

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

6 February 2015

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 2014, Activities of the Commission for the year 2014; and the Plans of the Commission for the year 2015.

Sincerely,

La Porte County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Kenneth Baker

Patricia Harris

Harriet M. Lute

Richard Lute, Sr.

Edward A. Marsh

Enc.

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Budget and Expenditures for Calendar Year 2014

<u>Category</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Office Supplies	\$ 500.00	\$ 101.23
Postage	75.00	63.74
Paint-Painting	1,000.00	893.99
Mileage	750.00	747.50
Landscaping	1,100.00	325.00 ++
Tombstone Repair	12,000.00	12,000.00
Cemetery Maintenance	20,000.00	19,890.79
Fencing & Gates	-0-	2,960.00 **
Board Members	1,004.00	857.50
Head of Department	5,773.00	5,773.00
Social Security & Medicare	<u>464.00</u>	<u>441.68</u>
Totals	\$ 42,666.00	\$ 44,054.43

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

Unexpended Balance \$ 1,611.57

++ Landscaping costs were less than budgeted because weather did not permit completion of some work this year.

** See Special Appropriation.

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2014 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.

Cemetery Visitations – We incorporated with two of our monthly meetings, visitations as a board, to eight 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 was completed at Miriam Benedict Cemetery and broken stone repaired at Norton Cemetery by Mark Davis of Stone Saver Cemetery Restoration.

Fencing – Final phase #6 of the restoration of the wrought iron fence were completed at Posey Chapel Cemetery by Rustic Fencing, Inc. Painting of Nickel Plate Cemetery fence and west fences at Rossburg and Miller Griffin cemeteries. New woven wire fence installed at Downing.

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; a path to and the area of and around Downing Cemetery was cleared and mulched with wood chips. Cooperated with Miriam Benedict Chapter DAR to install a new Miriam Benedict grave sign. Trees downed in storm removed at no charge to commission.

Signage – No new signs installed this year, but research for same is ongoing.

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2015 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. Also survey of Miriam Benedict property lines and seek deed documentation of various cemeteries.

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 restoration of stones at Maple Grove Cemetery for a minimum of \$12,000.00.
4. Paint west fence at Roszburg Cemetery & Miriam Benedict south fence.
5. Continue replacement of fences where needed.
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 and Beattys Corners and install others this year as research is completed.
9. Remove large evergreen at Lambs Chapel Cemetery and lower grade at entrance and mulch same with wood chips at Shippeeburg Cemetery.

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.