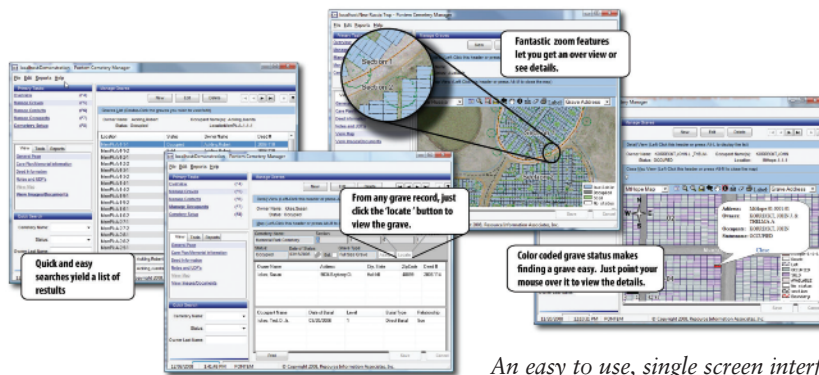# Calvary's Story

—by Karina Kimpell

An easy to use, single screen interface.

When the CCC contacted us and requested an article about the Pontem Cemetery Management System, we were thrilled to have an opportunity to write a narrative about the software.

For this article, we were blessed to be able to interview Joe Wall, assistant director of Calvary Cemetery in Nashville, TN. While Joe's Cemetery is fairly large at 44 acres, it could accurately be described as a collection of many smaller cemeteries. We asked Joe how his story at Calvary began...

"I was hired to bring the Cemetery into the 20th century. I am a former IBM Advisory Project Manager and have 25 years experience in IT as a computer operator, programmer, system engineer, etc.

"Before I came on staff they were trying to use a different software package which would not handle what needed to be done."

The Pontem Program has been tailored to be very easy to use, but the enterprise class SQL database running behind the simple user interface is designed to meet the needs of clients who demand a reliable, fast and capable solution. While Mr. Wall's technical background is extensive, the wants and needs of his cemetery are very similar to those of most cemeterians with whom we talk.

According to Joe, "All of our records were in plot books (multiple copies),

Ledger records and paper burial records. Since Calvary Cemetery was established in 1868 we have multiple section layouts which forced us to have multiple cemeteries within our single cemetery.

"We have sections that use compass points, others are single rows, others that have lots and compass points and the new sections have lots, and just grave numbers.

(We needed) to have a one stop system for mapping, locating sections, lots, and graves that were sold, available, occupied, or obstructed."

It seems Calvary's needs are typical of most Pontem users. Pontem's program has been designed for flexibility and to meet the needs of nearly every cemetery, regardless of size.

The core of the system, allows users to interact with a powerful database that holds all information related to every grave in the cemetery. Additional features in the software allow users to easily customize data entry fields, and Pontem's staff can provide additional support in customizing everyday paperwork such as custom deeds, sales contracts, special reports and more.

Add-on modules are available to further enhance the abilities of the core system. With two mapping options, a cemetery like Calvary was able to choose either a simple option that scans or recreates images of every

map, or the more sophisticated GIS solution. One of the big benefits of using GIS is it can be made available to the public through Pontem's special Online Burial Search Service.

The Image/Document Management Add-on is a feature used heavily at Calvary. Not only can all those historical maps, cards, and other paper burial records be securely stored and easily retrieved, the imaging module allows the user to attach any relevant document to a grave record - a great way to keep track of and organize contracts, interactions and correspondence with customers.

When asked why he chose Pontem over other products he reviewed, Joe Wall said, "Ease of use for training, up front tech support, attaching images, and price. (When getting started) the Customer service group was very supportive."

We here at Pontem are so flattered by Joe's high rating of our Software and Technical Support Staff. He's doing a great job for Calvary and his extensive training and expertise really put the Pontem System to the test.

Using software isn't just a decision made once, it's an ongoing story - an interactive narrative between the user and the program, as well as with the software company that will serve during the initial review, then through implementation. Users continue to interact daily with the software and occasionally with the software company as they receive regular enhancements, new features, ongoing support.

Karina Kimpell serves as a relationship specialist, helping Pontem connect with clients to provide the best software experience in the industry. She may be reached at *karinak@pontem.com*.

For more information about the Pontem Cemetery Management System, you may contact Pontem at 888.742.2378 or visit *http://www.Pontem.com*.

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