

Tempe Historic Preservation Office Research Report

# TEMPE DOUBLE BUTTE CEMETERY

Tempe Historic Property Register Designation #46

Preliminary Determination of Eligibility

6-402 Neighborhood Meeting

*printed 04/06/2012 1:12 PM*



*photo: Tempe HPO 2011*

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is an important local landmark, portraying more than one hundred years of Tempe history and, through its broad range of interments, remaining emblematic of the evolving cultural, social, and historical contexts that have come to define Tempe and the Salt River Valley as a whole.

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant primarily as the cemetery most closely associated with Tempe's historical past. The cemetery represents the final resting place of countless local pioneers from the 1880s through the modern era, many of whom played critical roles in shaping Tempe's development and directing the city's broad patterns of community development. Similarly, Tempe's broad cultural diversity during the previous century is clearly in evidence at Double Butte Cemetery, where gravestones of persons of Anglo-American, Hispanic-American, Mexican-American, and Native American descent can be found, all of whom played—and continue to play—a vital role in community history. No other location in Tempe depicts this cultural diversity more adequately and powerfully than Double Butte Cemetery.

**RESEARCH**

In accordance with the Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance, when a nomination for historic designation and listing is complete, staff compiles a report and recommends an action. That report will be provided to the commission for use at a public hearing to inform discussion and enable consideration of historic designation and listing in the Tempe Historic Property Register.

This report provides a preliminary determination of eligibility for use by the commission at the neighborhood meeting and to assist in determining if the commission will hold a public hearing and make a recommendation regarding historic designation. This research also informs subsequent staff summary reports prepared for public hearings.<sup>1</sup>

**LOCATION**

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is located at 2505 W. Broadway Road and occupies a prominent position at the base of two mountainous outcroppings, known locally both as the Bell Buttes and the Double Buttes. The cemetery lies on the westernmost periphery of the city's boundaries and is one of few Tempe properties lying west of Interstate-10.

The location of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is indicative of its age. Dating to the 1880s, when Tempe was still a small hamlet, the location was chosen because of its seclusion. Situated several miles west of the town limits at that time and because of the presence of the buttes which served as a prominent geographic marker for the locale, prominent local pioneer and landowner Niels Petersen donated the land upon which the first graves were placed in the 1890s. Petersen himself was buried at Double Butte Cemetery for a time before being exhumed and reinterred in 1923 at his historic home, located at 1414 W. Southern Avenue in Tempe. The availability of this land at no cost no doubt also influenced the decision to place the cemetery there.<sup>2</sup>

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery remains in its historic location, although it has been expanded several times over the years to reach its current size. At present, the City of Tempe (which now owns and operates the property) has sold its final remaining burial plots and there are no plans for future expansion onto adjacent lands. Thus, for the time being, the cemetery has reached its maximum size.

**CONDITION**

For many years, primary caretaking responsibilities at the cemetery fell to the individual families whose relatives were buried there. Oftentimes families would erect fencing around their burial plots and would, to the best of their abilities, care for the grounds in the immediate vicinity to prevent overgrowth and other unsightly features. As a result, in its earliest years Double Butte Cemetery appeared only sporadically cared-for because some families possessed greater caretaking resources than others. To be sure, the Tempe Cemetery Company did its utmost to ensure upkeep, but ultimately the more minute details were the responsibility of the families owning burial plots.

Of course, this early method of landscaping and grounds upkeep is no longer the case at Double Butte. The cemetery is now administered and maintained by the City of Tempe Parks and Recreation Department, which first acquired ownership of the property in 1958 from the Tempe Cemetery Association, which dissolved its interest in the property at that time.

Although many gravestones and burial plots at Tempe Double Butte Cemetery remain in good condition, many of the older gravestones show signs age and some are in critical need of conservation. There are also a significant number of graves at the cemetery that do not—and never did—have any identifying markers. All burial plots are maintained with the same care, however, and the cemetery continues to portray its wide diversity of interments through the careful, diligent caretaking of the City of Tempe Parks and Recreation Department.

**AGE**

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery was officially established on September 13, 1897, at a meeting of the Tempe Cemetery Company, whose officers formed the first corporate entity to administer the cemetery. It should be noted however, that many interments at that location had already occurred, which in fact prompted the Tempe Cemetery Company to assume responsibility for the property. The earliest gravestones recorded in the cemetery's burial database date to 1888; indeed there are six recorded graves from that year, but none from any previous years, making that the earliest verifiable date for the cemetery's founding. Although the final remaining burial plots were sold in 1994, there continue to be periodic burials at Double Butte Cemetery; a total of thirty-eight persons were buried there in 2010, the last full calendar year for which records are available.<sup>3 4</sup>

**SIGNIFICANCE**

The Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant at both the local and state levels, although its importance to Tempe history arguably exceeds its contribution to larger statewide contexts. Most of the 11,328 persons buried at the cemetery are closely associated with Tempe as a community; more so than with Arizona as a state. However, graves of many important figures in Double Butte Cemetery provide a strong case for statewide significance as well.

At the macro state level, Double Butte Cemetery is the final resting place of such prominent Arizonans as Charles Trumbull Hayden (founder of Tempe); Carl T. Hayden (Arizona senator, 1927-1969); Dr. Benjamin Baker Moeur (Arizona governor, 1932-1936); and J. Howard Pyle (Arizona governor, 1950-1954). These persons, along with their immediate family members, are representative of Tempe's many political contributions to both the Territory and the State of Arizona over the previous 140 years.

Carl T. Hayden proved instrumental in the advent of the Central Arizona Project, today one of the state's most crucial water resources. Prior to becoming governor, Benjamin B. Moeur helped to draft Arizona's state constitution in 1912 and played a pivotal role in education, being involved in various capacities with the development of the teachers' college that would one day become Arizona State University. Howard Pyle, before he ascended to the gubernatorial post in 1950, was among Arizona's most prominent public figures, a much revered Phoenix radio host who also served as a news correspondent in the Pacific Theatre during World War II. The biographic histories of these individuals reveal a remarkable level of involvement at both the community and statewide levels of Arizona's development, and it can be argued that few other historic cemeteries in the state possess such a wide diversity of prominent Arizonans.

Perhaps somewhat less prominent, but equally important, are the countless graves of Tempe citizens who quietly played their own respective roles in the community's evolution over the past century. Tempe is, and always has been, a place that exudes tremendous diversity. Being located as it is, directly between the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Reservation (SRP-MIC) and the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC), it is a place that has always been defined by its relationship with Native American communities. In that same regard, Arizona's proximity to the Mexican border has also played a critical role in cultural development. Since its earliest days Tempe has attracted a wide range of Hispanic- and Mexican-American residents who served in a range of capacities at the local level. So too did Japanese-American farmers occupy portions of the eastern Salt River Valley beginning in the early 1900s, adding yet another layer of cultural diversity. The arrival of Anglo-American businessmen and entrepreneurs beginning in the 1870s and continuing for many decades thereafter provided a third important cultural linkage, one that bonded the aforementioned ethnic groups in a triumvirate of cultural and social interaction. As Tempe's earliest cemetery, dating to 1888, Double Butte prominently portrays this unique diversity through its wide range of burials. Walking down the rows of gravestones, it is not unusual to find members of various ethnic groups buried alongside one another, a lasting vestige to those people's daily lives in Tempe, where they worked and lived together. No other place in Tempe so vividly portrays this cultural diversity in such a powerful and original setting.

### **INTEGRITY**

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be designated historic a property must not only have historic significance; it must also maintain sufficient integrity to communicate that significance to persons unfamiliar with the property or with the community in general. A candidate property is evaluated according to seven aspects of integrity which must be present in different combinations depending on the property type and the criteria from which historic significance is derived. The seven aspects of integrity are; Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association. In practice, all aspects of integrity are not normally present in an historic property; therefore, determining which aspects must exist for a particular nomination requires knowledge of why, where, and when the property is significant.<sup>5</sup>

For the case at hand, the Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is significant as a property type under NPS Criterion A, B, and C, based on its association with the community's cultural and social developmental history (A), interments of prominent persons in community and state history (B), and its portrayal of architectural significance vis-à-vis the presence of Victorian-era gravestones that are indicative of artistic excellence (C).

For the purposes of this nomination, and in view of the unique criteria considerations that the National Park Service has enacted for the nomination of cemeteries, not all seven aspects of integrity will be addressed in this determination of eligibility. Those aspects most pertinent to this determination include: Location; Design; Setting; Materials; Feeling; and Association.

**Location** – This property exists in its originally developed location. The original plots existed in an undeveloped, Sonoran desert environment at the base of the Double Buttes. Niels Petersen, a prominent Tempe entrepreneur and landowner, donated this

space in the late 1890s for use as Tempe's cemetery. These original burial plots remain within the confines of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery, which has grown many times over the years. This outward growth, however, has served only to enhance the integrity of setting and has had no detrimental impacts.

**Design** - Design is the composition of elements that constitute the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Because properties change through time, changes may acquire significance in their own right and changes do not necessarily constitute a loss of design integrity.

In the case of cemeteries, because of their continuous use over a period of many years, there is often a wide range of design features that are indicative of these changing elements. In the case of grave markers, for example, the earliest forms oftentimes were nothing more than a small wooden cross which, in many cases, has been replaced in more recent times. So too does the style of grave markers change over a period of many years. The juxtaposition of a century-old weathered gravestone next to a modern, manufactured-marble gravestone represents one of the unique design elements of any historic (and still functioning) cemetery, including Tempe Double Butte.

So too do the styles of mausoleums change over a period of many years, offering yet another unique juxtaposition of old versus new. One can see the Victorian-era architecture and design that defines early nineteenth-century mausoleums, which in many cases is contradictory to the outward stylistic appearance of more modern burial structures. Here again, continuously evolving design styles allow us to see the changing nature of human spirituality regarding burial of the deceased, making cemeteries a distinctive example of what is perhaps the single most humanistic form of architectural and landscape design.

**Setting** – In the context of integrity, NPS defines *Setting* as the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how—not just where—the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space.<sup>6</sup>

Double Butte Cemetery retains its full integrity of setting inasmuch as the historic period of significance is concerned. When one visits the site, they immediately gain a sense of the original layout and can envision the cemetery as it existed in its earliest days. One can readily deduce the manner in which the cemetery strategically expanded at various intervals over a period of many decades, flaring out in different directions to accommodate the need for additional burial plots. The two buttes rise prominently to the southeast and provide a lasting, and permanent, visual orientation device that has remained constant since the first burials in 1888. The sheer size and dominance of this unique geography serves to underscore the naturalistic setting and deepen the spiritual connection between humanity and this universal context.

**Materials** – NPS defines *Materials* as the physical elements that were combined during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form an historic property. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is unique in that it is the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard alongside a Post

WWII-era cemetery. The property contains graves and markers of Euro-American and Mexican-American pioneers evidencing the early diversity of the community and providing a good representation of the self-image of the historic Tempe community. The juxtaposition of both sections demonstrates the developmental evolution of the town graveyard into the modern community cemetery. From the gravel interpretation of natural desert in the pioneer section to the tree-lined irrigated lawn areas, both sections coexist with good integrity and together they help us interpret Tempe's growth and development from a rural 19th century farming community to a modern 20th century urban center

**Feeling** – NPS defines *Feeling* as a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century. A grouping of prehistoric petroglyphs, unmarred by graffiti and intrusions and located on its original isolated bluff, can evoke a sense of tribal spiritual life.<sup>7</sup>

Traditionally, cemeteries evoke a unique sense of feeling, one that we associate with a variety of spiritual and psychological human phenomenon. The presence of rows upon rows of gravestones almost invariably incites a profound sense of deep reflection and, therefore, cemeteries can be counted among our most sacred places, regardless of ethnic background or racial affiliation. In this, cemeteries like Double Butte serve to bridge the gap between cultural and ethnic divides, providing us with a deeper sense of the complexities and intricacies of human interactions at the community level.

**Association** – In the context of integrity, NPS defines *Association* as the direct link between an important historic event or person and an historic property. A property retains integrity of association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and if it is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register.<sup>8</sup>

As Tempe's earliest cemetery, Double Butte prominently portrays the unique diversity of the community across time. Through its wide range of burials members of various ethnic groups can be found buried alongside one another, a lasting vestige to the remarkable range of associations that constituted people's daily lives in Tempe through the ages. No other place in Tempe so vividly portrays this cultural diversity – these functional associations in such a powerful and original setting.

### **NPS SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CEMETERIES AND GRAVES**

Although this determination of eligibility is intended to address the listing of Tempe Double Butte Cemetery on the Tempe Historic Property Register, it is nevertheless useful to incorporate the National Park Service's special considerations regarding the nomination of cemeteries. These guidelines allow for a more thorough and informed analysis of Double Butte's significance and its potential future eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It will be seen that this property more than adequately falls under the special considerations necessary for listing of a cemetery.

Graves, cemeteries, and burial places can reflect cultural values and practices of the past and help instruct us about who we are as a people. Often, however, descendants of the interred view graves and cemeteries with a sense of reverence and devout sentiment that can overshadow objective evaluation. For this reason cemeteries and graves are among those properties that ordinarily are not considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places unless they meet special requirements.

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation include special considerations by which burial places may be determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Called Criteria Considerations, they stipulate how burial places that meet basic eligibility criteria may be listed utilizing special provisions. Essentially modifiers of the four Criteria for Evaluation, Criteria Considerations test burial places for historic significance in American culture by determining the geographic extent, the historic events affecting their creation, the span of time in which they evolved, their ceremonial functions, their aesthetic value, the reasons for the location and orientation of graves, and the underlying meaning of their embellishments.<sup>9</sup>

For a burial place to qualify for listing under Eligibility Criterion A (association with events), the basic eligibility statement "*properties can be eligible for listing in the National Register if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history*" is modified by Criteria Consideration D which specifies "*a cemetery is eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.*"

*NPS Criterion A: Properties can be eligible for the National Register if they are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. NPS Criteria Consideration D specifies a cemetery is eligible if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.*

Under NPS Criterion A, events or trends with which the cemetery is associated must be clearly important, and the connection between the burial place and its associated context must be unmistakable. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is Tempe's first cemetery. Double Butte is significant for being contemporaneous with the founding of Tempe, for evidencing the diversity of community pioneers, and as a good representation of the self-image of the historic Tempe community for its first century. The creation and continuity of Tempe's first cemetery, Double Butte, reflects a broad spectrum of community history and culture.

A District eligible under Criterion A must maintain integrity of Location, Setting, Feeling, and Association. Double Butte meets or exceeds the requirements for the continued presence of these aspects of integrity.

For a burial place to qualify for listing under Eligibility Criterion B (association with people), the basic eligibility statement "*properties can be eligible for listing in the National Register if they are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past*" is modified by

Criteria Consideration C which specifies “a grave of an historical figure is eligible if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.”

*NPS Criterion B: Properties may be eligible for the National Register if they are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. NPS Criteria Consideration C specifies that a grave of an historical figure is eligible if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.*

Under NPS Criterion B, the person or group of persons with which the burial place is associated must be of outstanding importance to the community, and, as required by NPS Criteria Consideration C, there must be no other appropriate site or building directly associated with their productive lives. A 1940s scrapbook of the Tempe Old Settlers Association named 91 early city pioneers; 82 of those named are buried at Double Butte. Indeed, Double Butte is the gravesite of Tempe founder Charles T. Hayden, his son US Senator Carl Hayden, and numerous other Tempe Pioneers and persons of transcendent importance in the history of the community, including the families of Fogal, Gilliland, Gregg, Laird, Miller, Moeur, and O'Conner. While Hayden, Laird and Moeur are memorialized in our built environment by buildings and structures directly associated with their productive lives, Fogal, Gregg, and Miller, along with a great many other Pioneer Families are commemorated only at Double Butte.

A District eligible under Criterion B must maintain integrity of Location, Setting, and Materials. Double Butte meets or exceeds the requirements for the continued presence of these aspects of integrity.

For a burial place to qualify for listing under Eligibility Criterion C (design), the basic eligibility statement “*properties can be eligible for listing in the National Register if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction...*” is modified by Criteria Consideration D which specifies “*burial places whose location, grave markers, landscaping, or other physical attributes tell us something important about the people who created them, as well as formal cemeteries whose collections of tombs, sculptures, and markers possess artistic and architectural significance are eligible for listing under Criterion C.*”

*NPS Criterion C: Properties may be eligible for the National Register if they embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction. NPS Criteria Consideration C specifies that burial places whose location, grave markers, landscaping, or other physical attributes tell us something important about the people who created them, as well as formal cemeteries whose collections of tombs, sculptures, and markers possess artistic and architectural significance are eligible for listing under Criterion C.*

Under NPS Criterion C, funerary monuments and their associated art works, buildings, and landscapes associated with burial places must be good representatives of their stylistic type or period and methods of construction or fabrication. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is remarkable in that it is the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard alongside a Post WWII-era cemetery. This transcendence of design and development provides a significant array of

gravemarkers and monuments representing the common artistic values of a continuum of historic periods while offering insights into evolution of landscape architecture as well.

A District eligible under Criterion C must maintain integrity of Setting, Design, Feeling, and Materials. Double Butte meets or exceeds the requirements for the continued presence of these aspects of integrity.

NPS CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

A (association with events) is modified by  
 B (association with people) is modified by  
 C (construction or design) is modified by

NPS CRITERIA CONSIDERATION

D (age or historic events)  
 C (no other property exists)  
 D (artistic or unique attributes)

A cemetery considered for evaluation on an individual basis may be treated either as a historic site or as a district made up of individual graves, their markers, and plot-defining characteristics. A cemetery that is a site may or may not possess above-ground features that convey significant historic associations. A cemetery district, like other historic districts, is more than an area composed of a collection of separate elements; it is a cohesive landscape whose overall character is defined by the relationship of the features within it. Tempe Double Butte Cemetery is unique in that it is the only cemetery in the Salt River Valley that includes both a Victorian-era pioneer graveyard alongside a Post WWII-era cemetery. The property contains graves and markers of Euro-American and Mexican-American pioneers evidencing the early diversity of the community and providing a good representation of the self-image of the historic Tempe community. Both sections coexist with good integrity and together they help us interpret Tempe’s growth and development from a rural 19th century farming community to a modern 20th century urban center. In addition to these basic cemetery features, Double Butte has ornamental plantings, boundary fences, road systems, gateways, and substantial architectural features such as mausoleums and Veteran’s Memorial features that contribute to an evaluation of significance as a district.<sup>10</sup>

Increasingly, scholarship and public perception have come to demonstrate a growing appreciation for the important historical themes that graves, cemeteries, and burial places can represent. Nurtured in part by growing emphasis on the history of ordinary individuals, grass roots movements, and various cultural groups, the importance of burial places to the interpretation of community history is taking on new significance. Unfortunately, identification, maintenance, and preservation of burial places is threatened by neglect, ignorance, and vandalism; even as the qualities that render these places important representatives of our history make them clearly worthy of preservation. Historic designation and listing is an important step in preserving Double Butte because such recognition can help to spark community interest in the importance of these sites in conveying the story of its past. Designation also gives credibility to local efforts to preserve these resources for their continuing contribution to the community's identity.

## HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Research for historic property designation uses historic contexts to synthesize information about the period, the place, and the events that created, influenced, or formed the backdrop of the historic resources. Background and literature research is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the cultural and environmental contexts and are incorporated into the report as a basis for designation. General and specific archival and documentary records are consulted to develop a comprehensive cultural sensitivity of the project area and to aid in the analysis and understanding of cultural material persisting within a project area. Specific documentary records examined include local histories, local historic period maps and atlases, historic city directories and gazetteers, previous cultural resources research reports, property records, and, if appropriate, census data. These research efforts are designed to help explain the cultural and historical development of the property, document its historic significance, and substantiate a recommendation for designation.

### **Development of Double Butte Cemetery, Tempe AZ, 1888 to 1958**

Tempe Double Butte Cemetery traces its roots back as far as 1888, the date of the first recorded graves in the cemetery register (six total graves are known to date from that year). For the next decade, Double Butte grew to become Tempe's primary burial place. Accordingly, on September 13, 1897, the Tempe Cemetery Company was formed, becoming the first corporation to administer the cemetery. Officers included: Thomas Morrow (president); Jonathan L. Richard (vice president); Gabriel Cosner (secretary); and M.S. Johnston (treasurer). The articles of incorporation granted the corporation operating rights for twenty-five years, until September 1922. Upon executive board approval, the company made available one thousand shares of stock in Double Butte cemetery, valued at ten dollars per share.<sup>11</sup>

Among the first sections to be professionally developed by the Tempe Cemetery Company, what has come to be known as the "Pioneer Section" offered family plats and was located adjacent to earlier, pre-1897 burials. Of the five original company executives, four of them are buried in the Pioneer Section. It is also in this, the oldest organized section of the cemetery, that the graves of Tempe pioneers Charles Trumbull Hayden, Carl T. Hayden, and Benjamin B. Moeur can be found. Alongside them are buried members of their immediate families, including Carl Hayden's wife Nan, who sewed the first Arizona State flag in 1912. Moeur's wife, Honor Andersen Moeur, who served for many years as secretary of the Tempe Cemetery Association, is also buried next to her husband.<sup>12</sup>

As noted, the incorporation charter for the Tempe Cemetery Company expired in September 1922. Two years later a stockholder meeting was convened to elect a new board of directors and to determine the future direction of the company. At a January 31, 1924 meeting the new directors were elected, including: Joseph T. Birchett (president); D.G. Buck (vice president); Mrs. B.B. Moeur (secretary); Hugh Laird (treasurer); and Price Wickliff (sexton).<sup>13</sup>

Events in the 1920s had left the company in dire financial straits, and the cemetery itself suffered immensely as a result, with "many of the graves . . . badly sunken and the trees beginning to die from lack of water and care."<sup>14</sup> Recent banking failures at the local

level had devastated the Tempe Cemetery Company's pecuniary assets and the new board of directors was faced with the primary task of fundraising. By the end of 1926, after only a few months, the company's fundraising committee had secured nearly \$1500 to be used towards cemetery upkeep as well as the purchase of five additional acres of land from Niels Petersen.<sup>15</sup>

By the time Joseph Birchett retired as president in 1929, the Tempe Cemetery Association had fully recovered from its earlier financial woes and had begun to envision greater expansion. Some concern was expressed with the frequent practice of non-Tempe residents being buried in the cemetery, especially because of limited space. Prior to his departure, Birchett recommended that the cemetery expand to include both of the buttes and all land adjoining them, noting that he was "convinced that at some future time they will be valuable assets." An imaginative Birchett foresaw the placement of permanent reservoirs and ponds "on some of the higher ground" as being conducive to the future placement of mausoleums and proclaimed that Tempe Double Butte Cemetery, if properly expanded and administered, "could unquestionably be made into one of the most beautiful and unique cemeteries in the whole country."<sup>16</sup>

Birchett's vision of lavish ponds and fountains on the slopes of the Double Buttes never came to fruition, but the cemetery did nevertheless continue to expand in other (perhaps more practical) directions. In 1938 Tempe Cemetery Association President Garfield A. Goodwin asked the board of directors to approve a motion for the purchase of twenty-five acres of land abutting the western fringe of the existing grounds for the price of \$3200. In upcoming years burial plots would continue to fill these newly acquired lands: Sections F and G were filled between 1927 and 1936; Sections 1-7 filled to capacity between 1926 and 1939; and Sections 8-12 were full by 1958.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1950s, the cemetery had grown to a size and scale that severely taxed the administrative abilities of a volunteer organization like the Tempe Cemetery Association. At a board of directors meeting on April 17, 1958, the three remaining members (E.P. Carr, Jr., Hugh E. Laird, and Clyde Gilliland) announced that a deal had been struck to "convey to the City of Tempe all of its right, title and interest in and to the property . . . on the condition that the City of Tempe assume its obligations to operate same as a cemetery."<sup>18</sup> Thus, after sixty years of private, volunteer-organization management, Tempe Double Butte Cemetery reverted to administration by the City of Tempe. It remains under city ownership and administration to this day.

### **Cultural, Social, and Historical Development in Tempe AZ, 1888 to 1958**

As heretofore noted, Tempe Double Butte Cemetery provides understanding and appreciation of Tempe's highly diversified past with unparalleled transparency. As the primary place of burial for community residents beginning in the late 1880s and extending into the modern era, the cemetery reflects, through its array of burial plots and headstones, the cultural and social diversity of Tempe over a period spanning generations and dating back into the community's earliest years.

Because of Tempe's location in the heart of the fertile Salt River Valley, the town was defined in its earlier years by the presence of farms spreading outward in all directions from the community's core. Tempe's future role as a transportation center became

manifest with the arrival of the railroad (1887), a role reemphasized with the completion of the Ash Avenue Bridge (1913), allowing vehicular traffic, at that time mostly wagons, all-weather access to the north bank of the Salt, and by extension, to Phoenix.<sup>19</sup> Add to this Tempe's fortuitous adjacency to the major educational institution that would one day become Arizona State University, and one can gain a realization of the reasons for which the community has always attracted cultural diversity.

Surrounded by farms in its earliest days, many migrants arrived to serve as laborers in the field, giving rise to a considerable Hispanic/Mexican population as early as 1900 (many of these persons lived in the area known as San Pablo, near the present site of Sun Devil Stadium and slightly removed from the community's commercial hub along Mill Avenue). Later, beginning in the 1910s and 1920s, the Sotelo Addition further to the east (near the present site of Four Peaks Brewery, once Borden Creamery) represented an even greater expansion of the local Hispanic/Mexican community. Today, this type of racial segregation is not so readily apparent, with the entire Tempe community exuding a semblance of cultural diversity throughout.<sup>20</sup>

So too did the presence of large-scale farming in the Salt River give rise to an increasing Asian migrant population beginning in the early twentieth century. Persons of Asian descent being arriving in greater numbers in the 1920s and early 1930s, when unfavorable conditions in the farming areas of southern California induced many persons to move further east into Arizona. In the 1930s, under the gubernatorial term of longtime Tempe resident Benjamin B. Moeur, cultural tensions reached a climax when local Anglo-Americans began threatening and even carrying out acts of violence against Asian migrant farm workers. An international incident with Japan seemingly imminent, an ambassador from that country visited Phoenix to speak personally with Governor Moeur in 1934 in hopes of easing tensions and devising a peaceful solution. Eventually the matter fizzled out, but not before many Asian laborers were terrorized by others exhibiting a profound level of racial intolerance. All of this serves to exemplify the vastly evolving nature of cultural and social diversity in the Salt River Valley.<sup>21</sup>

The arrival of the railroad in 1887 resulted in a significant economic boom for Tempe, which now had a commercial link not only to nearby Arizona communities but to the entire outside world as well. Anglo-American capitalists flocked to Tempe, recognizing the inevitable economic expansion that would occur now that the railroad linked the community to outside business centers. This resulted in widespread infrastructural expansion in the town's core while simultaneously encouraging real estate investors to snatch farmlands skirting the town's immediate periphery in anticipation of additional expansion. This, in turn would result in continuing residential development, beginning especially in 1910 with the advent of the Gage Addition and perpetuated in 1924 with the platting of Park Tract south of 8<sup>th</sup> Street and west of Mill Avenue, neighborhoods that would cater to a predominantly Anglo-American population. Thus, the coming of major transportation infrastructure in the 1880s directly caused the economic boom that would ultimately bring countless persons to Tempe as permanent residents.

February 1885 saw the ceremonial opening day of the Tempe Normal School, whose board was headed by Tempe's founding pioneer Charles T. Hayden. A mere 31 students were on hand to mark the occasion (a stark contrast to the approximately 72,000 attendees enumerated in the school's 2011 student body). While the

bureaucratic evolution of the college that would one day become Arizona State University is not central to this narrative, its cultural impact on the surrounding community is. Any community boasting a major collegiate educational institution necessarily attracts a wide array of persons, both teachers and students. As the school expanded and its student body/work force grew, so too did Tempe witness a corollary expansion in its own population's cultural and social diversity. In more modern times, students from nations all around the globe come to Arizona State University in pursuit of a higher educational degree, thus perpetuating the university's role in promoting the continuing evolution of Tempe as a cultural community.<sup>22</sup>

What role does Tempe Double Butte Cemetery play in all of this? All three of the above-named community developmental themes (farming, transportation, education) served to encourage an ever-increasing array of culturally and socially diverse inhabitants in Tempe in their own respective ways. All three of these seemingly disparate developmental phenomena are drawn together in a powerful and spiritual manner at Double Butte Cemetery. Persons of all ethnic backgrounds—regardless of previous neighborhood segregation in the local community or racial backlash that occurred between different ethnic groups—are here found in one and the same place, a lasting vestige to the fact that all were, during their lifetimes, a pivotal component of the Tempe community in their own way and undeniably assisted, through their daily activities, in creating the Tempe that exists today. As such, Double Butte Cemetery holds a unique distinction in Tempe as the location that perhaps best exhibits the cultural and social evolution of the local community.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> City of Tempe, Tempe City Code Chapter 14A – Tempe Historic Preservation Ordinance, Ord. No. 95.35, 11-9-95; Ord. No. 2004.42, 1-20-05 accessed 04/06/2012 online at: <http://www.tempe.gov/citycode/14aHistoricPreservation.htm> §14A-4 “(4) Upon receipt of an application and placement on the next available commission agenda, the HPO shall compile and transmit to the commission a complete report on the subject property or district. This report shall address the location, condition, age, significance and integrity of historic features and identify potential contributing and noncontributing properties and other relevant information, together with a recommendation to grant or deny the application and the reasons for the recommendation; (5) At a public hearing, the commission shall review the application based on the applicable criteria in subsections (a) and (b) of this section, together with the HPO report, and make a recommendation to the development review commission. Any recommendation for approval may be subject to such conditions as the historic preservation commission deems applicable in order to fully carry out the provisions and intent of this chapter...”

<sup>2</sup> Cheryl L. Fox, *A History of Tempe's Double Butte Cemetery*, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tempe.gov/cemetery/Records/On-Line%20Records%209-8-10.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, How To Evaluate The Integrity Of A Property accessed 04/06/2012 online at [http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_8.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm) “Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons.” Integrity of location need not be present for the nomination as proposed.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, How To Evaluate The Integrity Of A Property accessed 04/06/2012 online at [http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_8.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm) “Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character.” For example, an early ranch-style house retaining original design, workmanship, and materials will relate the feeling of hand craftsmanship and onsite construction methods in residential construction before World War II. Integrity of feeling is a condition precedent to the nomination as proposed.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, How To Evaluate The Integrity Of A Property accessed 04/06/2012 online at [http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_8.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm) “Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.” For example, an early ranch-style house on a property whose natural and manmade elements have remained intact since the 1930s will retain its quality of association with the initial development of the subdivision and early suburban expansion within the original townsite. Integrity of association need not be present for the nomination as proposed.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, “GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING AND REGISTERING CEMETERIES AND BURIAL PLACES” accessed online 10/07/2011 at [http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41/nrb41\\_7.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb41/nrb41_7.htm) “To be eligible for the National

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Register, a cemetery or burial place must be shown to be significant under one or more of the four basic Criteria for Evaluation. Criteria A, B, C, and D indicate the several ways in which a property may be significant in American history, architecture (including the disciplines of landscape architecture and planning), archeology, engineering, and culture. Decisions about the relative significance of cemeteries and burial places can be made only with knowledge of the events, trends, and technologies that influenced practices of caring for and commemorating the dead, and with some concept of the quality and quantity of similar resources in the community, region, State, or nation. Such background provides the context for evaluating significance. The term "context," as applied to the process of evaluation, may be described simply as the relevant social, political, economic, and environmental circumstances of the historic period in which a property was developed. By studying a burial place in its broadest possible context, and by applying the basic criteria, the researcher is able to recognize those resources which are significant in representing a given period and historic theme."

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "HOW TO APPLY THE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION" accessed online 10/07/2011 at [http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15\\_7.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_7.htm) "The Criteria Considerations need to be applied only to individual properties. Components of eligible districts do not have to meet the special requirements unless they make up the majority of the district or are the focal point of the district."

<sup>11</sup> Fox, *A History of Tempe's Double Butte Cemetery*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph T. Birchett, President's Report, March 30, 1926, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Joseph T. Birchett, President's Report, March 30, 1929, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>18</sup> Tempe Cemetery Association Minute Book, April 17, 1958, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> In 1909 the Territorial Legislature appropriated \$116,000 to build the Ash Avenue Bridge. It was completed in September 1913.

<sup>20</sup> On the segregation of Mexican residents in their own separate areas east of the commercial core, see Smith, *Tempe: Arizona Crossroads*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>21</sup> See City of Tempe's National Register Nomination for the Governor B.B. Moeur House, esp. pp. 9-10. See also various articles in the *Los Angeles Times* between August and December 1934, cited in *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> For the evolution of the Arizona Territorial Normal School, see Smith, *Tempe: Arizona Crossroads*, pp. 39-41; 98-101.