

## On the Origin of Jacob Waltz's Gravestone

By Ed Dobbins

The Jacob Waltz gravestone at Pioneers' Cemetery was carved by E. Vance Howe in his garage on 16th Street in Phoenix. Howe was a bookkeeper for the Crystal Ice and Storage Company who did not have a strong interest in the life of Jacob Waltz. He simply enjoyed carving stone as a hobby.

Howe had read about C.H. Coogan placing flowers on Waltz's unmarked grave in the newspaper and Coogan's hope that someone would provide a permanent marker for the site. It took Howe 52 hours of carving to fulfill that hope at no charge to Coogan.

Unlike Howe, Coogan was a Waltz enthusiast who regularly searched for the Lost Dutchman Mine in the Superstitions. In 1968, he planned to leave his job as janitor at Bob's Big Boy to spend the month of February in the mountains.

After reviewing the evidence for the location of Waltz's grave, archaeologist K.J. Schroeder moved the sandstone marker to its current spot in the early 1990s. Les Holtzen, who, with his son Tom, had helped Howe and Coogan set the stone the first time, suggested the relocated marker be placed on a secure base made of rocks with fool's gold. The suggestion was not followed.



## **A Short History of Improvements at Jacob Waltz's Gravesite**

By Ed Dobbins

Although many parts of the Jacob Waltz story have been questioned, there's no doubting the attraction of the Lost Dutchman's tale to lovers of local historic lore. Waltz is buried in the southwestern corner of Loosley Cemetery and his grave is one of the most visited locations at PMMP. The gravesite has been improved more than once since the 1960s in efforts to satisfy the public interest in Waltz and enhance the visiting experience. According to a letter in the PCA files, a project to bring attention to Waltz's presence at the cemetery was suggested decades before any enhancements to the site were undertaken.

In the letter dated July 1936, the Dons group of Phoenix requested permission from the city to build a marker for Waltz in an "unused" area of the Loosley Cemetery. They had recently determined that he was buried in the cemetery and believed residents and winter visitors alike would be interested in visiting his final resting place. Although the city manager offered cooperation, he was unable to grant the request because Phoenix did not own the cemetery at that time. Title was not secured to the grounds until twenty years later in 1956. Undaunted, the Dons stuck to their plan of building a memorial and in 1938 erected their popular Lost Dutchman Monument along the Apache Trail.

The first reported improvement to Waltz's plot at PMMP was the placement of the gravestone in the cemetery. It was created by a local stone cutting hobbyist and installed on December 24, 1969. Other enhancements were enacted after the revival of Pioneers' Cemetery Association and the Parks Department's involvement in the cemetery's maintenance. A large walk-through monument simulating a mine in the Superstitions on the trail to the grave was constructed in 1992. Around the same time, the location of Waltz's grave in Block 19 was reviewed and the gravestone moved to its current location.

Two years ago, a committee was formed at PCA with the goal of creating a more attractive and functional visiting area at Waltz's gravesite. Plans are not yet finalized, but already a concrete bench and six large boulders have been put into place. On one of the boulders, a bronze plaque tells the story of the Lost Dutchman. Future additions and events include landscaping with table mesa granite and a short fundraising event, prior to installing a large stone monument that is similar in size and shape to that proposed in 1936.

Eighty-five years after their original request to place a monument at the cemetery, the Dons of Arizona are still an active group. The committee has reached out to let them know that improvements to Jacob Waltz's gravesite are in progress and their possible participation would be welcomed.