

## **Tombstone Tour**

On February 26<sup>th</sup>, my group and I went to the Mesa Cemetery. Our tour guide took us on the Tombstone Tour. We viewed a variety of famous tombstones including Harry Lyman Chandler whose brother had the privilege of having a city named after him, Chandler. Also, in between famous people, each of us had a certain person to research. One of which was Zedo Ishikawa, who was Japanese and had an elementary school named after him. Ernesto Miranda, who was also on the tour, was responsible for the Miranda Rights which are now a standard part of our legal system.

The cemetery is broken into certain parts. We passed by the Jewish section where many of the headstones bore menorahs, the Star of David, and Hebrew writing. Other sections we passed by were: a memorial for some British Airforce cadets who died in training for WWII, an Eastern European section, and an unmarked area where people who died in the Depression era were buried. There were no headstones because people in that time couldn't afford them. And lastly, we visited the grave of Benjamin F. Johnson who had seven wives, one of which divorced him. Out of the people, we researched 20 men and only 2 women; and of these 20 people, 3 were Hispanic and 1 was Asian.

We had a wonderful time exploring and learning new things. Overall, it was a great experience.

## **Life Spans**

A cemetery is a great place to go to get lifespans. The lifespans varied between men, women, and children. Men had an average life of 68 years. Women had an average life of 67 years. Children, on the other hand, lived an average of 2 years. I was really interested in the differences in ages which made this project intriguing.

## **Epitaphs**

In the Mesa Cemetery, the most common epitaph was, "In Loving Memory of." The saddest epitaphs were the ones implying that the parents had buried their children. Some of the tombstones told something personal about the person, like if they were in the navy or if they liked fishing. Two occupations of women that were recognized on their gravestones were nurse and nun. One

occupation of the men was soldier. Men had more occupations listed than the women.

### **Shapes and Sizes**

The most unusual shape of a tombstone that we saw was a log. Gray and black were the most common colors for the tombstones. All the tombstones were different shapes and sizes. You can notice a difference in the old and more modern tombstones. They have different shapes and are made out of different materials. The most common religious symbol was the cross. Other symbols of Christianity were praying hands and an open book.

### **Demographics**

We studied the history of names in the Mesa Cemetery. We checked what nationality the names were. In the Mesa Cemetery there is a rich history of names from German to Eastern European to Jews. German seems to be the largest ethnic group. Married women barely had their maiden names written on their tombstones but most women had an inscription. Even the pioneers had their own special symbols.

The most common last names were Smith and Pew. O.S. Stapley and Rulon Shepherd were the most famous names we saw.

We had fun looking at all of the different names in the cemetery and finding their nationalities.

### **Private v. Public Space**

Cemeteries are public places because anyone can go in and see the graves. Cemeteries are also private places because it can be a place that is special to someone. It could be a private place to see their dead relatives.

### **Reflections**

Before we went, I thought the cemetery was a place for mourning and a place to be sad. I also thought that it was a place for quiet voices and for downed heads. Now after the trip, I know that cemeteries are places to honor and remember our friends and family members. It is also a place to leave gifts for our fallen

comrades. In conclusion, the cemetery is a place of remembering and shouldn't be feared.

Cemeteries are places where you can learn about the precious past. Also it is a happy place, in a way, because it is a memory preserver for our love ones. Cemeteries are places where we honor our loved ones. It is a place of a thousand stories. Cemeteries are to be treasured .

Cemeteries are thought of by some as dark and scary places. Before going to the Mesa Cemetery, my mental picture of a cemetery was a place with a bunch of stones sticking out of the ground where people were buried. I didn't think this was a very interesting subject. But once you visit a cemetery, your perspective of cemeteries could change. Instead of thinking about people underground, you could think about them. A cemetery can be a place to learn about those who have passed away and what they achieved in their lifetime.