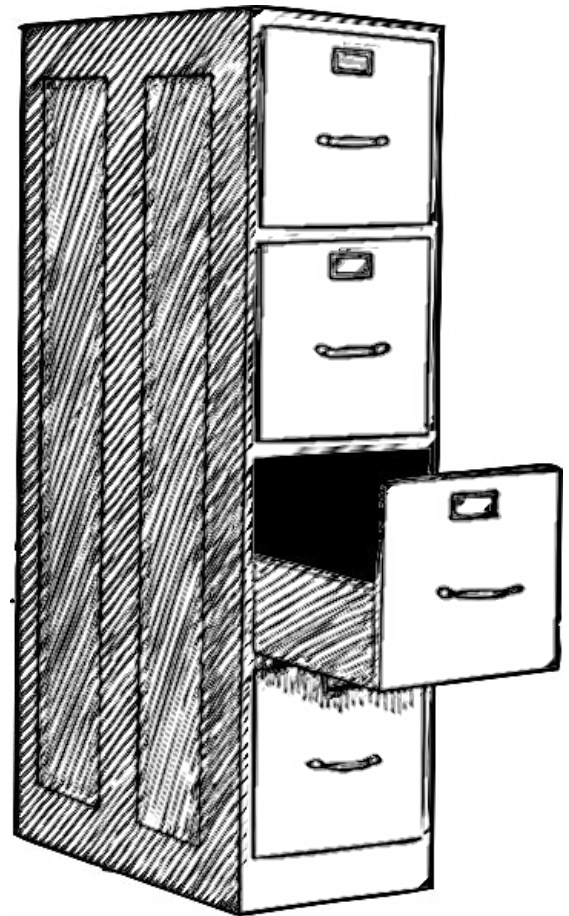## Spotlight
Cemetery Vertical Files and Guide

Lawrence "Larry" G. Robbins

In the fall of 2006 when the Genealogical Forum library was still at the Gideon Street location, a project was initiated to inventory all the cemetery records at the GFO and propose ways to make those records more accessible and user friendly to patrons. The *Oregon Burial Site Guide* which listed all the cemeteries and gravesites in Oregon, their locations, and any alternative names which may have been used over the years was chosen as an index for the inventory.

The inventory was done alphabetically by county. The content of all cemetery records on the library shelves, in the vertical files, in the rare manuscript room and in several other locations within the library were located and added to the inventory. Special attention was given to primary records, those kept by the cemetery itself during the interment process, and the information resulting from the recording of gravestone inscriptions which were gathered by GFO volunteers,

local genealogical and historical societies, the WPA during the Great Depression, veteran organizations like the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), and lineage societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

Once the inventory was gathered, a decision was made to establish a file folder for every cemetery in the state of Oregon using the cemetery names identified in the *Oregon Burial Site Guide*. As paper and photographic records were gathered and identified they would be placed in the vertical file, as this system allowed for easy incorporation into the new filing format. For cemetery records that were already in published form and on the GFO library shelves, reference was made to them in the inventory together with their shelf location so that the researcher might easily find them.

Larry Robbins shows one of the unique pieces found in the vertical files. Photo by Sarah Holmes.

Cemetery Name(s)	Map Key	Records at GFO Library
Agency Cemetery (Umatilla Indian Agency)	31	Inventories and Summaries: (UCC1), 25 pages and (YRC), pp. 315-316
Albee Cemetery (aka Alba Cemetery)	32	Inventories and Summaries: (UCC2), 4 pages and (YRC), pp. 169-170
Athena Cemetery (aka IOOF Cemetery and Knights of Pythias Cemetery)	01	Inventory and Summary: (YRC), pp. 171-181
Bowlus Cemetery	03	Inventories and Summaries: (MSS), 2 pages and (YRC), pp. 182-185
De Spain Gulch Cemetery	04	Inventory and Summary: (YRC), p. 186
Echo Memorial Cemetery (aka IOOF Cemetery)	05	Inventories: (TSC), pp. 1-143; (YRC), pp. 187-192 Summaries: (OHC), pp. 120-121; (OHCA), photos
Foster Pioneer Cemetery	06	Inventories and Summaries: (MSS), 7 pages, photos; (TSC), pp. 145-148; (YRC), pp. 193-195

A sample from the Umatilla Cemeteries file. The first page (not shown) is a key to the abbreviations used in the inventory.

The inventory and record set-up took about two years to accomplish. There is now a section in the vertical files for each cemetery in Oregon. The files are organized alphabetically by county; and within each county, alphabetically by cemetery name. There is a county inventory at the beginning of each county file section, providing the researcher with a list of what records exist in each file and on the GFO Li-brary shelves. Individual file folders may contain a transcription record of gravestone inscriptions, photographs, newspaper articles, biographical data, and other tidbits of useful information for the researcher.

While the inventory process has been substantially complete for several years, the collection process continues. If you find a record of cemetery buri-als or cemetery information in Oregon, please make a copy of it for the GFO. That record might be very helpful and meaningful to someone in the future.

Editor's note: These cemetery files and their contents are not yet in the GFO's library catalog, and the finding aid described in this article is due for an update. This might be a larger project than one person would like to undertake, but with 36 counties in Oregon, the project could easily be divid-ed between several volunteers, each working on a few counties. If you love cemeteries and see the value in this resource, please contact Cathy Lauer (volunteer@ gfo.org) to offer your help.