

# SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER

*A newsletter for the families and friends of  
the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery*

SPRING 2001

## WELCOME TO THE EUGENE PIONEER CEMETERY

A National Historic Cemetery & City of Eugene landmark, the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery was established in 1872 by the Spencer Butte Lodge No. 9 International Order of Oddfellows. It was originally known as the I.O.O.F. Cemetery. The original cemetery was 10 acres with 6 acres added in 1907. There are 752 lots on the 15 acres with about 4500 to 5000 burials.

It is an historical repository of stories of the lives of early pioneers who chose this as the final resting places for themselves and their families. Towering Douglas Fir trees, old roses, and lavender and white lilac bushes shade their graves. If stones could talk, what stories they could tell of the things that they accomplished that influenced what Eugene, Lane County, and the State of Oregon are today!

Their foresight provided the "valuable, green, open-space" in the midst of dense urban development that the community can enjoy for respectful multiple use. On any given day some of the things that can be seen might be pleasure strolling, marching band rehearsals, school historical and botanical field trips, guitar playing and singing, searching for genealogical information. There might even be a bagpiper marching down the rows between lots! And, above all, the singing of many birds who make their nests in the trees and set the mood for quiet contemplations.

The Eugene Pioneer Cemetery is as one person of record put it, "The Crown Jewel of the Surrounding area."



**The Entranceway to the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery is Lined with Stately Douglas Fir Trees.**

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We Need Your Help

Questions, Please write or phone us!

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## **SPECIAL THANKS AND RECOGNITION TO:**

TO: **Tami Dingle** - Our cemetery Supervisor for the past year who resigned to take a position in another field. Thank you, Tami, for your hard work, artistic abilities, and enthusiasm!

TO: **Sheriff Jan Clements** - Whose crews from the Forest Work Camp were hired to clean up shrubs, vines and small trees in the cemetery that were nuisance "overgrowth".

TO: **Sanipac** - for their donation of trash barrels for the Cemetery.

TO: **Roosevelt Middle School students in a special "Services Class"** - Who manicured individual lots for class credit of 10 hours each.

TO: **Schnitzer Steel** - for the donation of their large dumpster and for hauling its contents to the dump

TO: **Mark Peterman of Bottom Line Accounting** - Who is the Accountant and Bookkeeper for Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association (EPCA).

### **KINCAID FAMILY LOT**

Thomas Kincaid, his wife, Nancy, and 5 children left their Indiana home for the Oregon Country in 1853. They located near another homestead where Thomas dug spuds on share for winter food. With his eldest son, Harrison, 17, they cut trees, made logs, and built a one-room log cabin. When Christmas neared, they were hard-put to know what to do. It would have to be a homemade Christmas. Harrison built a screen of fir boughs and attached long sticks full of pitch. He hid dried pig bladders inflated like balloons in the screen. Just after dusk on Christmas eve, the children were summoned to see the sizzling pitch lights, and the bladders exploded amid shrieks of delight. They had a little food: potatoes, some flour, brown sugar, and sowbelly.



**Visitors often pause near the Kincaid family lot to contemplate amidst the quiet beauty and elegance.**

Mrs. Kincaid brought out her few pretty dishes and placed them on the crude homemade table. A fat grouse roasted on the fireplace spit, potatoes baked on the grill, sourdough biscuits, and milk from "Old Peggy" the family cow. The evening ended with Thomas reading from his well-worn bible the old, old story of the Three Wisemen, and the shepherds who watched over their flocks by night. He played Christmas carols on his violin and the family sang together.

### **EPCA MASTER PLAN**

Sally Donovan of Donovan and Associates, a noted and respected authority on pioneer cemetery planning, was hired On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000 to formulate a firm guideline for present and future care, beautification, and preservation of the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. The plan, when completed, will create a unified vision, define various work projects, and prioritize them. It will establish both long and short term goals. It will provide a schedule for future work projects. Each of the following items will be presented in light of present conditions. These items include: Cemetery layout, existing documentation of the cemetery, photographs and maps, parking, current roadways & paths, signage and interpretive facilities, landscaping features, present day uses and activities, and buildings, as well as general maintenance guidelines. The Board is continuing consultation meetings with Donovan and Associates..



## Memorial to Civil War Soldiers.

### **CIVIL WAR VETERANS' PLOT**

This is the unique cemetery "signature". It lies South of the maintenance building. Here is where we hold our annual Memorial Day Ceremony. A 25-foot tall blue marble statue of a Union Soldier with his rifle at rest stands guard over its 51 burials. The inscription on its base reads, "I bequeath this monument in memory of my comrades of the Civil War from 1861 – 1865." The verse on the other side says, 'Soldier rest, The war is over, Sleep the sleep that knows no waking, Dream of battlefields no more.'

John Covell, 1827 – 1903, came to Eugene after the Civil War ended. He seemed to have no family and only a few good friends to look after him when he needed it. In his will John Covell left instructions that after all final expenses were paid, the rest of his estate was to go to a statue on the Civil War Veterans' Plot where he is buried..The remainder amounted to \$2,500, a very large sum of money in the year 1903!

When this became known, relatives popped up out of the woodwork demanding that his will be overturned because, "Mr. Covell clearly was of unsound mind." The case continued in court for several years. Finally, the presiding Circuit Court Judge ruled that the relative's case was "without merit" and work on the Memorial Statute began.

The statue was created in Barre, Vermont from the finest Vermont Blue marble. The statue was hand-carved by an Italian sculpture who was visiting the quarry that summer. The Memorial Statute came to Eugene on a freight train boxcar riding in a bed of straw. From the train depot it was hauled a mile ride over muddy roads to the cemetery by an 8-horse team. An item appearing in the Register Guard stated, The Statue's 8-ton weight was installed by sheer manpower using block and tackle without a single scratch."

## **Did You Know?**

***Whose wedding did the Bride's Mother refuse to attend because her Father died before he gave his permission?***

Alberta McMurphey. The wedding was held in what is now the historic Shelton-McMurphey house atop Skinner's Butte. The Mother gave the house to the young couple as a wedding gift and it was where they raised their family of seven children.

***Who worked diligently to get Crater Lake declared a National Park?***

Robert McMurphey (1866-1921). He was Alberta's husband!

***Who was a signer of the Oregon Statehood Constitution in 1859?***

Paul Brattain (1801-1883). He also served in the Oregon State Legislature and also served as a United States Senator from Oregon.

***Who got a grant from Dale Carnegie to build the first Eugene Public Library?***

Minnie Lockwood Washburne (1860-1920). She also crusaded with Abigail Scott Duniway for Women's Suffrage.

***Who was Eugene's first recycler?***

Dr. Orrin F. Stafford, a Chemistry Professor at the University of Oregon. Professor Stafford invented the "Stafford Process" for making wood alcohol from wood wastes and charcoal.

***What early doctor said that he "could cure a cold in 6 weeks and God could cure it in a fortnight?"***

Dr. William H. Hanchett (1805-1875). He made house calls in outlying areas in a horse and buggy and his chief remedy was "Dover's Powders" - a mixture of Ipecac and opium.

## **We Need Your Help**

We would like to gather as much history as possible on those buried in the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. To do this, we would love it if you could send us any information you may have on family or friends who rest here.

What did your parents do for a living? Did your grandparents meet in an unusual way? Did your mother win the blue ribbon in quilting at the State Fair? Travel adventures, favorite pets, anything that would give us insight into who these people were, would be greatly appreciated. This type of information is invaluable, and deserves to be preserved.

Please send us your stories and memories to Ruth Lake Holmes at the address below.

## **Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association**

**c/o Ruth Lake Holmes  
881 Oakway Road  
Eugene, OR 97401**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**