubble. Now it is intact and a prominent feature, the only monument of its type in our cemetery.

1. John G. Agorides 1899 -1920

Condition When Found

This monument had broken in two places, at its base and the top cross of the monument was missing entirely. The base was badly sunken and needed lifting and re-leveling.

Restoration

The base was excavated in order to lift and level. During this excavation, the missing cross originally belonging to the top of the monument was unearthed, mostly intact. During restoration, the monument was re-adhered using epoxy in both broken places. The base was raised, re-leveled, and the monument was restored to its original place on the base. Both cracks in the monument have been filled with lime mortar in order to give aesthetic appeal and create resistance to water ingress into the marble stone. The monument has been carefully cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

John Agorides was born in Greece and emigrated here with his family as a child. The family was living here at the time of the 1910 census but after John's death at the age of 20, the family moved away and no other Agorides are known to be buried here. This is the only cross-shaped monument at PVC. The concrete base also has uniquely shaped corners which are now clearly visible.

Results

This monument stands out as being the only one at PVC with a bright white cross on its top. It now stands straight and tall, once more intact and leveled. The tablet portion in the base was not straight with the base so it was leveled for the tablet, leaving the base slightly tipped, but the tablet straight. The middle portion of the monument, which accumulated lichen being above ground, should eventually turn the same white as its cross.



2. Fritz Wilson 1882 -1884

Condition When Found

This monument was lying on the ground face-up with no base in sight. It had what appeared to be a clean break at its base and needed obvious cleaning and lichen removal.

Restoration

Fritz' monument was removed and excavation was performed to ascertain whether a base might be found. The base was indeed resting below ground and found in good enough condition for further use. The base was raised and leveled. The tablet was re-adhered to the base with the use of epoxy. It has been cleaned with water and D2 and the crack filled with lime mortar.

Why It Matters

Fritz Wilson was the 16-month-old son of Charles Wilson, the postmaster for whom Wilsonville was named. Charles was born in Denmark and his wife, Fridericke Kurz Wilson, was born in Germany. This small delicately engraved stone is inscribed in German with the European style of date recording.

Results

Fritz is happily upright once again and is stable in his original base. The cleaning of the tablet is showing good results and looks whiter by the day. The remaining dark lichens will eventually disappear from the stone's interior.



3. Anna James 1828 -1886

Condition When Found

This tablet was lying on the ground when found, broken in three distinct pieces. The base had been unearthed during our initial investigations and needed to be raised from below ground and leveled.

Restoration

This monument and its base entailed several unforeseen challenges. The base was very deep and not easily raised or leveled. Once this had been accomplished, we undertook the re-piecing of the tablet itself, one piece at a time. The slot on the original base for this monument is not the proper depth to accommodate the height and weight of the tablet. We had several challenges working with this shallow slot and the re-adhering of the tablet into it. Because the stone is top heavy, we reinforced its fit into the slot with non-corrosive, permanent shims, which were installed before mortaring. Eventually, the entire tablet was successfully re-pieced and re-adhered to the base with epoxy, permanent shims, and lime mortar. We also found that the marble itself is bowed in the middle – a not uncommon occurrence when a tablet of this size and weight is down for many years. This makes it appear to be slanted from some angles. Each piece of the tablet has been mortared to hide the breaks and prevent further water damage to the stone.

Why It Matters

Anna James (maiden name unknown) was born in Ireland. She was married and living here at age 40 for the 1870 census. There are no children in the household and we don't know of any other relatives at PVC when she dies at age 58.. Since her husband, Martin, predeceases her, it is hard to know who would have had this very large, ornately carved tablet created for her memorial. It features a relief carving of feminine and masculine hands clasped in farewell. The elaborate edge carvings create a symbolic arch or gateway. The carver has used at least five different font styles.

Results

Anna's monument stands tall and straight now, toward the top of the hill. While the restoration of the stone and its base were more involved than expected, we are very pleased with the results. The cleaning of this monument will, as with all monuments, show whiter results within the coming months. The James monuments have certainly changed the look of the cemetery landscape!



2006



2014



2014

4. Martin James 1818 - 1882

Condition When Found

This broken monument was lying next to Anna James' monument on the ground, overgrown with grass. His base was not visible at the time. Survey photos show the upper part of the tablet was intact in 2006, but had been driven over multiple times. By 2009 the tablet had snapped below the hands and was in three pieces.

Restoration

The original base was found and unearthed, then raised and leveled. It was in good enough condition to be reused for its monument. This monument is only slightly smaller than Anna James'. Martin's was broken in two places, with uneven breaks, which posed challenges for re-adhering. The tablet was re-pieced and adhered to its base with epoxy and lime mortar. It has been given several thorough cleanings to expunge the lichens. The back still shows a very black type of lichen, but this too should fade away with time.

Why It Matters

Like his wife, Anna, we know very little about Martin James, who dies here at age 63.. He was born in Kentucky and was living here with Anna by 1870, perhaps much earlier. We have no record of children or other relatives at PVC. Like Anna's, his tablet features the clasped hands, but this one includes the banner "WE'LL MEET AGAIN". His also includes elaborate edge gateway carvings and multiple font styles. His original sandstone base has been carefully carved around the edges.

Results

While this tablet did require some tricky epoxying due to the very slanted break at its base, we are pleased to see Martin standing tall and straight next to his wife once more. The lichens in the marble will continue to fade in the coming months.



2006



2014



2014

5. Thomas M. Bell 1859 -1889

Condition When Found

This monument was broken in half with its lower half still in a sunken base below ground. The base needed to be raised and leveled. The break in the tablet was a fairly clean break and needed to be re-adhered to its other half.

Restoration

The original sandstone base was excavated, raised and leveled. It was found to be in good condition. The tablet was re-adhered with epoxy and re-mortared with lime mortar. The entire piece was carefully cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

Thomas Bell is 30 years old, a member of the early pioneer Bell-Case family, some of whom are buried at Champoeg and at Philip Foster. His cousin, Mattie (Bell) Boyse is near him and he is related to several other Bells at PVC. His tablet has a modified arch on the top, similar to that of A. J. Bell. It is not as elaborately carved as many, but includes a very fine relief carving of the clasped hands and an inset for his name. Unfortunately the break occurred through the last line of the epitaph and is illegible, but we do know what it said.

Results

The restoration of this monument was straightforward and presented no unforeseen challenges. The break in the tablet was clean and fit tightly when repaired. The carvings are becoming increasingly legible now that the tablet has been cleaned. The soil stains on the lower half should fade with time.



6. Electa Calkins 1852 -1868

Condition When Found

This monument was found lying in several pieces in the grass. No base was visible and we were uncertain whether there were more tablet pieces to be found. The break was in the middle of the inscription.

Restoration

Electa's tablet was removed from the ground and the remaining piece was found below, cemented together with the footstone next to the original base. We were able to remove the majority of the concrete with careful chiseling. Some concrete remains on the base of the tablet with the clear imprint of the footstone. We chose not to make further attempts to remove the concrete because it is on the back of the stone, it tells the story of a previous repair, and its removal includes a high likelihood of further damage to the marble. The base was unearthed and found to be in good condition for reuse. This was raised and leveled. The tablet was reset in its base with thin set and lime mortars. The tablet was also re-pieced and re-adhered with epoxy in several places. Existing cracks were mortared to reduce water intrusion. Thorough cleanings with water and D2 have also been performed.

Why It Matters

Electa Calkins, age 15, is the eldest child of Sylvanus and Hannah Calkins, who are next to her. She was born in Utah. This small tablet includes a relief carving of a lily and a banner above it that is nearly worn away that says "ELECTA". The tablet includes delicate gateway carvings and additional floral designs. There are at least seven different font styles and sizes and her full dates are now intact and legible.

Results

We are pleased to have Electa's tablet become legible and whole once more. The concrete remains are visible on the tablet base, but they tell their own story of past repairs. We have made the cracks in the tablet as unobtrusive as possible, although this stone shows wear from the years of being horizontal and having been run over, probably by mowing equipment.



7. Emma Seely 1863 -1880

Condition When Found

This monument had been broken and repaired previously and had multiple bases. The largest part of the tablet was lying on top of the ground, but the bottom piece of the tablet was adhered to the side of a below-ground base and encased in concrete.

Restoration

The base with the concrete was unearthed, raised and leveled. The piece of tablet in concrete was carefully separated, first from the base and then carefully chiseled from the rest of the concrete. Her tablet was re-pieced and re-adhered, though a small piece of the tablet remains missing. The tablet has been mortared with lime mortar and has been cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

Emma is the 17-year-old adopted daughter of Lucius and Sophia Seely. Her elaborately carved headstone includes gateway edging, a floral circle and at least seven different font styles and sizes.

Results

We did not assume that we would be able to separate the marble tablet from the old concrete 'repair,' but were very relieved to be able to accomplish this with lots of careful chiseling. A corner of the lower portion of tablet broke during concrete removal leaving a small piece of concrete still attached to the remnant. The remnant was needed in the repair for structural integrity but was too small to be able to remove the concrete. The concrete piece remains, again telling the story of the stone. Now we are privileged to see the scrollwork on the base of the stone and have the stone restored to one piece. It also exposed the carver's mark, "Merges & Vosper Marble Works", Portland, Oreg".



8. Harriett Whitmore 1847 -1878

Condition When Found

Harriett's tablet was found in two pieces lying on the ground. No base was visible. The breaks in the tablet suggested another piece might be underground with the original base, if found.

Restoration

The tablet was removed from the ground and we excavated to find the base. The original base was found and deemed to be in good condition. It contained the last piece of the tablet, which was in the slot, but no longer adhered. The base was raised and leveled. The three pieces of the tablet were repaired with epoxy and restored to their upright position in the slotted base. The break at the inscription was repaired to retain legibility when possible. All cracks were filled with lime mortar and the stone was cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

Harriet Whitmore is the 30-year-old daughter of Lucius and Sophia Seely, who are next to her. She is a sister of Emma. This tablet has the same "dome and shoulders" top that was originally on Norwood Seely's tablet. There is a relief carving of a dove in a circle. At least seven different font styles were used.

Results

We anticipated that this tablet, with its three pieces, might be fragile enough to require a bracket around its edges. The repairs have obviated the need for this and seem very solid. Harriett looks wonderful, standing proudly next to her sister, Emma.



9. Norwood Seely 1877 - 1878

Condition When Found

This small tablet was found lying in the grass, broken into four pieces, having been run over by mowing equipment. Its base was not visible above ground. We suspected that the lowest portion of the tablet might be found below ground upon excavation.

Restoration

Norwood's marble pieces were removed and the ground excavated for the original base. The base was found, along with the very lowest portion of the tablet. The base was raised and leveled. The tablet required careful re-piecing and off-site clamping with epoxy. Although the pieces were small and not every piece of the top of the tablet was found, because of its location at the top, the repair is not structural and is now quite stable. The cracks have been mortared with lime mortar and the tablet has been restored in its base. The tablet has been carefully cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

Norwood Seely is the one-year-old son of Franklin and Mary Seely who are next to him and he is the grandson of Lucius and Sophia Seely, just south in the same row. This very small stone has been down for so long that we are fortunate that it was not lost altogether. It has the same "dome and shoulders" top as his aunt, Harriet Whitmore, although it is not easy to recognize with part of the top pieces missing. It includes a relief carving of a broken rosebud and multiple font styles.

Results

It is wonderful to see Norwood finally in just one piece. While one piece of his monument remains missing, this does not detract from the overall appearance of his flower and inscriptions. The monument will continue to lighten with time and the dark lichens will disappear.



10. Maria Everest Parrott 1810 - 1887

Condition When Found

This marble tablet had been broken decades earlier and its top portion had been loose or standing in the dirt much lower than was originally intended. No base was evident. Part of the inscriptions were beneath the sod. The base was discovered buried beneath it with the lower portion of the tablet still attached. On excavation, the original slotted sandstone base disintegrated, leaving the lower portion of the tablet still intact.

Restoration

A new slotted concrete base was created and set in tamped gravel and sand. The lower part of the tablet was spot set with epoxy and mortared in with sacrificial thin-set mortar. The top portion was spot set to the lower portion with epoxy and the crack was mortared with sacrificial lime mortar. The marble was cleaned with water and D2 to eliminate lichen staining.

Why It Matters

Maria came to Oregon from England with her husband Samuel Parrott and eight children (two more were born here). She lives to age 76 and is one of the primary matriarchs of the Oregon Parrotts. The relief carving on this stone is especially fine, featuring clearly feminine and masculine hands clasped in farewell. The delicate flowers cascading in a curtain around the relief carving are unique in style for our cemetery. There are nine different font styles and sizes used and the edges of the tablet are beveled in a symbolic curtain. All the inscriptions are clearly legible.

Results

This spectacular white marble tablet is now standing at its original height and the repair at the break is not obvious. The D2 treatment done last summer, has significantly lightened and brightened the marble with the elimination of lichen. There is some residual staining from ground contact which should continue to fade, making the repair less visible over time. The remnants of the original sandstone base were left buried in back of the monument.



11. Edna Bell 1903 -1903

Condition When Found

This monument was considerably sunken underground when found, standing in the center of the plot rather than with the other headstones. It was unknown whether more inscriptions or an original base would be present underground.

Restoration

We carefully excavated this monument to find that it was sitting solidly in its original and quite substantial base, about eight inches below ground. The entire monument was raised and leveled. The tablet and base were cleaned several times with water and D2. After consideration, this monument and its base were moved back into line with the rest of the row of monuments, as was the monument of Edna's grandfather, A. J. Bell.

Why It Matters

Edna Bell is also part of the early Bell-Case pioneers, the 6-month-old granddaughter of A.J. Bell who is next to her. This is a small monument with simple inscriptions and is without illustrations. It was seriously sunken and, given its small size and location, on a potential collision course with a mower in the future. The sandstone base is carefully carved with embellishments and is now visible.

Results

Edna now sits upright, with the rest of her inscription 'Our Darling' for all to view. The marble will continue to lighten as the lichens loosen their hold on the stone. As stated above, this monument is now in line with the rest of the monuments in that row.



12. Andrew J. Bell 1832 -1888

Condition When Found

This very large monument was found sunken, tipped forward, and loose in the ground. We were unsure of the state of the original base or whether one was present. We also suspected that the tablet could be broken below ground. It was forward in the plot and out of line with the headstones.

Restoration

The muddy excavation on this monument showed that the entire tablet was intact below ground, but that it was resting on its base unsecured. Vandals' attempts to break the tablet had only resulted in breaking the fragile sandstone base below ground. This base was partially raised and found to be broken in numerous pieces. Because of the tablet's size and weight and the fact that all the carving is high on the stone, the decision was made to leave the base underground, set the tablet unsecured on the base, and fill in around the stone with gravel and sand in order to secure it. It is well tamped down, straight and stable. The base and monument were moved back into line with the rest of the headstones in this row. The tablet was carefully cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

Andrew J. Bell, age 55, is part of the Bell-Case family of early Oregon pioneers. J.D. Bell is his brother and Edna, next to him is his granddaughter. His stone is the largest tablet we have at PVC. This tablet has a modified arch top similar to Thomas Bell. The inscriptions are also similar enough that it is likely these two stones came from the same carver. It includes a large relief carving of a Grand Mason insignia. It is otherwise without embellishment except for the lettering and break line, all of which are expertly executed.

Results

This tablet is much larger than was able to be viewed before restoration. Its inscription was also much less legible. While the base remains out of view, it serves to secure the stone in such a way that the tablet should be able to resist any further attempts at breakage by would-be vandals. The stone continues to lighten each week from the cleanings that have been performed.



13. Henry Schutte 1840 -1886

Condition When Found

This tablet was broken into two pieces when found. The base had been raised and leveled before our work started on the stone. The tablet needed to be re-adhered and re-pieced.

Restoration

Henry's large tablet was re-adhered with epoxy and lime mortar was applied to the stone. Because of the large size and height, this tablet required special bracing to secure it during the cure time. A thorough cleaning of the stone with water and D2 has also been performed.

Why It Matters

Henry Schutte was born in Germany and came to Oregon in the 1850s. Our ledger lists him as age 36, but his dates indicate he is 45. We have no record of other relatives at PVC. His very large tablet is inscribed in German with the European style of date recording. It features a relief carving of clasped hands in a circle with a delicately carved border. There is a symbolic curtain draped across the top. Multiple font styles were used.

Results

Henry's impressive monument stands tall in the cemetery now. The tablet has been repaired and restored to its original housing in its base. The break in the tablet is considerably less noticeable. The cleaning of the stone will continue to provide more clarity of the inscriptions and carvings as the stone continues to lighten in the coming months.



14. McConnell Mother Stone 1847 -1892

Condition When Found

This small stone was broken and did not appear to have a base. We were unsure what excavations would reveal. We hoped to find the missing part of the stone.

Restoration

The area around this stone was well excavated, showing an intact base with the mother stone fragment still extant in its slot. A portion of the missing corner piece of the stone was found, but despite exhaustive searching, the remaining piece(s) could not be found. The base was raised and leveled. The stone was re-adhered with epoxy and re-mortared with thin set mortar. It has been cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

This is the mother stone for Eliza (Tuckness) McConnell, who came to Oregon as part of the Baker-Tuckness family in the 1850's. It is an interesting piece of varied color marble, which matches the father stone for Nelson McConnell. It is somewhat unusual that the main monument is granite and the two parent stones are marble. Both parent stones have an arched top and arched lettering.

Results

This small, marbled stone now sits upright in its base next to the McConnell monument. While it is missing part of its shoulder piece, it looks much better than it did lying in the grass with no base.



15. Bailey Father Stone 1802 -1883

Condition When Found

This small father stone had separated and was just resting loose on its sunken sandstone base, which showed some signs of flaking.

Restoration

The top of the base has flaked off several large chunks, but the decision was made to re-adhere them. This base is quite fragile and may continue to flake, but it is secure for the time being. It may need a new base at some point in the future. The stone was re-adhered to its base once the base had been raised and leveled. It was also cleaned with water and D2.

Why It Matters

This is the father stone for George Bailey who came to Oregon with the Youngs in 1865. His birthdate (1802) and that of his wife, Anna (1797), are among the oldest at PVC. These two parent stones are very thick with the letters in relief across the arched tops.

Results

This stone is once again secure on its original base and matches the Mother stone next to it in the Bailey plot. Its color is lightening as the lichens are expunged from the marble.



16. Robison Bristow 1879 -1882

Condition When Found

This loose stone was found near the A.J. Bell monument, but clearly belonged in the Bristow Family Lot. It had no base. Confirmation in the cemetery ledger was needed in order to ascertain where Robison had been buried.

Restoration

We were able to find the burial place of a toddler-sized boy within the Bristow plot that is likely Robison Bristow. We ordered a custom slotted base from Willamette Memorials to fit Robison's stone, which was installed and leveled. The tablet was mortared with thin set mortar into this new base. No other pieces of the tablet were unearthed in our investigations. The other base in the Bristow plot remains empty. It was not usable for Robison's small stone.

Why It Matters

Robison Bristow is the two-year-old son of James Bristow, who is in the same row, along with many other Bristow family members. His simple monument is without embellishments, but includes numerous font styles and his name is arched across the top.

Results

Robison's burial is now marked with this small headstone in line with the other Bristow family burials. While we believe it is a reasonable assumption that he is now in the correct location, if future information indicates otherwise, it is a small tablet and base that could be re-located without great difficulty. The marble continues to lighten to our great satisfaction.





