



Victoria Avenue Forever



Victoria AveNews

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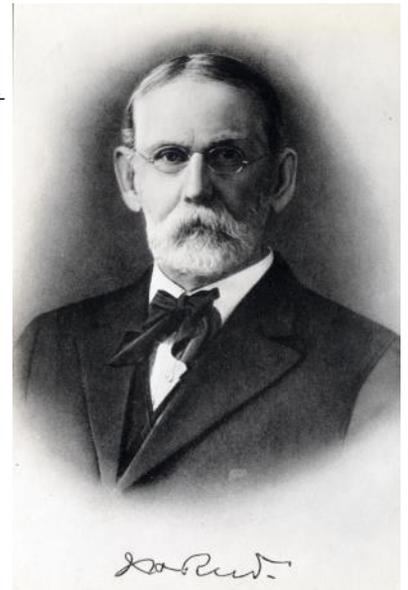
Volume 27—No. 3

John Henry Reed Part 1: Street Trees—Bill Wilkman

This two-part series on John Henry Reed will explore the substantial contributions Reed made to city beautification and to advancements in citrus farming. This part will cover Reed's involvement in the incorporation of street tree planting and maintenance as a municipal responsibility. Part 2 will cover the contributions Reed made to making Riverside a major center of citrus farming science.

Most of us take street trees for granted. Unless there is something spectacular about them, they simply form the background of our travels. But, there was a time when street trees were not a common sight and the notion that a local government would undertake a program involving the planting and maintenance of street trees would have been considered rather peculiar. Riverside's John Henry Reed (1833-1920) was an early adopter of this idea, becoming a major contributor to the street tree movement at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Reed was born in June of 1833 in Rootstown Township, Portage County, Ohio. His first occupation was that of a mathematics teacher in Lebanon, Ohio, a profession he was forced to give up due to worsening hearing loss. From there he migrated to Nebraska where he purchased a large stock farm. Suffering from failing health, however, he decided to move to California in the hope that the Golden State's mild climate would facilitate the restoration of his health. Traveling with his son Frederick, Reed first stopped at Santa Barbara. At that location, his son purchased a horse and wagon, supplying it with the essentials needed for travel. Reed and his son then commenced to travel up and down the California coast for —[go to page 3](#).



John Henry Reed

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City of Riverside & UC Riverside Scientists team up to protect the Parent Navel Orange Tree—Mario Lara, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department.



The City of Riverside, which traces much of its early prosperity to the citrus industry, has moved to protect the historic Parent Navel Orange Tree (PNOT) by removing two companion trees and reducing the possibility of the Parent Navel being infected by a fatal disease.

Two companion trees, which were of no significant historical value, were recommended for removal by citrus and plant pathology experts at UC Riverside, who were concerned about the possibility of the companion trees being potential hosts for the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP), which carries Huanglongbing (HLB), also known as citrus greening disease.

Protection of the PNOT is critical to preserving a treasured historical and cultural resource with national significance. The PNOT, located within a fenced enclosure at the corner of Magnolia and Arlington Avenues, is California —[go to page 5](#)

Letter from the Editor

During the hot summer season we put away the shovels and clippers and turn instead to making plans for the future. There is no real down time. We celebrate our successes, but there are always new challenges that arise. This is the time for our **annual Board election and membership survey** to our to get your opinions on how we are doing. **Please do fill out the enclosed ballot and survey and mail it back to us. Your opinions are important to us. Thank you.** We will have our first Board meeting for the new planting season on Saturday, September 14th. At this time we will talk about revitalizing the Board and considering an annual fundraising event.

Our successes for the year include 7 work events, a major *Eucalyptus* tree trimming, positive interactions with the City on protecting Victoria Avenue from roundabouts and updating the City's protection policy, and a public event with Explore Riverside. We want to express our deep gratitude to California ReLeaf and to Ward 5 City Councilman, Chris MacArthur who have provided support to *Victoria Avenue Forever*, which are both now ending. Our grant to plant trees in the Casa Blanca neighborhood has just ended ([see Events on page 6](#)) and Councilman Mac Arthur has participated for the last time in the annual Regatta, a fundraising event that provides support for a program of sailing and water safety for our City's youngsters and for local non-profit organizations (see below). *VAF* has benefitted greatly from Coun-

cilman MacArthur's contributions from this event for many years. Councilman Mac Arthur is retiring after serving for 12 years, and plans to spend more time with his family. We wish the entire MacArthur family all the best for the future.

Among the challenges we face are more thefts and vandalism on Victoria Avenue. The Lorraine Small Rose garden in the median near Myrtle Street was planted in her lifetime to celebrate her 37 years as an advocate for parks, gardening and open spaces. In 1993, roughly 270 roses were planted by *Victoria Avenue Forever* in the garden. Over the past couple of years, weekend after weekend, thieves have dug up and stolen a total of 85 roses from that garden. In addition, this year we had 10 new trees stolen or removed from the medians of Victoria Avenue and 15 had their crowns cut off. For the first time this year, we have had four handmade wooden benches stolen from the Avenue (at Jane, Horace, Arlington and Myrtle). And finally, this year, numerous backflow devices have been stolen from Victoria Avenue, depriving the landscaping of irrigation during the hot season ([see Events on page 6](#)). Both the Hal Snyder Garden and the Dr. Lewis garden have suffered, as well as many newly planted trees in both areas. It is a terrible shame. We thank the City for scheduling and paying for manual watering with water trucks.

Enjoy your summer—Darleen DeMason

The 2019 Annual Regatta—Darleen DeMason

The Riverside Community Sailing Program's fundraising event, the Annual Regatta, took place on June 8 this year at Fairmont Park's Lake Evans. There were three races: kids, City Council, and Non-Profits and Donors. Four City Councilmen raced: Mike Gardner, Andy Melendrez, Chris Mac Arthur and Mike Soubirous. Each of these Councilmen sold tickets and the profits of their ticket sales were split between the Sailing Program and a Charity of their choice. Councilman Mac Arthur chose *Victoria Avenue Forever* again this year. Board Member, John Collins raced for *Victoria Avenue Forever* in the third race. A picnic meal of Chick-fil-A sandwiches and Nothing Bundt Cakes was provided. There were raffle prizes and silent auction items. Trophies were awarded to the racers.

Councilman Soubirous handily won the City Council Race. Only two other City Council members completed the race because Councilman Mac Arthur capsized his boat and, both he, and the boat had to be rescued. John Collins won the Non-Profits and Donors race and was clearly the most skilled sailor on the water that day.

Victoria Avenue Forever was proud to debut its new T-shirt for the event and both Councilman Mac Arthur and

John Collins wore their shirts. It was a fun day and the last time *Victoria Avenue Forever* will receive a donation from this annual event because Councilman Mac Arthur is retiring from the Council.

Thank you Councilman Mac Arthur for all the years of support!



John Collins zooming off the starting line in the Non-Profits race.

John Reed—from pg 1 fourteen days, camping out and basking in California's sunshine. Through this process, Reed's health greatly improved and he soon found himself ready to settle down. His deafness, however, did not diminish. His hearing loss was apparently not complete, however, as he was known to carry a tube with him to serve as a primitive hearing aid. Placing the tube over an ear, people could shout into the tube to be understood.

During his travels, Reed and his son examined many potential places to call home, but found all of them lacking in one factor or another. When he and his son reached Riverside in 1890, however, he knew right away that he had found his new home. Quoting from Brown and Boyd's *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*: "When they topped the divide between Riverside and West Riverside, and the panorama of the bright green valley, which is now Riverside, burst upon their enraptured vision, John H. Reed cried: 'This is the place for me,' and he might well have added, 'And I am the man for this place' had he not been too modest to ever lay claim to the credit which was due him."

In Riverside, Reed purchased a 10-acre property at 547 (now 3089) Chicago Avenue and there he established a citrus farm. Reed's wife, Catherine (1832-1907) joined him soon thereafter. Over time, Reed expanded his farm to approximately 50-acres, on which he and his son planted lemon and orange trees.

Among the things that impressed Reed about Riverside, was its abundance of street trees. He asserted in an essay on street tree management in Brown and Boyd's history book that "Probably in the early years of no other California town were so many street trees planted on the streets."

Many Riverside residents also took pride in the town's street trees and felt strongly about their planting and care. This sentiment was forcefully expressed in an editorial published in the July 26, 1889 edition of the *Riverside Daily Press*. Its author complained bitterly about the haphazard pruning of pepper trees along Magnolia Avenue and the practice of cutting down street trees for firewood. Among the memorable pronouncements in the editorial was this: "I say plant trees – plant them *everywhere* especially along the avenues...Let them stand and remember the lines – Woodman, spare that tree!"

Before the planting of street trees became an accepted practice of municipal government, street tree plantings were typically carried out by land developers, promoters, and individuals. Examples of early street tree plantings in Riverside included those in downtown Riverside (also known as the Mile Square), Magnolia Avenue, Colton Avenue, White's Addition, and Walnut Street.

Downtown: Street trees in the business district of Downtown Riverside were planted by the Southern California Colony Association, the entity that founded Riverside. According to Reed, pepper trees were favored for this district. Interestingly, however, an 1887 photograph published in Tom Patter-

son's "Out of the County's Past" (*Press-Enterprise*, December 17, 1978) shows a stand of rather large eucalyptus trees along 10th Street in the vicinity of Lemon Street. Perhaps both were planted or maybe one preceded the other. Whatever the case, over time, downtown shop owners came to despise these trees because they blocked the view to their storefronts and littered the sidewalks with leaves and other litter. Eventually, downtown business owners took matters into their own hands and had the offending trees cut down. Given Riverside's fabled love affair with street trees, one would have thought that the removal of these street trees would have been met with outrage. And, there were likely those who were shocked at the wholesale destruction of these trees. Such was not the case for *Riverside Daily Press* publisher L.M. Holt, however, who praised the tree removals opining in an editorial that the ax was doing "Christian work" downtown. Eventually, palm trees were adopted as the best tree for downtown Riverside, and turn of the nineteenth century photos of downtown streets show an abundance of recently planted palms.



Magnolia Avenue approximately 1907

Magnolia Avenue: Magnolia Avenue was the brainchild of the Riverside Land and Irrigating Company which viewed the creation of a magnificent boulevard as a vehicle for selling lots in the company's 15,000-acre subdivision southwest of the Riverside colony's boundaries. Designed as a dual carriageway of 132 feet in width, the Avenue was laid out in 1876. While the RL&I envisioned this grand boulevard to extend from the Temescal Wash in Corona to the San Bernardino Mountains in San Bernardino County, in its initial form, it only covered the distance from Temescal Wash to Riverside's Arlington Avenue. A later extension brought Magnolia Avenue to the Tequesquite Arroyo, but that's as far as it ever reached. According to Reed, the grand boulevard was conjured up by RL&I's S.C. Evans and H.J. Rudisill. Reed noted that the RL&I only planted the median, leaving the parkways for adjoining property owners to plant. Under the guidance of James Boyd, some 2,500 pepper trees were installed in Magnolia's median. In its day, Magnolia—[go to pg 4](#)

John Reed—from pg 3

Avenue was a novel idea in street design. In its early years, Magnolia Avenue looked very much like Victoria Avenue. Some say the Ontario's Euclid Avenue was inspired by Magnolia Avenue. And it is generally accepted that Victoria Avenue, funded in 1890 by Matthew Gage, was influenced by the design of Magnolia Avenue.

White's Addition: White's Addition, was a 102-acre subdivision southeast of the Mile Square. To highlight the extent of this subdivision, developers A.S. White, W.A. Hayt, and C. Sylvester planted the tract's perimeter with street trees. Hayt took charge of these trees, and for two years employed a man to care for them. Beyond that, for a total of 14 years, Hayt continued to look after these trees.

Colton Avenue: Another notable early planting of street trees occurred along Colton Avenue (now La Cadena Drive). In this case, James Boyd planted a half mile of this street to eucalyptus trees. Sadly, and to the dismay of Riverside's tree lovers, these were later cut down for firewood.

Walnut Street: Finally, Walnut Street (now Brockton Avenue) was beautified with pepper trees in the late 19th century. C.M. Loring funded this beautification effort, with the Mission Inn's Frank Miller supervising the planting of these trees.

So, while early Riverside was known for its abundance of street trees; the practice of street tree planting and maintenance was up to private individuals and entities. In some cases, such as Magnolia Avenue, an orderly process was followed to assure consistency of tree types and uniformity of maintenance. In areas lacking this sort of structure, the result could be chaotic. Individual property owners were known to plant whatever tree pleased them, with the result that many streets became a hodgepodge of tree varieties, some well suited for parkway planting and other not so. In some areas, street trees were planted too close together, while other street frontages were entirely barren of street trees. Further exacerbating the situation was the fact that up until 1896, a property owner could do anything to the trees fronting his property, including cutting them down for firewood.

The inaugural attempt to bring order to Riverside's street tree situation occurred in 1896, when Riverside's first street tree ordinance was passed. Far from comprehensive, this ordinance simply required the approval of the City's Board of Trustees (the equivalent of today's City Council) before any street tree could be felled. However, while this edict looked good on paper, in practice the Board was frequently known to simply rubber stamp most requests for tree removals.

Concerned about the continued destruction of street trees subsequent to this ordinance, Riverside's Horticultural Club convinced the Board of Trustees to appoint a committee to investigate all requests for tree removals and to advise the Board as to whether the requests should be approved or denied. This committee was formed in 1897 and proved effective in bringing order to the matter of street tree removals.

With the problem of random street tree removals solved, the Chamber of Commerce approached the City's Board of Trustees with a request that the street tree ordinance be expanded to encompass all aspects of street tree planting and maintenance. Unfortunately, the Trustees could not be convinced of the wisdom of this idea and the proposal fell flat. Undaunted, the Chamber decided that it would assume responsibility for street tree planting and maintenance and on August 2, 1904 established a committee for this purpose, with John Reed selected to head this committee. By October of 1904, using Chamber funds along with private subscriptions and donated labor, the Chamber's street tree committee saw to the planting of 350 street trees. This was the first systematic planting of street trees, outside of the streets planted by land developers. The following year, the Chamber raised \$1,000 to plant more street trees. Funding for this latter effort came from the Chamber, private subscription, and interestingly, the City of Riverside.

In February of 1905, the Chamber created a new Tree Planting Committee, with John Reed put in charge of its efforts to plant additional street trees. To help arouse public support for a comprehensive street tree program, the Chamber organized a mass meeting to take place in the Loring Opera House on April 6, 1905. Several dignitaries were on hand to talk about the importance of beautiful streets to the prosperity of the City. In promoting this meeting, the *Riverside Daily Press* noted that "...these talks will be illustrated with stereopticon slides, which will show the difference between well cared for and poorly cared for streets." Well cared for streets, the speakers noted were those lined by well pruned street trees. The meeting proved a success and greatly aided the effort to gain public support for street tree planting and maintenance. With Reed at the helm, the Chamber's Street Tree Committee saw to the planting of 1,000 street trees in 1905.

Still, despite the Chamber's efforts, lapses in street tree care persisted. Pruning and other street tree maintenance efforts were largely up to the owner of the adjacent property. When a property owner allowed a street tree to obstruct a roadway or sidewalk, the City's Street Commissioner took up the responsibility of cutting offending branches as needed to assure safe passage. Utility companies pruned trees with the sole objective of eliminating interference with overhead wires. The results of these trimming efforts were often badly shaped and/or damaged trees.

In 1906, a momentous decision was made by the City of Riverside when the position of Tree Warden was created. Attached to the Superintendent of Streets Department, the position was assigned to John Reed. Reed had full charge for the planting and maintenance of the City's 25,000 street trees. With the exception of a few outlying streets, these plantings graced most of Riverside's established streets. As the City Charter did not allow the City to pay for street tree work, the Chamber of Commerce took on the responsibility of raising needed funds.—[*go to pg 7*](#)

Parent Navel Orange—from page 1

Historic Landmark No. 20 and City of Riverside Landmark No. 15.

In the 1870s, Eliza Tibbets planted the first pair of Bahia orange trees believed to be responsible for launching California's successful citrus industry. The PNOT is the only surviving member of the pair from which all California Navel Oranges have descended. The fruit they produced were large, sweet, flavorful, seedless, and commercially viable, thus creating many jobs and agricultural opportunities in this region.

This is not the first time that the City and scientists from UC Riverside have teamed up to protect the PNOT. In 1918 a procedure called inarching was done to make the tree more resilient against a fungus that killed the PNOT's sister tree. The inarching procedure was repeated in 1951. The PNOT's thick root structure bears the physical evidence of many root grafting that has kept the tree alive beyond its typical life span.

Today, citrus greening disease, also known as huanglongbing, or HLB, which devastated citrus in Florida, is known to be in Riverside and around Southern California. The bacteria attack the plants' vascular system, but do not pose a threat to humans or animals. The Asian Citrus Psyllid can spread the bacteria when the pest moves from one location to another, feeding on citrus trees and other plants. Unfortunately, once a tree is infected there is no cure, and it typically declines and dies within a few years.

Florida first detected the pest in 1998 and the disease in 2005. The University of Florida estimates that the disease causes an average loss of 7,513 jobs per year, and has cost growers \$3 billion in lost revenue since it was first detected there. The Asian Citrus Psyllid was first detected in California in 2008.

The City and scientists from UCR are once again working together to maintain the health and vigor of the PNOT, including protecting it against pests and disease. The team of scientists includes experts from UCR, as well as from the Citrus Research Board and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) with focus in the fields of citriculture, entomology, biology, plant pathology, and plant genetics. This world-renowned team of experts recommended last year that a frost cloth be draped over the PNOT during the summer months to provide a physical barrier against the psyllid during the psyllid's most active period. It was, however, subject to the effects of heavy winds, suffered tears and was ultimately removed in early fall.

To provide a more permanent physical barrier, a steel structure was constructed in March, 2019 and insect screening material was installed in June.

For more information about HLB and what to look for, Riverside County residents may call the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (951) 955-3045 or CDFAs toll-free pest hotline at 1-800-491-1899 or visit: www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/acp/.

This article is adapted from a City of Riverside Press Release on April 5th, 2019, edited and submitted for publication here.

On right—Final enclosure with insect screening mesh—June 2019.

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on the 2nd Wednesday of each month (except August)

www.victoriaavenueforever.org

victoriaaveforever@gmail.com

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PO Box 4152, Riverside, CA 92514

Contributions

May - July 2019

Thank you to all who contributed to *Victoria Avenue Forever*. Your gifts will be used to help protect and care for Riverside's living legacy – Victoria Avenue.

General Contributions and for Upkeep/trees

Allen & Candy Baron, Charles & Sally Beaty, Jerome & Elisabeth Blair, Mike & Nancy Buchmeier, Steven & Elizabeth Francis, Maureen Kane, Robert & Sue Krieger, James & Jessica Lee, Councilman Chris Mac Arthur, Dick & JoAnn Messer, Mark & Nancy Parrish, Lawrence Paulsen, Gaby Plascencia, Dennis & Janice Ponsor, Roger & Julie Slininger, and Catherine Zimmer.

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Save the Eucalypts

Los Amigos Association, Jerome & Elisabeth Blair, Sue Johnson, and Sally Mazzetti.

Memorial Contributions

Recently there was an outpouring of donations in memory of **John Malloch "Terry" Mylne III**: Alfred & Betty Jo Bonnett, Gage Canal Company, Enid Brock, Charles & Virginia Field, Marta Franzen, William Irving, William Johnson, Jr., Elaine Mannon, Roger & Commie Ransom, and Nicholas & Carlaine Willis.

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Los Amigos Assoc.	In Memory of Margaret Fletcher
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Sue Johnson	In Memory of Terry Mylne
Walter & Betty Parks	In Memory of Terry Mylne

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Recent Events Impacting Victoria Avenue:

New Contractor on the Avenue—The City of Riverside recently hired a new contractor, **Pacific Coast Landscape and Design** to maintain the Avenue. They started on July 1st. They have jumped right in and are aggressively cleaning up the medians and parkways. You will see their trucks out there every day.



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ReLeaf Grant Ending—In January, VAF partnered with the Board of Casa Blanca Home of Neighborly Services (CBHNS) and the Villegas Park Advisory Committee (VPAC) to receive a grant from **CA ReLEAF** (<http://californiareleaf.org/>) which is a statewide alliance of community organizations that support urban forestry. With the funding we were able to plant 230 trees, fund installation of new irrigation, buy tools and forge positive relationships within the Casa Blanca Community. The grant funding ended in June. We are proud to have planted 126 new Eucalyptus trees on Victoria Avenue between Maude and St. Lawrence.



Stolen Backflow Devices—There has been a rash of thefts of backflow devices all over the City in the last few years. This year thieves have hit Victoria Avenue multiple times and have stolen at least a dozen devices. Missing backflows inactivate the entire irrigation system and deprive whole landscapes from receiving water for weeks until new units can be purchased and installed. The Hal Snyder and all the new Weeping Bottlebrush trees planted on the outbound parkway in front of it were without water in June-July. And then in early July, five backflow devices were stolen between Arlington and Washington, affecting the Dr. Lewis Garden, 34 new Eucalyptus trees planted between Maude and Mary, hundreds of roses, Navel Orange Trees and all other landscaping during a period of triple digit temperatures. We have tragically lost plants in both gardens and the City is out over \$150,000! The scrap metal value is a small fraction of the damages caused. :-)

*John Reed—*from pg 4

Riverside was one of a few cities in the United States to have a Tree Warden in the early part of the twentieth century. Reed discussed the uniqueness of a city funded Tree Warden in an essay incorporated into Brown and Boyd's *History of San Bernardino and Riverside Counties*. In Reed's writing, he noted that, while a few East Coast cities paid for the services of a street tree specialist, in the West, Riverside was the first to have such a professional on its municipal staff. He noted further that in the East, the position was usually called a "City Forester."

On May 27, 1907, the City of Riverside adopted a new Charter with a provision for funding the Tree Warden and his work. John Reed continued to serve in this position. Along with the new Charter's provisions for paying for street tree management, a new organizational structure was established. In this new system, the Tree Warden was attached to a Board of Park Commissioners. With his position of Tree Warden firmly established in the City's organizational structure, Reed busied himself with the daunting task of caring for Riverside's 25,000 street trees.

In areas lacking a uniformity of street trees or where undesirable species of trees had been planted, the Tree Warden took charge of interplanting well suited, uniform varieties between the existing trees. As the new trees became established the older nonconforming street trees were removed. A side benefit of these removals was an accumulation of firewood, the sale of which was used to help fund new plantings. Pruning was also an important duty of the Tree Warden and this task was approached with utmost care in relation to aesthetics and public safety.

Sadly, the excitement of Reed's new duties was dampened late in 1907 when, on November 17, his wife Catherine passed away.

Today, Riverside is home to some 150,000 street trees and 40,000 park and open space trees. In recognition of the excellence of Riverside's urban forest program, the National Arbor Day Foundation has designated Riverside as a "Tree City USA" every year since 1987.

Responsibility for street trees is divided between the Park and Recreation and Public Works Departments. A Community Forest *Ad-Hoc* Committee of the Park and Recreation Commission works with the Public Works Department to discuss and make recommendations on tree issues to the Park and Recreation Commission. Within the Public Works Department is a Trees and Landscaping Division with responsibilities that include the supervision of private contractors involved in street tree planting, pruning, preservation, and removal. The former position of Tree Warden is now known as the Urban Forester. The Urban Forester is an employee of the Public Works Department. An "Urban Forestry Policy Manual" describes the City's street tree program and provides guidance for the preservation and protection of Riverside's street tree heritage. Information on Riverside's public

tree program may be found at: <https://riversideca.gov/publicworks/trees/>

Outside of the City's Urban Forestry program, various public utilities prune trees that interfere with overhead wires. Pruning of trees by public utilities can involve trees on both private and public land, with most such work involving street trees. Unfortunately, in keeping with a decades-long practice, these trimmings are typically done with little or no regard for aesthetics or the health of the trees involved.

Individual volunteers and volunteer organizations also assist the City in the maintenance of its urban forest. And as has been the case since the 1890s, the Chamber of Commerce is a vital part of the City's public tree programs. In this regard, the Chamber manages a Perpetual Tree Care Fund, paid for by private donations. The Chamber also manages an Adopt-A-Tree program, which enables individuals to sponsor tree plantings. Volunteer organizations, such as Keep Riverside Clean and Beautiful and Victoria Avenue Forever, also plant and maintain trees in public areas related to their missions.

For all of these street tree programs, the heritage of John Henry Reed stands out as the major force behind their establishment and perpetuation. Despite his significant contributions to urban forestry, however, Reed is little known in Riverside today. John Reed died on February 26, 1920. He is buried in Olivewood Cemetery next to his wife, Catherine who preceded him in death on November 17, 1907. A boulder at the gravesite is engraved with John and Catherine's names and the years of their births and deaths.



Catherine & John Reed's gravestone in Olivewood Cemetery



PO Box 4152
Riverside, CA 92514

Phone: 951-286-1036
website: www.victoriaavenueforever.org
e-mail: victoriaaveforever@gmail.com



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