

# SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER

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

SPRING 2008

## **GEORGE W. KINSEY: An Early Eugene Resident and Firefighter**

by  
*Mary Jean Pagter – his Granddaughter  
and Ruth Lake Holmes, EPCA Secretary*

George W. Kinsey was born in 1850 in Newark, New Jersey. A 1927 "Pioneer Tales" interview tells that "In my nineteenth year I got the western fever and went by boat to the Isthmus, crossed over by land and boat to the Pacific, and then took a ship to San Francisco. I was 22 days in making the trip from New York to San Francisco. This was in the year of 1869."

"I took passage on an old side-wheeler called the Oriflamme, to Portland. On the 27<sup>th</sup> day of March 1869, I came up to Corvallis on a river boat, and from that place I reached Eugene by stage. When I came to Eugene, there was nothing but wooden sidewalks, and the streets were graveled, but all of the roads were just mud-roads, outside of the town, and it was a common occurrence for a man to start to town from the country and get "stuck" in the mud. That is where some of the old timers learned to swear. But those same old timers had a good time; and they really didn't mind the roads. To go 20 miles on horseback, and dance all night was not uncommon."

In May of 1872, George Kinsey and C.W. Finch helped form Eugene's first hook and ladder company. "Finch was elected foreman, and I was selected as secretary. We started out with several small and one long extension ladder; and at the start our outfit was hauled to the fire by man-power. The organizers furnished the truck and ladders, later receiving some help from proceeds of fireman's dances. The city council gave us \$50 with which to buy the regulation fireman's hats. Later, we got some hose and cisterns were excavated at different

places in town, which was our water supply in those days."

After the city got water, our first engine - purchased by the city - was one of the old side-bar pump kind, and was operated by 'main strength and awkwardness'."

George's granddaughter, Mary Jean Pagter of Portland, inherited George Kinsey's original fireman's hat from her mother, Beulah Pagter, in 1981. Recently, she decided she wanted the Eugene Fire department to have it. Last January, she donated his 1870's fireman's hat to the Eugene Fire Department in a formal ceremony. Chief Randall Groves said Eugene's Fire Department was deeply honored to receive this historic item.

In the mid-1870's, George W. Kinsey bought a truck and dray business and had to finish a contract for carrying the mail from Eugene to Springfield. "One day I went over to the Willamette opposite Springfield and called for the ferryman to come over and get me. For some reason, he would not come. So I looked for a  
( See **GEORGE W. KINSEY** on Pg 2 )



### **The Kinsey - Pagter Lot.**

(The large upright memorial is for George W. Kinsey and his wife, Mary, nee Belshaw.)

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

**Page – 1**

George W. Kinsey:  
An Early Eugene  
Resident and  
Firefighter

**Page – 2**

Seen Recently in the  
Cemetery

Elegant New  
Cemetery Sign  
Completed

**Page – 3**

Spring Cleanup Set  
for Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>,  
2008

Eugene Pioneer  
Cemetery  
Endowment Fund

**Page – 4**

Combined Annual  
Meetings to be Held  
on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008

Memorial Day  
Ceremony at Eugene  
Pioneer Cemetery  
Set for 11:00 a.m.  
on May 26<sup>th</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

## **GEORGE W. KINSEY (cont.)**

place where I thought I could ford, and by good calculating and driving, together with the good sense of my team, I got across, but the mail sacks were all wet. I delivered the mail, but the postmaster was pretty 'sore' about the wet sacks; he threatened to report me. I told him that the Eugene postmaster should have given me waterproof mail sacks; and that I was not to blame. That was the credit that I received for 'getting the mail in on time' by the water route."

In 1877, George married Mary Belshaw who was born in 1856 in Eugene. (Her parents, George and Candace Belshaw, had come out to Eugene from Indiana by wagon train in 1853.) George and Mary Kinsey had four living daughters: Ethel, Mae, Beulah Pagter, and Georgia Boney (a fifth daughter, Maude Kinsey, died before age 5).

George Kinsey figured largely in the construction of the Eugene Hotel – the 'Hult Center' of its time. Its large ballroom hosted many dignitaries and fashionable balls. Today, the Eugene Hotel is a residential hotel.

George W. Kinsey passed away in 1933, and his beloved wife, Mary Belshaw Kinsey, in 1935. They are at rest in the large Kinsey-Pagter lot in Eugene Pioneer Cemetery. Their daughter Beulah Pagter and her husband Lawrence B. Pagter are at rest there also.

## **SEEN RECENTLY IN THE CEMETERY**



### **Volunteer Cherry Tree in Full Bloom**

Spring is a special time in our cemetery. A variety of flowering trees hold forth in splendor heralding the arrival of warm (though often rainy) weather.

## **Elegant New Cemetery Sign Completed**

*Quentin Holmes, President  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

An elegant, and very permanent, sign now graces the Cemetery's South-East corner. "I.O.O.F. Eugene Pioneer Cemetery 1872" these words, carved in stone, identify our cemetery to the many folks who pass each day. Designed by landscape architect Kate McGhee, the stately new sign is in keeping with the historic character of our cemetery and with the surround. Made of Columbia Basalt, and perched above the sidewalk on Cemetery ground, the new sign is highly visible both to pedestrians and to people driving by in cars.

The driving force behind this ambitious project was Board Member Sarah Leiman. However, if you ask Sarah she will also give credit to Kate McGhee, Tim King, and several others who helped "get it done". To all of them we say, Thank you!

We hope that the completion of "Phase One" of the Entryway and Signage Project will kick off a special fundraising campaign to build the remaining two projects.



### **Elegant New Sign at 18<sup>th</sup> and University St.**

Crafted from Columbia Basalt, the new sign identifies our cemetery to all who pass by this busy corner.

## Spring Cleanup Set for Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008

*By Quentin Holmes, President  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

An ongoing series of work parties (one in the Spring and one in the Fall) have gradually transformed the cemetery's landscape to being open and inviting. Much of the credit for this cumulative progress goes to Board Member George Beebe who organizes and leads our work parties. "It's a never-ending task for things always continue to grow."

This Spring's Work Party is scheduled for Friday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9 AM until around 3:30 PM. George Beebe has arranged for the Lane County Sheriff's Forest Work Crew to come up from Alma, Oregon. Under the guidance of E.P.C.A. members, brush will be whacked,

low-hanging limbs will get cut, and some of the invasive plants will be removed. Resident caretaker, George Dull, will be on hand to help with transporting the debris to a commercial dumpster. Do come out and join us if you can.



### Typical Start of The Day for a Work Party

(Board Member George Beebe giving all of us a rundown on the tasks to be tackled this day.)

## EUGENE PIONEER CEMETERY ENDOWMENT FUND

*by Sara Leiman, President  
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund*

Greetings Friends. We are all friends of the Cemetery, therefore, we too are friends! It is the place where our loved ones and ancestors are resting, and a beautiful spot to be: a respite from our busy, busy lives.

We are also all stewards of this place and, if not us, then who?? We can be proud that this Cemetery, 150 years from inception, has not fallen by the wayside, is not overgrown with brambles and knee deep in weeds. We can feel good that the stones are not fallen and the graves not sunken, without the care to fill where needed.

The Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund needs you! Your donations are put into investments and the earnings only are available to the Association for upkeep and improvements at the Cemetery. Your donations to this Fund are permanently used to generate money to be used for the good of the Cemetery and are tax deductible.

This is a legacy you can leave. This place will be here after we are gone. Be a part of that legacy and make a contribution now or add a bequest to the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery in your estate planning. If you prefer to donate to specifically help fund our next signage project at the Cemetery, or have other questions, please contact Sara Leiman at 954-8338 or [bsleiman@peak.org](mailto:bsleiman@peak.org).

Please send your donations to Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund, 881 Oakway Rd., Eugene, OR 97401.

Special thanks to our Fund donors from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008.

#### \$50-\$99:

Jerry D. Christian  
Mary Jane Dobson  
Tim King

#### Up to \$49:

Ada Ruth Whitmore

We would like to correct the names of two donors in our last newsletter, Holmes Archie Holeman and Wm. and Carol Holeman. Our apologies!

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

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

Will be held Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 10:00 AM to Noon.

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

**Memorial Day Ceremony at Eugene Pioneer Cemetery**

A Memorial Day Service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Civil War Veteran's Plot. This formal service will feature the inspiring Shasta Middle School Band and Choir. Please Come!

**Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association**

**c/o Ruth Lake Holmes**

**881 Oakway Road**

**Eugene, OR 97401**

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**