



Wolf Boy Discovered in the Julian Cemetery

David Lewis

Introduction to the author

My name is David Lewis, and I am the historian for the Julian Cemetery. In February of 2006, I completed the first modern database and site map of the Julian Cemetery. The site map was created by first surveying the grounds of the cemetery with a total station laser transit and then uploading the data to AutoCAD civil software. All visible headstones plus all significant structures and features throughout the grounds were recorded. Previous survey maps of the area provided control points for my survey, establishing both a beginning point and a basis of bearings. The cemetery's original maps were destroyed in a house fire in 1957. Hard copies and digital versions of the new map and database will be stored in three separate locations to prevent disasters, such as the recent Cedar Fire, from erasing history.

Brief historical background of the Julian Cemetery

To my knowledge, no one oversaw the Julian Cemetery from the time of the first burial in 1870 to the forming of the Julian Cemetery Association in 1923. One of the Association's first acts was to place 129 individually-numbered concrete markers at the sites of previously unmarked graves. Although the 1957 house fire destroyed most of the cemetery's official records, Ida Bailey Wellington, the first secretary of the Cemetery, had fortuitously kept a burial list at her home. Although Wellington's lists are incomplete and were compiled nearly fifty years after the first burial, they are an essential resource in attempting to locate and identify many of the cemetery's lost graves.

Recent history

For seven years, I have searched the Julian Cemetery grounds looking for the location of seventy lost graves. Finding one or two a year has been good progress, given that I must budget my time around work and family. Since the day I first laid eyes on Wellington's four of individuals buried in the cemetery, I have been intrigued by one name in particular: Wolf Boy. In my lifetime I have known more than a few people who acquired nicknames derived from their physical characteristics. Some names were earned by the person when plying a certain trade. Leaf Mold Molly was one such name. But the one name on the cemetery list that conjures up an especially vivid image is: "The Wolf Boy from Temecula: marker number 7."

To date, a brief investigation has revealed nothing about the boy who reportedly died in 1876 and was buried in the Julian Cemetery near Tommie Horrell. I had found marker number 8—

purportedly Tommie Horrell—several years ago, but there was no name inscribed. Furthermore, the records are vague as to who is actually buried under marker number 8. I was able to locate a family by the name of Wolf living in Temecula in the 1870s and 1880s. Louis Wolf was a prominent store owner and well known in Temecula. Louis and his wife Ramona were reported to have a three-year-old son, Harry, according to the 1870 U.S. Census. Harry is not listed on the 1880 census. Could the Wolf boy buried in the Julian Cemetery be Harry? Popular belief maintains that author Helen Hunt Jackson based her novel *Ramona* on the life of Ramona Wolf. Jackson had spent some time with the Wolfs around 1882 and 1883. This only adds more local intrigue to the story of the Wolf boy.



Figure 13.1. This photograph shows an unidentified grave in the Julian Cemetery that was marked in the typical way—only by a blanket of rocks. Note the railroad-tie steps in the foreground that have damaged many of the cemetery's graves. A water line also was run through the lower left portion of this grave. Courtesy David Lewis.

Finding an answer to this question and many others may take a lifetime. Recently, I was able to locate five of the seventy missing graves. One grave site, which is nothing more than a blanket of rocks, was partially destroyed during the placement of railroad-tie steps and a water line within the cemetery (Figure 13.1). Half of a second grave site adjacent to it was destroyed by the steps. A third grave site was almost completely destroyed. Damage like this is not unfamiliar to those of us who lend our lives to the research and preservation of historic sites. It will require more work at the site and sophisticated equipment to identify grave sites that were completely destroyed by the steps. Today was my first outing with a metal detector loaned to me by my friend Jim Birdsell. My hope is to find square nails that would have fastened a wooden cross.

The instrument may prove to be too sensitive for my work as it detects even the wire debris from artificial flowers left in the cemetery. The wire is nearly everywhere.

On August 27, 2007, while scanning the ground for clues, I noticed an uncharacteristic rock protruding from the ground and began to trowel the earth around it (Figure 13.2). That rock led me to another and soon the outline of a grave, long buried, began to emerge. Much earlier, I had discovered the common practice of outlining graves with rocks; sometimes the whole grave site is a blanket of rocks. Many times the rocks were just debris accumulated during the excavation of a grave in the typically rocky soil of the cemetery, but sometimes they appeared to be imported from another area. I was clearing the head of the grave when I discovered one of the 1923 concrete markers. I brushed away the dirt from the top of the marker, and I could not believe my eyes. There before me was the number 7, the Wolf boy from Temecula (Figure 13.3)! For a moment I was Indiana Jones. There were no snakes, no Nazis, and this was not the Holy Grail; but it might as well have been. For seven years I had searched for the Wolf boy and I was beginning to think his grave, like many others, had been destroyed. While clearing his grave, I discovered another of the concrete markers. This one belonged to the Brady baby. That made a total of five grave sites discovered this week. Not many people would consider what I do as being thrilling or fun. However, I have always said that the best toy you can give a child is a puddle of water or a pile of dirt. It doesn't matter how old the kid is.



Figure 13.2. The Wolf boy grave before it was uncovered. Courtesy David Lewis.



Figure 13.3. The rocks marking the Wolf boy grave are fully exposed and shown to be in line with marker number 7. Courtesy David Lewis.