

February 21, 2023

7:00-8:45 PM

Meeting of COMO Preservation

Columbia Public Library

Friends Room

#### I. Call to order by Dee Wasman

The sign-in sheet was passed around and the following were present: Dennis Fitzgerald, Dee Wasman, Donna Walter, Alex Sterawn, Dana Bocke, Morgan McNally, Chris Creasy, Jay Creasy, Janice DeRosier, Marcie Walker, Pamela Jones, Julie Plax, Nina Sappington, Jeff Brotermarkle, Jane Brotermarkle, Cynthia Evans and Dan Viets.

Dee announced that the Vision Statement and Mission Statement were voted on and approved at the last meeting. Our next meeting is March 21. Deb Sheals will be speaking on the difference between local historic districts and National Register districts. Our speaker for the April 25 meeting will be the owner of the Neidermeyer Apartments.

On February 25-26 a program, "Tell it like it is" an oral history project will be at the library.

#### II. Dana Bocke, speaking on, "The Evolution of American Cemeteries."

Dana has been doing cemetery tours at the library for the past 10 years. Her concentration is on the art and symbolism in cemeteries.

Early 1700's tombstones were made of slate or sandstone.

Memento Mori- "Remember you will die." Symbols- dead heads, skulls, soul effigies & wings.

Post Revolutionary War tombstones made of marble. Influences from classical architecture: symbols include draped urns, a common symbol of mourning and weeping willows (Goddess Persephone.) Common to rent cemetery space for 50-100 years. After that, remove bones and bury another person, sometimes they stacked caskets.

Rural Cemetery Movement- 1804. Churchyards crowded.

1804- Pere La Chaise Cemetery – Paris

1831- Mount Auburn Cemetery- Massachusetts

1849- Bellfontaine Cemetery- St. Louis

These were architectural gardens. Cemeteries don't have to be by the church or city. Make cemeteries beautiful, landscaped spaces. This was before city parks, so these cemeteries became beautiful green spaces for music concerts or picnics in a park-like atmosphere.

Victorian- 1837-1901. The Victorians took mourning to another level.

They instituted mourning and mourning attire for a whole year. Funeral directors established.

Rocheport cemetery- ivy meaning steadfast and loyal.

New York City- Brooklyn- Victorian Gothic. Decorate with wrought iron. Cradle grave- plant flowers in cradle.

Egyptian Revival- 1880-1930.

Around the discovery of King Tut's tomb (1922).

Egyptian influence – obelisks, overturned baskets, clasped hands, treestones (stones that look like tree trunks), ferns and ivy.

Tombstones - white bronze, metal that looks like bronze, made of zinc. Hollow panels could be personalized. Tombs look very good but ended with World War I. Metal needed for munitions.

Culturally or Geographically.

Christian burial- East West orientation.

Brunswick, MO- small town. Homemade stones of concrete and shells.

Islam- buried on side facing toward Mecca.

Several Muslim stones in Columbia Cemetery.

Scottish tradition- immigrants from places with no topsoil.

New Orleans- high water table. All burials above ground.

Oven tombs- temporary. Family owned yours until the next person died.

We need to take all things into account when studying cemeteries.

Forest Lawn- California. Got more fashionable. Gravestones flat for easier upkeep.

Hollywood Forever fell into disrepair, but now has been revitalized physically and culturally. It hosts concerts and is the most visited cemetery in Los Angeles.

African American Tradition

Arrow Rock, MO- preservation of cemetery very difficult. They took things used in life as grave markers. These did not last very long and many people did not recognize there was a cemetery.

Yucca plants are very hardy and are sometimes used instead of gravestones. Cemeteries have lots of perennials: roses, peonies and periwinkle.

Cremation- common in the Stone Age.

1873- 1<sup>st</sup> oven hot enough to burn a human body.

1884- 1<sup>st</sup> freestanding public crematorium in U. S.

Greenwood Cemetery in New York City has safe deposit box like spaces for cremated remains.

As of 2020 – 56.1% cremated.

Predicted by 2030- 72.8% cremated.

Green Burial- Modern or Ancient?

Burial used to be a home issue, until the Victorians made a big ceremony out of it.

Home and Green burials- planting to denote the place instead of a stone.

Open pyre- "Viking Funeral"

Crestone, Colorado- Instructs on how to stack wood and what kind of wood to use? It took several years to get OK for this type of burial.

Aquamation-heated acidic water, same as cremation, comes out as dust. This only uses a fraction of the energy as cremation.

Terramation- essentially composting. This is currently legal in 3 states with 2 states pending. Can't use ashes to put on trees. Body breakdown kills trees.

Preservation of Cemeteries.

Cemetery Conservators for United Standards. Standards are set for how to clean and reset tombstones. For cleaning D/2 biological agent- spray, wait, rinse. In 2 months it will be beautiful.

Missouri Preservation includes cemeteries. National Park Service includes cemetery preservation.

Dry places.

Jewish piled stones as permanent reminders of grave.

Immigration each culture has a different idea of how to take care of family burial or bones.

Most cemeteries make their own rules.

Columbia Cemetery is really 5 little cemeteries that grew together.

Dana plans two cemetery tours each year: one in Boone or Callaway County in May, the second in Columbia Cemetery in the Fall. Watch for events in library program guides or online.

III. Minutes from the last meeting were approved.

IV. Team Reports

President's Report – Dianna met with the MU Entrepreneurship Legal Clinic who agreed to take COMO Preservation as a client. They will review our bylaws, articles of incorporation, assist in our application for 501c3 status, create liability waivers for the bike/walk tours and create disclaimers for our craftsman directory.

Trevor Harris has stepped away from COMO Preservation leaving the organization without sufficient members to incorporate.

The Executive Committee must agree on bylaws stating that COMO Preservation will have formal or informal membership. Formal members would have to vote on all decisions and financial matters. Informal members would have input and benefits, but would not vote on every decision. This would be a board-directed organization. Examples of this are: Local Motion, Missouri Preservation and national groups like the American Heart Association.

Dianna interviewed Riley Price of Missouri Preservation and Lawrence Simonson of Local Motion about concerns against lobbying by 501c3 organizations. Mr. Simonson stated that organizations are allowed to expend 20% of time and funds on lobbying, but his group has never gone above 20%. Both suggested that having formal members would be time-consuming and expensive, because it would require all members to be present to vote on decisions.

The owner of the Neidermeyer Apartments, Nakhle Asmar, has agreed to be our speaker for the April 25, 2023 meeting.

Advocacy Tour Report- The team wants the main to focus to be on education and tours. Elena said Cindy Mustard suggested tours should begin and end at a location with public restrooms.

The first tour will be on historic movie theaters, since the research has already be done in Dianna's book, Historic Movie Theaters of Columbia. The tentative route is Missouri Theater (1928) on 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Hall Theater (1916) at 9<sup>th</sup> and Cherry, Haden Opera House (1894) and the Negro Nickelodeon (1909) from the corner of Broadway and 9<sup>th</sup>. Continuing to 10<sup>th</sup> and Walnut for the Airdome (1905). Then to Broadway Odeon/Nickeloden/Cozy/Uptown (1905-1989) at 1010 E. Broadway. Next to Broadway and Hitt for the Columbia Theatre (1907) and ending with the Ragtag Cinema on Hitt Street.

Outreach Team Report- A COMO Preservation postcard has been made and it has a QR code. Matt is doing the COMO 365 blog. Outreach is working on the bylaws.

Advocacy Team Report- Trevor has stepped away and Dianna has volunteered to lead this team. Both Advocacy and Tour Teams met in February. The mission of Advocacy is to create a toolkit for home owners facing demolition of property. The HPC has only 1 demolition permit request - 1511 Rosemary. HPC didn't meet last time- no quorum. If they don't meet, then in 45 days the building can be demolished. This information has been sent to the neighborhood association. The owner, Paul Hinshaw, may be considering demo and replatting the two lots he owns to build apartments. The email to the neighborhood association states, "As the city is moving very slowly on the neighborhood protection UDC rewrites, it may be time to ask again for a moratorium on replats in the historic central-city neighborhoods."

Trevor spoke to Columbia College and has concerns about the 30% of land the college owns along Wilkes Blvd., Rangeline, Business Loop and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Some of these places have been vandalized. Trevor suspects Columbia Public Schools may be planning to demo Ridgeway and Benton Schools.

The Tour group met and planned a route for an historic movie theater tour. In April there will be a trial run of the Theater Tour. Lots of buildings used to be theaters.

The next meeting are March 9 for the Advocacy Team and March 14 for the Tour Team.

#### Other Ideas

Calendar of historic buildings or COMO postcards- something to sell.

Traveling trunk- check with Boone County Historical Society. Assemble items for kids to look at.

Restoration Team Report- The main focus is to create a list of artisans and crafts people. These experts would make it easier for people to find someone skilled at restoring and repairing old houses. The team is working on a disclaimer for the list. This information will be on our website. Contact Debby Cook at [comopreservation.com](http://comopreservation.com) to suggest a name. The team talked about trying to sell salvage to reuse architectural items. Jefferson City has a store for architectural salvage. Columbia has items, but cannot sell them due to city ordinance. Pat Fowler is interested in helping with this project. A Salvage Librarian is needed to write down and index salvaged items, then write the background that goes with the item. We want to see the salvaged items being used. Rusty Palmer, preservation commission liaison would love to partner with us.

#### V. No new business.

Announcement related to preservation from Dan Viets— In Kansas City after more than 28 years the Missouri Development Board will issue tax credits and match donations to save the 1<sup>st</sup> Walt Disney Workshop. It is located at 31<sup>st</sup> and Forest in Kansas City. Planned use will be a museum, educational and exhibit space and movie facilities.

Our next meeting: 7:00 P.M. March 21, 2023 in the Friends Room of the Columbia Public Library. Deb Sheals, historic preservation consultant from Columbia will speak on the difference between local historic districts and National Register districts.