

**LA PORTE COUNTY PIONEER CEMETERY COMMISSION
COURTHOUSE SQUARE
LA PORTE, IN 46350**

---Board Members---

Richard V. Lute, Sr., President Edward A. Marsh, Vice President
Kenneth Baker, Financial Secretary Patricia Harris, Recording Secretary
Harriet M. Lute

5 February 2016

Indiana Historical Bureau
140 N. Senate Avenue
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Sir or Madam:

Attached please find the annual report of the La Porte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission to be filed with your office under Indiana Cemetery Law IC 4-23-7-3. The attached contains the Commission budget and expenditures for the year 2015, Activities of the Commission for the year 2015; and the Plans of the Commission for the year 2016.

Sincerely,

La Porte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Kenneth Baker

Patricia Harris

Harriet M. Lute

Richard Lute, Sr.

Edward A. Marks

Enc.

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Budget and Expenditures for Calendar Year 2015

| <u>Category</u> | <u>Budget</u> | <u>Expenditures</u> |
|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Office Supplies | \$ 500.00 | \$ 130.76 |
| Postage | 75.00 | 58.85 |
| Paint-Painting | 1,000.00 | 940.00 |
| Mileage | 750.00 | 675.65 |
| Landscaping | 1,100.00 | 80.00 ++ |
| Tombstone Repair | 12,000.00 | 12,000.00 |
| Cemetery Maintenance | 20,000.00 | 22,365.00 * ++ ** |
| Fencing & Gates | -0- | -0- |
| Board Members | 1,004.00 | 1,004.00 |
| Head of Department | 5,773.00 | 5,773.02 |
| Social Security & Medicare | <u>464.00</u> | <u>441.74</u> |
| Totals | \$ 42,666.00 | \$ 43,469.02 |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| Special Appropriation from Riverboat Admissions Tax | <u>3,000.00</u> |
| Total | \$ 45,666.00 |

Unexpended Balance \$ 2,196.98

* Although this item was over individual budget, funds were transferred among accounts (++) to meet specific needs, while staying within our total budget.

** See Special Appropriation.

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2015 Activities

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for board members.

Availability to the Public – We are available 10:00 – 3:00 p.m. first Friday of each month and other times by phone or e-mail. A new Cemetery Commission brochure was printed and made available to various groups and interested persons.

Cemetery Visitations – We incorporated with two of our monthly meetings, visitations as a board, to eleven pioneer cemeteries. This was done to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to determine individual cemetery needs as an aid to determining priorities on maintenance, repair and restoration and inspect contracted work.

Historians/Liaisons Volunteers – Volunteers watched over our cemeteries and reported any act of vandalism or cemetery need.

Stone Restorations – Stone restoration phase #1 was completed at Maple Grove Cemetery and broken stones repaired at St. Martin of Tours, Norton and Hudson Lake cemeteries by Mark Davis of Stone Saver Cemetery Restoration.

Fencing – Storm damage was repaired to the wrought iron fence at Posey Chapel Cemetery by Rustic Fencing, Inc. The front fence at Miriam Benedict Cemetery was painted.

Documentation/Photographs – We continued to photograph and document tombstones before they become illegible or vandalism occurs. We have also continued to seek out locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then research and document.

Written Reports on Cemeteries – Board members are assigned certain cemeteries that are to be checked by them for caretaking condition and other items throughout the year and they then report their findings on a Cemetery Inspection Report Record.

Request for Bids and Contracts – We continue to use standardized forms for Request for Bids for Cemetery Maintenance and Contracts for Cemetery Maintenance as well as for Uncontracted Maintenance of Cemeteries and for Stone Restoration, etc.

Cemetery Maintenance – Pioneer Cemeteries without any funding are maintained by a contracted firm who is doing excellent work. Others that had caretakers and/or some funding for maintenance were aided with funds budgeted by the Cemetery Commission. Perimeters of Norton, Sharp and Miller Griffin sprayed with weed kill to aid maintenance of area; tree removed and entrance grade to Shippeeburg lowered; tree removed at Lamb's Chapel; downed tree in northwest corner of Heckman Memorial removed and area cleaned out.

Signage – History sign was installed at Miriam Benedict Cemetery.

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2016 Cemetery Commission Plans

Monthly Meetings – Structured monthly meetings for Board Members.

Availability to the Public – Available to public 10:00 am – 3:00 pm first Friday of each month and otherwise by e-mail, phone or mail.

Cemetery Visitations – Continue to visit various cemeteries as a group to acquaint all members with the La Porte County cemeteries and to set priorities.

Historians/Liaisons-Volunteers – Continue to have volunteers watch over our cemeteries and report any act of vandalism or cemetery need. Encourage the continuation of transcribing all gravestones, photography, writing histories and identifying veterans graves with the aid of volunteers.

Discovery and Research – Seek out the locations of old cemeteries not known to us previously and then view, research and document, as well researching and documenting known cemeteries and the burials therein. Clarification of Miriam Benedict property lines and possible deeding of same to La Porte County. Possible deeding of Faith Methodist and Beatty's Corners cemeteries to La Porte County as supporting congregations are dissolving.

Continued Preservation of Our Cemeteries – Caretaking is extremely important in our cemeteries as it can affect the safety of individuals visiting the cemeteries.

1. Communication with sexton/caretakers to allow them to make the needs of their individual cemeteries known to the board and discuss ways to prevent vandalism. Enter into written agreements with them detailing the work to be performed in the cemeteries stating a specific amount to be budgeted for the work from Commission funds.
2. Contract with lawn care services for cemetery maintenance for those cemeteries who do not have caretakers. Seek aid of County Highway Dept. for needed removal of trees, etc. and supply and delivery of wood chips for entry paths, etc.
3. Many of our tombstones are in need of repair. We will contract for the repair and phase #2 restoration of stones at Maple Grove Cemetery for a minimum of \$12,000.00.
4. Brush and paint Coulter Cemetery fence.
5. Continue replacement of fences where needed – broken post at Sharp.
6. Continue to replace signs at cemeteries as funds permit.
7. Continue to work with the LaPorte County Community Service to provide labor for fence painting, etc.
8. We have begun a program of historical research to install signs at the cemeteries telling about their history. We have installed signs at Eahart-Reed, Norton, Coulter, Hudson Lake, Tuley, Maple Grove, Pike, Beattys Corners and Miriam Benedict and install others as research is completed. Some older signs at Coulter & Miriam Benedict may have to be replaced or sprayed to secure lettering.
9. Spray path to Downing, add mulch to Sharp entrance & cut 4' wide path around Miller Griffin.

Written Reports- Continue using the Cemetery Inspection Form, a written report for board members to report on the condition of our cemeteries throughout the year.