

In 1965, the Secretary of the Lodge wrote a letter reviewing the years 1944-1965 where he summarized that, due to multiple factors, “we now have upon our hands, a property, from which little revenue can be had, and an annual expenditure for care and maintenance is not only necessary, but is an obligation incumbent upon the Lodge.” (EMCA Archives) Despite all their work to find grants, donations, or city support, they could not muster the monies needed to maintain the grounds, much less the mausoleum.

When the mausoleum was proposed in 1912 by the Portland Mausoleum Company, the Lodge and the Company signed a contract that stated that for each tomb sold for \$200, the Company would pay the Lodge \$10 (keeping the other \$190 for themselves) with the understanding that the Lodge would hold that money for maintaining the mausoleum. The one catch was that, if the purchasers of the tombs formed a permanent association, the Lodge would give the collected money to it. In fact, one paragraph of the agreement says that once all of the tombs are sold, the Lodge must transfer the funds to trustees elected by the association and, finally, relinquish all rights to said association. Thus the contract lent itself to a tenuous method for gathering money to maintain the building.

During the early years of 1900 the cemetery and building had become objects of neglect and vandalism. During WW II an association of plot owners was formed to “address the disgraceful condition of the mausoleum due to lack of maintenance and direction.” (*Plan*, p. 6) The Association cleaned the mausoleum, connected a sewer line to enable water and a rest room, repaired the roof and broken windows, and hired a caretaker. They raised funds through donations from crypt owners. But, despite all of this intervention, by the 1960’s fraternity hazing in the mausoleum had again resulted in broken windows and other damage. The mausoleum was padlocked and windows were bricked up or cemented shut. The Lane County Historical Society attempted to garner support for maintenance but, despite their efforts, both the cemetery and mausoleum fell in disrepair. Some people even moved their family members to other cemeteries.

In January of 1980 the Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey were designated a Eugene Historical Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (That success came despite one letter from a local citizen who wrote: “I believe strongly that it would be a mistake to give historic status to Hope Abbey Mausoleum, since then it would be impossible to remove this ugly, dangerous structure ever....Drug traffic and devil worship are bad enough, but the really revolting acts have been the desecration of the bodies put there for safe keeping.” (Archives) Luckily for the site, this person was in the minority!

Then in 1995 the Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association became the owners of the cemetery and mausoleum. Through 22 years of hands on labor, fund raising, and grant writing, the members have succeeded in slowly “preserving” the better parts of this place. The present Masons have made many contributions to help in this preservation, carrying out the spirit of the gentleman who wrote about the “obligation incumbent upon the Lodge” to maintain this important historical piece of Eugene.