

# SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER

A newsletter for the families and friends of  
the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery  
(Across from McArthur Court)

SPRING 2004

## **Dissolution of Pioneer Memorial Park Association** *by Everett G. Smith, President Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

This is a "Tale of Two Organizations" rather than a "Tale of Two Cities" if you will. For many decades, two corporations have been involved in The Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. Each having their goals and proponents, and each striving to do what they deemed to be in the best interests of their organization. These organizations are: Pioneer Memorial Park Association (PMPA.) - allied with the University of Oregon and the State Board of Higher Education, and Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association (EPCA) - the lot owner's association.

PMPA was formed in 1954, and re-incorporated at a time (1956) when the University of Oregon was expecting to have to expand rapidly, and was determined to gain control of lands adjacent to the existing campus. PMPA has no members. PMPA purchased title to the The Cemetery from the I.O.O.F Lodge in Eugene in 1957 and, after a protracted legal dispute with EPCA, was awarded title to the Cemetery by the State Supreme Court in 1962. PMPA is the Cemetery Administrator. Indeed, University of Oregon Security personnel occasionally pass through the cemetery on their rounds. In 1978, PMPA granted the University of Oregon a "perpetual easement" along the West side of University Street. This easement dovetailed with the upgrading of University Street that created a very attractive main entrance to the U. of O. campus and also added diagonal parking spaces with meters.

EPCA was established in 1930 with the care, maintenance, and preservation of the Cemetery as its mission. EPCA draws its strength from the ongoing support of its members, many of whom are descendents or relatives of individuals who are buried in the cemetery. EPCA Directors are elected

by its members. Significant EPCA accomplishments are:

- Clean up of the cemetery prior to each Memorial Day and annual maintenance;
- Conduct of Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Civil War Veteran's Plot;
- Establishment of an Endowment Fund in 1975 that helps pay for maintenance and preservation of the cemetery;
- Erected a large maintenance building in Memorial Square;
- Provided a trailer for our resident caretaker, George Dull;
- Applied for, and obtained, listing of the Cemetery on the National Register of Historic Cemeteries;
- Made the Cemetery a 16 acre multi-purpose "open green space", and conducts public tours;
- Commissioned, and paid for, a Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Preservation Plan in 2001 – The resulting plan serves as a guide to present and future Boards;

For several years now, there have been good faith efforts to bring PMPA and EPCA together. The current PMPA President, Prof. Jonathan Stafford, has parents and grandparents buried in the Stafford-Straub lot. As President of PMPA, Jonathan is sent a written invitation to each EPCA Board Meeting.

Pioneer Memorial Park Association has proposed Voluntary Dissolution in return for having one member of the EPCA Board appointed by the President of the University of Oregon. In addition, PMPA has proposed turning over of its assets, such as they are, to EPCA. This includes title to the Cemetery, subject to a "First Right of Refusal" for the U. of O. After slight rewording by our lawyer, the offer was unanimously accepted by our Board of Directors on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

With the dissolution of PMPA, the "words" and the "music" will combine in one harmonious composition in the best interests of both organizations.

## **What's in this issue?**

**Page – 1**

Dissolution of  
Pioneer Memorial  
Park Association

**Page – 2**

Thank You,  
Mr. John Smeed!

**Page – 3**

Board Revises and  
Restates E.P.C.A.  
Bylaws

Caring for Lots  
Involves Removing  
Invasive Plants

Seen Recently in The  
Cemetery

**Page – 4**

Combined Annual  
Meetings to be Held  
on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Memorial Day  
Services at Eugene  
Pioneer Cemetery  
Set for 11:00 a.m.  
on May 31<sup>st</sup>

Any Comments or  
Questions?  
Please write or  
phone us!

EPCA  
c/o Ruth Lake Holmes  
881 Oakway Rd.  
Eugene, OR 97401

Phone: (541) 345-8686

## **THANK YOU, MR. JOHN SMEED!**

*by Ruth Lake Holmes, Sec./Treas.  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

There are fifty men and one woman buried in the Civil War Veteran's Plot at the center of our Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. However, a number of the original white marble grave stones are now unreadable; rendered so by decades of standing in the wet Oregon weather. Moreover, due to vandals, several of the markers are badly broken or even completely missing. About three years ago, Mr. John Smeed - President of the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund - took on the task of getting the government to provide replacements.

John started out by meeting and talking to any part of officialdom that might help him out with this task: The Office for Veteran Affairs, The Oregon Historical Society, Oregon State Senators and Representatives from our District, and even the U.S. Senators and Representatives that represent Oregon in Congress. Each presentation that John made came up empty. The people listened and seemed sympathetic, but were unable or unwilling to get involved. Responses ranged from "We know of no funds that are available for this sort of thing", to "The U.S. Government does indeed replace damaged gravestones for veterans, but ONLY if the veteran served in a war that was fought after 1900."

Mr. John Smeed is a very persistent gentleman. In the late fall of 2003 he found the right person to talk to – replacement gravestones could be provided by the Federal Government. However, in order to make new markers they would first need, in writing, what names and dates to inscribe on them.

Yet again, John rose to meet the challenge. Among the many research avenues that he and others pursued to find the soldier's names along with their Dates of Birth and Death/Burial were:

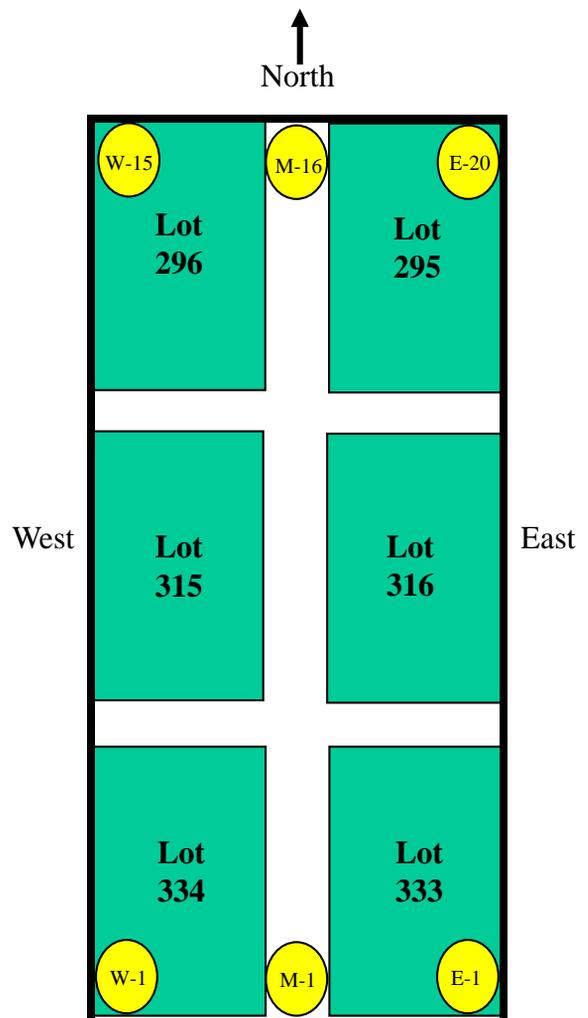
- Working from the original records that E.P.C.A. inherited from the I.O.O.F Lodge;
- Going through obituaries in old issues of the Eugene Register Newspaper;
- Searching through the archive of family tree information compiled by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints;
- Searching through the records of specific regiments from the Civil War;
- And, working with staff members of the Oregon Historical Society.

In all, individual names and their death/ burial date were determined for twenty of the grave sites for which replacement markers are needed. Eleven of these graves are located in the East row, one grave is in the Middle row, and eight in the West row.

Finding out birthdates of Civil War soldiers is a challenging task. Back in the 1800's, official birth records were relatively unimportant. Women often gave birth at home. Birthdates were whatever the child was told, or chose to use, later on in their life.

John Smeed is determined not to give up until he has found birthdates for each of the soldiers. Then, with a happy heart, he will fill out the government forms and request replacement grave stones.

**THANK YOU, MR. JOHN SMEED!**



### **Civil War Plot Occupies Six Lots Along With The Spaces In Between.**

( Actual grave sites form three rows: E-1 to E-20, M-1 to M-16, and W-1 to W-15 )

## **BOARD REVISES AND RESTATES E.P.C.A. BYLAWS**

*by Quentin A. Holmes, Board Member  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

The Bylaws of the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association (EPCA) were last updated in the 1950s, and didn't cover all the things we have to deal with today. As a part of merging the two corporations that have been involved in the Eugene Pioneer Memorial Cemetery, our Board of Directors has revised and restated our Bylaws.

Beginning with draft Bylaws provided by Pioneer Memorial Park Association, a committee composed of Sara Leiman, Quentin Holmes, Ev Smith and Ruth Holmes created a document that essentially captured not only the operation of our member-driven association, but also the provisions sought by Pioneer Memorial Park Association. The document produced by the committee was then sent off to our attorney, Mr. Rohn Roberts, for legal review. Mr. Roberts recommended several, relatively minor but still important, changes in wording to bring the document into accord with the Oregon Revised Statutes for a non-profit corporation with members. The resulting Revised and Restated Bylaws were adopted by a unanimous vote of the EPCA Board of Directors on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

At the upcoming Annual Meeting, members will be asked to ratify the Revised and Restated Bylaws.

Notable changes include:

- Nine Board members (instead of seven);
- One Board member gets appointed by the President of the University of Oregon;
- Eight Board members get elected by the membership of EPCA at our Annual Meetings;
- Board members serve three year terms (instead of seven year terms);
- EPCA shall purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of each Director and Officer against liability.

These Revised and Restated Bylaws bring Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They provide the guidance needed to focus our efforts on the care, maintenance, and preservation of the Cemetery, while also encouraging its use, in appropriate ways, as an "Open Green Space" in a busy urban area. The transfer of the Cemetery's legal title from PMPA to the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association bears with it taking on the function of "Cemetery Authority" – The Revised and Restated Bylaws give us the tools we need to deal effectively with this responsibility.

## **CARING FOR CEMETERY LOTS INVOLVES REMOVING INVASIVE PLANTS**

*by Sara A. Leiman, Treasurer  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund*

To some people, Ivy is not only green and healthy looking, but also is pretty. However, Ivy is an invasive plant that is extremely difficult to control or remove once it has gotten well-established on a cemetery lot, along an embankment, or in a tall tree.

The Preservation Plan for our Cemetery contains useful guidelines for maintaining individual burial spaces and family plots. Basically, each burial plot should be evaluated to determine what invasive shrubs and plants need to be removed. Removal should be completed on a case-by-case basis with guidance from a person knowledgeable about various plant types. Remove trees and shrubs (often these are small volunteer saplings and suckers) that are disturbing the headstones or causing severe damage to the curbs. Limb up trees that hang over the burial spaces and might damage headstones.

Holly saplings, ivy, wild blackberry vines and other volunteer plants are overtaking some of the individual plots and should be removed at each opportunity. Do not be surprised if these plants grow back again within a year or so. As an old saying goes, "Nature abhors a vacuum, something is going to grow there!" The nice part is that once the plants that you like and enjoy are growing on your lot, they will flourish and continue to enhance the beauty of not only your lot but also the lots around it for years to come.

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### **SEEN RECENTLY IN THE CEMETERY**



**Hawthorne and Red Oak Trees in Bloom Near the Brabham Lot.**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Combined Annual Meetings of Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association and Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund, Inc.**

Will be held Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.

LOCATION: The First Congregational Church  
1050 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Eugene, Oregon.

### **Memorial Day Services at The Eugene Pioneer Cemetery**

Traditional Memorial Day Services will be held on Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2003 at 11:00 a.m. at the Civil War Veteran's Plot in the center of the cemetery. The inspiring Shasta Middle School Band and Choir will perform music from the Civil War era. Our Vice-President, Mr. Paul Gilbertson, has made arrangements for Mr. Jim Torrey, ex-mayor of Eugene, to give the featured address. Please Come!

**Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association**

**c/o Ruth Lake Holmes**

**881 Oakway Road**

**Eugene, OR 97401**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**