

S M I T H - H O B S O N

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October 15, 2004

TO: Ken Magdaleno, Chair and Commissioners
Ventura Parks and Recreation Commission

Dear Commission Members,

I am sorry that I am unable to attend tonight's meeting. I am writing in support of the effort to develop an appropriate form of memorialization for the people buried at Cemetery Memorial Park.

I am a fifth generation Ventura County resident from both my fathers' and mothers' families (Hobson and the Petit) and have several of my first, second and third generation ancestors buried at Memorial Park. The most well known is my great great grandfather, William Dewey Hobson.

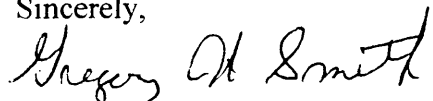
William Dewey Hobson was very active in Ventura County and has been called the "Father of Ventura County" for his successful lobbying efforts to separate Ventura County from Santa Barbara County and for his dedication and efforts on behalf of the county.

I was surprised to learn that William Dewey Hobson is currently in an unmarked grave in Cemetery Memorial Park along with his mother, his wife, a sister, several grandchildren, and a daughter in law. I do not fault or blame the city for this situation. At the time that the markers were removed in 1964, three of William Dewey Hobson's descendants, (Walter Hoffman, Katherine Haley, and Fred W. Smith) were alive, living locally and quite active and involved in the area. In addition my maternal grandfather, Charles Petit, was a close friend of theirs and would have been mayor of Ventura at the time this decision was made. (He was Mayor of Ventura from 1953-1969).

It is therefore highly unlikely, if not impossible, that Hobson descendants were unaware of the planned headstone removals or actively opposed it. However, it is equally unlikely that they would have agreed to the removal of their honored ancestor's headstones without some plan and guarantee to replace them with markers or some alternative form of memorialization.

Therefore, I would like to offer my support and the support and assistance of my relatives in this project. I appreciate the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the City Council, and members of the public to address this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gregory H. Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gregory H. Smith