

**CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) HENRY VINTON PLUMMER**  
**NINTH CAVALRY REGIMENT, UNITED STATES ARMY**

**(A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND AFTERMATH OF HIS DEATH)**

**TROOPER ISAAC L. PRENTICE**  
**7 March, 2022**





*Henry V. Plummer was commissioned in 1884 as the first Regular Army Negro chaplain. He was assigned to the 9th Cavalry Regiment. (Courtesy of Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.)*





## CHAPLAIN HENRY VINTON PLUMMER

Henry Vinton Plummer was born on July 31, 1844 on "Three Sisters" Plantation in Prince George's County, Maryland. He was the son of Adam Francis Plummer and Emily Saunders, who were enslaved by their owner, George H. Calvert, a direct descendant of Lord Baltimore.

When he was a still young, Henry was sold to people living in Washington, D.C., and then to Howard County, Maryland. In the spring of 1862, Plummer was living with his father and managed to escape from the Riverdale Plantation to live with his aunt, Margaret Tyler in Washington, DC. Later that same year, he entered the U.S. Navy and served the duration of the Civil War, mostly on the gunboat, *Coeur de Lion* stationed at the Washington Navy Yard and assigned to patrol the Potomac River.

He learned to read and write while enlisted in the Navy. At the end of the Civil War, he took a job as a coachman and gardener in Hyattsville, Maryland. The following year (1863) he made a trip to New Orleans to find his sister, Miranda, who had been sold some years before to an owner in Louisiana. He found his sister and brought her back to their family home near Bladensburg, Maryland.

Plummer was baptized at the Second Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. in 1867 and married Julia Lomax of Virginia that same year. Nine children were born from this union. Recognizing that freed Blacks needed financial assistance in burying their dead; he formed the Bladensburg Union Burying Association in 1870 and served as its first president and treasurer for fourteen years.

Heeding the call to preach, Henry ministered to small Baptist congregations in Prince George's and Charles Counties in Maryland. He also worked as a night watchman at the U.S. Post Office in Washington, DC. While working at the Post Office, he started taking courses at Weyland Seminary, located in Washington, DC. Henry graduated from Weyland in 1878 and was ordained as a Baptist Minister. He served as pastor at St. Paul Baptist Church in Bladensburg from 1876 to 1881.

In 1884 Henry applied to become a Chaplain in the U.S. Army. With help and the urging of Frederick Douglass and several prominent, Republicans, then President, Chester A. Arthur, appointed Plummer as the Chaplain of the Ninth Cavalry Regiment in 1884, making him the first Black American Chaplain in the U.S. Army following the Civil War.

Plummer's first official assignment, as a Chaplain, was at Fort Riley, Kansas (1884-1885) and then at Fort McKinney in Wyoming (1885-1891). His final assignment was at Fort Robinson, Nebraska (1891-1894). Chaplain Plummer was responsible for the pastoral care and education of the Ninth Cavalry's men and their families and quickly became popular with the men and his church services were well attended. As a result, he received outstanding efficiency reports from his commanders.

However, while stationed at Fort Robinson, Nebraska, he was an advocate of the Temperance Movement and initiated an effort to send enlisted Ninth Cavalry men to colonize Central Africa. These events in addition to his participating in and drinking at an enlisted man's promotion party led to him being court-martialed on August 23 1894. The primary charge against Chaplain Plummer was "conduct-unbecoming an officer."

After he was court-martialed, Plummer moved to Kansas, where he served as pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas and held office in the Kansas State Baptist Convention. He and his supporters never gave up on their efforts to have his dis-missal from the Army reversed. He also volunteered to serve during the Spanish-American War in 1898 and later tried to join troops battling the Philippine Insurrection, but the Army denied his attempts to offer his service.

Chaplain (Captain) Henry Vinton Plummer died on February 10, 1905, at the age of 61, following a long illness. The aftermath, following his death included numerous activities to clear his name, high-light his accomplishments, and to perpetuate his distinguished service to the U.S. Army and his country.

In 2001, a committee consisting of lawyers, clergy, historians, family members, politicians, etc. was formed and became known as The Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer: Advocating the Reconsideration and exoneration of Chaplain Henry Vinton Plummer, U.S. Army. The Committee's hard work paid off in 2005 when the Army Board for Correction of Military Records changed Chaplain Plummer's dis-honorable discharge from the Army to "honorable."

Chaplain Plummer was honored in 2015 with the chartering of The Chaplain (Captain) Henry Vinton Chapter of the Ninth and Tenth (Horse) Cavalry Association, "Buffalo Soldiers" in the City of Glenarden, Prince George's County, Maryland.

**THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) HENRY  
VINTON PLUMMER NINTH CAVALRY REGIMENT  
UNITED STATES ARMY**

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- 1844**      **BORN ENSLAVED, LIKE HIS PARENTS, EMILY AND ADAM PLUMMER, AT THREE SISTERS PLANTATION NEAR FLOWERS HIGH SCHOOL IN MITCHELLVILLE, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**
- 1851**      **SOLD WITH HIS MOTHER AND TWO OF HIS FOUR SIBLINGS**
- 1856**      **MOVED WITH SLAVE MASTER FROM WASHINGTON, DC TO ELLICOTT MILLS (NOW—ELLICOTT CITY), MD  
LATER, MOVED WITH HIS MOTHER AND SIBLINGS FROM ELLICOTT MILLS TO THE CALVERT FAMILY HOME TO JOIN HIS FATHER AT THE RIVERDALE MANSION, IN RIVERDALE, MD**
- 1862**      **ESCAPED FROM SLAVERY TO LIVE WITH AN AUNT IN WASHINGTON, DC**
- 1864**      **ENLISTED ON 4 APRIL 1864 IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AT THE AGE OF 20 AND SERVED IN THE WASHINGTON, D.C. NAVY YARD ONBOARD THE COEUR-DE-LION PADDLE SHIP**
- 1865**      **DISCHARGED, HONORABLY, FROM THE NAVY AT THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR**
- 1866**      **TRAVELED TO NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA IN SEARCH OF HIS SISTER, SARAH MIRANDA PLUMMER**
- 1867**      **MARRIED JULIA LOMAX AND THEIR UNION PRODUCED NINE (9) CHILDREN – EIGHT BOYS AND ONE GIRL**
- 1868**      **SERVED AS POLITICAL LEADER AND ACTIVIST IN BLADENSBURG, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COMMUNITY**

- 1870 ORGANIZED THE BLADENSBURG BURIAL ASSOCIATION
- 1872 ENROLLED IN WAYLAND SEMINARY IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AND GRADUATED IN 1878
- 1876 SELECTED AS PASTOR OF THE COLORED BAPTIST CHURCH OF BLADENSBURG (LATER, ST. PAUL BAPTIST CHURCH IN CAPITOL HEIGHTS, MD)
- 1881 SELECTED AS PASTOR OF THE MOUNT CARMEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN WASHINGTON, DC
- 1884 COMMISSIONED CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY, 9<sup>TH</sup> CAVALRY  
HIS MILITARY ASSIGNMENTS INCLUDED: FORT RILEY, KANSAS; FORT MCKINNLEY, WYOMING; AND, FORT ROBINSON, NEBRASKA
- 1894 RECEIVED GENERAL COURT-MARTIAL DECISION ON 7 SEPTEMBER 1894  
HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS APPEALED THE COURT-MARTIAL DECISION WITHOUT SUCCESS
- SERVED AS MINISTER IN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS AREA CHURCHES
- 1905 DIED ON 10 FEBRUARY IN KANSAS
- 1996 REVEALED AS A "BUFFALO SOLDIER" AND ARMY CHAPLAIN TO THE PLUMMER FAMILY
- 2001 REVISED EFFORTS TO GAIN AN HONORABLE DISCHARGE LEAD BY THE COMMITTEE TO CLEAR CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) HENRY VINTON PLUMMER
- 2004 BURIED IN THE HARMONY CEMETERY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

SUBMITTED AN APPLICATION TO THE ARMY BOARD FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS (18 FEBRUARY 2004)

RECEIVED A MILITARY BURIAL IN THE NATIONAL HARMONY MEMORIAL CEMETERY, LANDOVER, MD ON 31 JULY 2004

2005 RECEIVED HONORABLE DISCHARGE CERTIFICATE ON 9 FEBRUARY 2005 FROM THE ARMY BOARD FOR THE CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS (RECEIVED BY CHAPLAN PLUMMER'S DESCENDANTS); HOWEVER, THE BOARD DECLINED TO REVERSE HIS COURT-MARTIAL CONVICTION

2015 FORMED THE CHAPLAIN (CAPTAIN) HENRY VINTON PLUMMER CHAPTER ON 14 JANUARY 2015

CHARTERED AS A CHAPTER WITH THE NINTH AND TENTH (HORSE) CAVALRY ASSOCIATION ON 1 AUGUST 2015





# Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

*This is to certify that*

HENRY V. PLUMMER, CAPTAIN, CHAPLAIN

*was Honorably Discharged from the*

## United States Army

*on the* 10<sup>th</sup> *day of* NOVEMBER 1894 *This certificate is awarded*  
*as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service*

*Karl F. Schneider*

Karl F. Schneider  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
(Army Review Boards)



Chaplain Henry Vinton Plummer

The Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer represents people from across the country with many areas of interest in Plummer's cause. If you wish more information or would like to work with us, please contact Reverend L. Jerome Fowler, Chair, at:

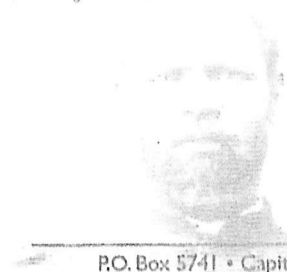
[friendsofplummer@hotmail.com](mailto:friendsofplummer@hotmail.com)

or

P.O. Box 5741, Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5741

Rev. L. Jerome Fowler  
The Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer, Inc.  
P.O. Box 5741  
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5741

*The Committee to Clear Chaplain Plummer, Inc.*  
Advocating the Reconsideration and Exoneration of Captain Henry Vinton Plummer, U.S. Army

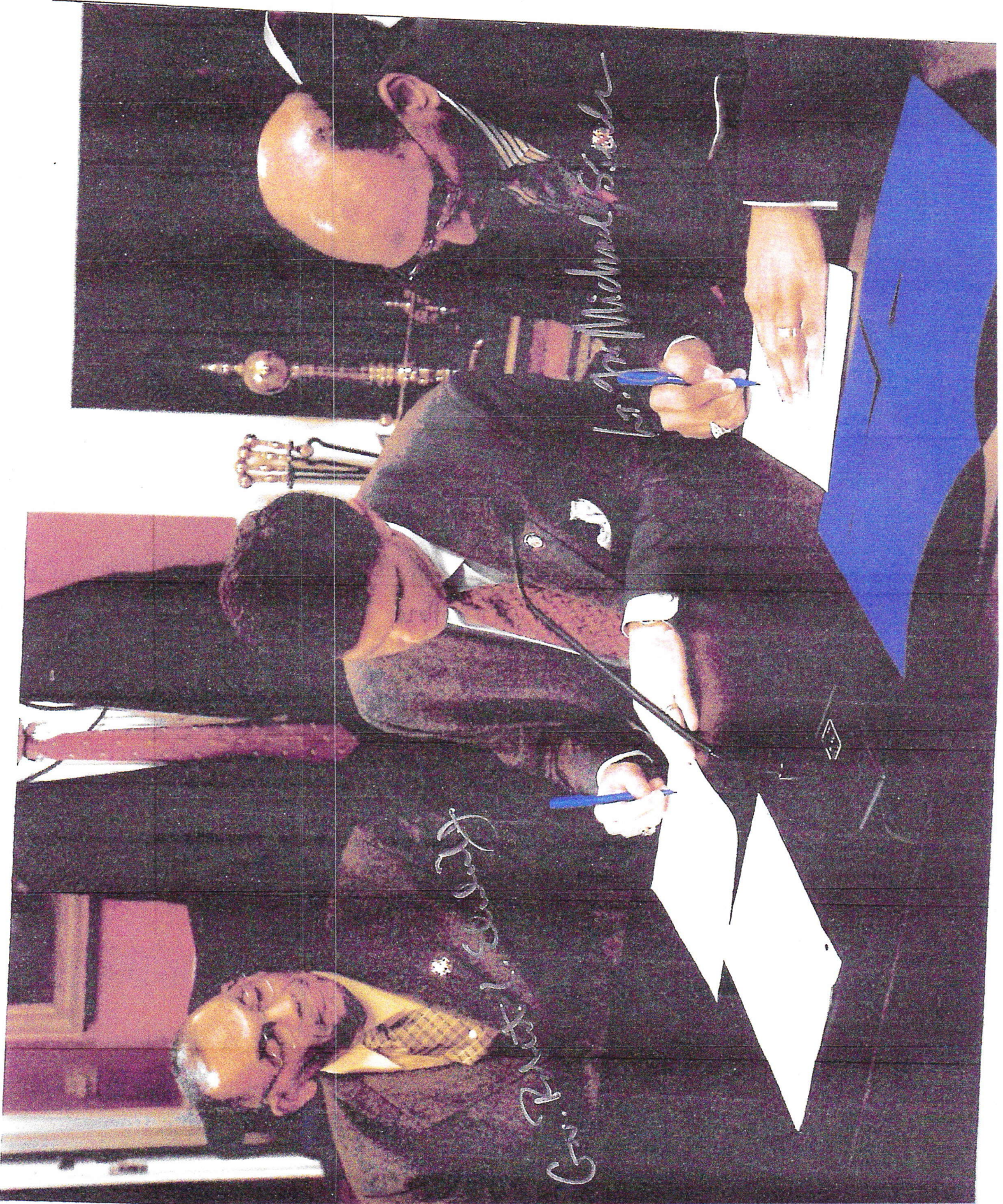


Trooper Isaac L. Prentice  
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P.O. Box 5741 • Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5741





Gov. Bruce L. Sewell

Gov. Michael E. Leach





Chaplain(Captain) Henry Vinton Plummer Chapter

## 9th and 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

FOUNDED ON 14<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2015, BY:

PRESIDENT

TROOPER ISAAC L. PRENTICE

1<sup>ST</sup> VICE PRES.

TROOPER CHESTER E. CREWS

2<sup>ND</sup> VICE PRES.

TROOPER CRESTLE WATSON, JR.

SECRETARY

TROOPER ALICE GRAY

TREASURER

TROOPER GLORIA HARRIS - DURHAM

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

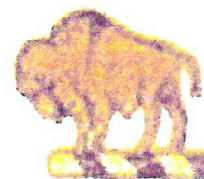
TROOPER ROBERT GASS



9th Cavalry  
Regiment  
"We can; We  
will"



"Buffalo Soldiers"  
"Lest we  
forget"

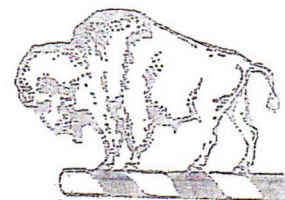


10th Cavalry  
Regiment  
"Ready and  
Forward"





Buffalo Soldiers  
NINTH & TENTH (HORSE) CAVALRY  
ASSOCIATION  
(The Official Army Unit Association)



# CHARTER

GRANTED  
TO THE



Chaplain (Captain) Henry Vinton Plummer, CHAPTER


To carry on the programs of The Ninth and Tenth (Horse) Cavalry  
Association, subject to the Constitution and By-Laws, for the  
period ending:

INDEFINITE

Date of Issue 01 August 2015

In Testimony whereof the Ninth and Tenth (Horse)  
Cavalry Association has caused this Charter to be issued and its  
corporate seal to be affixed.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
National President  


  
\_\_\_\_\_  
National Chairman  
Chapter Charter Committee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
National Secretary

# National Harmony Memorial Park

## Burial Location

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Interment # 40785  
Full Name HENRY J PLUMMER  
Sex M  
Age UNK  
Burial Date 9/7/12  
Death Date

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Section MCCOY  
Lot 22  
Grave 1

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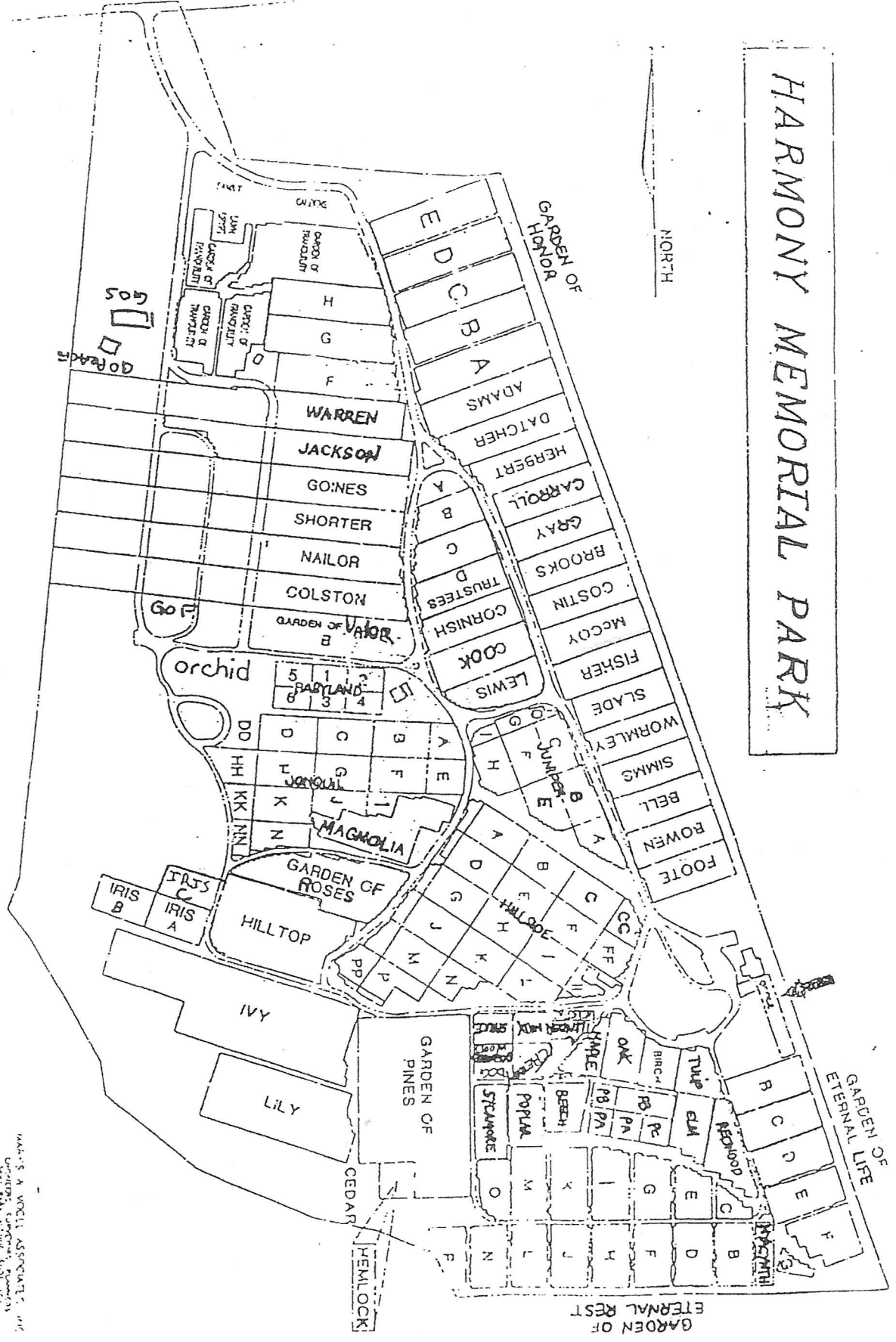
Memorial Memorial Installed

Thursday, July 29, 2004

# HARMONY MEMORIAL PARK

NORTH

SHERIFF ROAD



MADE BY A. W. WELLS ASSOCIATES, INC.  
 10000 W. 10TH AVE., SUITE 100  
 DENVER, CO 80231