

SPIRIT OF THE PIONEER

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

FALL 2012

Ruth Lake Holmes

IN MEMORIUM

“A DETERMINED ADVOCATE FOR EUGENE PIONEER CEMETERY”

By *Quentin A. Holmes*

Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association

I write with a mixture of sorrow and pride of the passing of Ruth Lake Holmes, a longtime member and active supporter of Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association and the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Endowment Fund Corporation. She served as EPCA Secretary-Treasury from 1955 – 2012, and as secretary of E.P.C.E.F. from its inception until 2012.

Ruth was born to Emery D. Lake and Georgie Evelyn Warner Lake on September 20, 1918. She was the eldest of three siblings: Evelyn Lake Malkasian (now deceased), Charles Lake of Eugene, Oregon and Ralph Lake (now deceased).

Ruth passed away in her home of 75 years on November 27, 2012 after working the crossword in the morning newspaper. Jim Holmes, her beloved husband and partner during their 58 years of marriage, preceded her in death in January 1994.

Ruth's connection to the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery reach back to childhood. Her Grandfather, Egbert “Bert” Lake, who founded Eugene Granite & Marble Works in the 1890s, was responsible for ordering, delivering, and overseeing the raising of the tall Vermont Blue Marble statue of a Civil War soldier that stands in our Cemetery. After Grandfather Lake died, Ruth's father operated Eugene Granite & Marble Works until his death in 1944. Then, Ruth “Lake” Holmes managed it for a number of years. Ruth's parents and paternal grandparents are at rest in the Lake lot in our cemetery. Ruth was very proud of the “Lake” name.

In 1955, when Ruth attended an Annual Lot Owners meeting, she was asked to serve – temporarily – as their Secretary.



Ruth Lake Holmes, September 20, 1918 – November 27, 2012.

Ruth's life-long passion for the Eugene Pioneer Cemetery is widely-known. She was a determined, and formidable, defender of the Lot Owners rights during the 1960's -1970's when the U. of O. sought to gain control and move the Cemetery. And, Ruth was actively involved when Pioneer Memorial Park voluntarily dissolved and merged with EPCA in 2004 so that the “words” and the “music” combined in the best interests of both corporations.

Ruth graduated from Eugene High School, and attended the Univ. of Oregon majoring in Journalism – she dreamed of becoming a foreign correspondent and travelling the World.

Ruth and Jim Holmes married in 1936, and raised three children: Robert & Quentin Holmes of Marcola, and L. Ruth Blattler (now deceased).

(Cont. on Pg. 2 Ruth Lake Holmes...)

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Any Comments or
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Please write or
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Ruth Lake Holmes (Cont. from Pg.1)

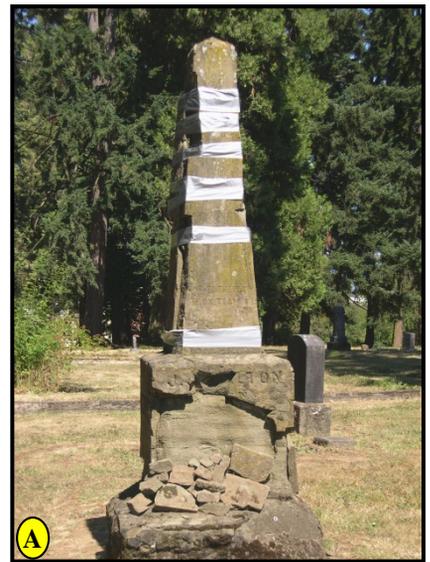
In 1948, Ruth earned her private pilot's license and loved to go on flying adventures to far-away places with Jim and Quentin in "The Flying Cloud" - a Cessna 195.

Spiritually, Ruth Holmes was a Teaching Priestess in Eckankar, the Ancient Science of Soul Travel.

Those who knew Ruth will attest to her connection to the family's Mohawk Valley woodlands which Jim and she had bought over a period of many, many years. She enjoyed a lifetime of canine companionship and loved animals of all kinds. Ruth considered Hawaii to be paradise, especially Maui, and was able to visit the islands 53 times during her lifetime.

Ruth has now gone to be with her husband, Jim, and their daughter, L. Ruth Blattler. Ruth & Jim Holmes leave 12 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

Ruth Lake Holmes will be greatly missed and long remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing her.



Walton Monument - Circa 2011

REPLACING THE WALTON FAMILY MONUMENT

*By Quentin A. Holmes
Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association*

Judge J. J. Walton (1838-1909) helped found our Cemetery. He also helped establish the University of Oregon. His daughter, Miss Pauline Walton, worked as a Eugene librarian and was very active in civic affairs until her death in 1966.

Several years ago the tall Walton family memorial, carved from sandstone in the late 1800's, began crumbling dangerously (see Photo **A**). In 2012, EPCA decided to replace it with a granite obelisk-style memorial that is historically appropriate and whose inscriptions pay tribute to the role Walton family members had in the early development of Eugene and Lane County.

In April 2012, EPCA submitted a proposal to the Oregon Commission on Historical Cemeteries requesting a Grant of \$2,000 to help us with the cost. In May, we received word that our proposal had been selected for funding.

In July/August, Dorothy Brandner & Elisabeth Kramer researched the Walton family and designed historically-accurate, lovely inscriptions for the new monument. Bruce Palone - a master stonemason from Portland - was then contracted to craft the new monument. To keep within budget & the timeline of our Grant, Bruce created a composite monument wherein the outer surfaces of the entire monument are 1" thick granite veneer.

During the late afternoon of December 21st, with the able assistance of Tim King operating a tractor equipped with a backhoe, installation of the new monument took place (see Photo **B**).

A pyramid-shaped cap will be added to the top when the monument is completed. A formal dedication ceremony will be held sometime in the Spring.



Installation of Replacement Walton Family Monument



The Replacement Walton Family Monument

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF PIONEER CEMETERY

by *Whitey Lueck*, Horticulturist and Naturalist

One of the aspects of Pioneer Cemetery that appeals most to the casual visitor is its landscape dominated by large conifers. Few visitors, however, are aware of the site's landscape history, and how dramatically it has changed since the 1870s.

At that time, not a single tree stood on the present site. And it's not because all the trees that had once grown there had been cut down by early settlers. Rather, this site—like most of present-day Eugene—had been treeless for millennia due to the cultural practices of the area's aborigines who set fire to the valley floor on a nearly annual basis, thus preventing trees from getting established.

Although the cemetery site itself was originally treeless, a visitor could have seen trees in the distance, as the banks of the Willamette River were heavily wooded with maple, cottonwood, alder, and Douglas-fir. And the nearby hills had widely spaced oaks—both Oregon white and California black—on their flanks, as well as a scattering of conifers including valley ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir.

It's hard to imagine these days, but the view from the early cemetery must have been magnificent, since there were no trees to impede it. From the grass- and wildflower-covered mound, one could see from what we now call the South Hills, all the way to the Coast Range in the west. Skinner Butte lay just a mile or so away. And less than ten miles to the northeast, rising abruptly from the valley floor, were the relatively lofty summits of the Coburg Hills.

One of the first tasks that cemetery caretakers had was getting trees established. Most of the trees that local nurseries at that time raised were fruit- and nut-bearing trees that provided food. And more exotic trees, even if they were available, required a degree of care and summer watering that likely was unavailable. So all of the trees in the initial plantings were local conifers which were adapted, of course, to our area's summer drought, and which were readily available and easy to transplant. Perhaps, too, conifers were chosen because of their more stately or formal form or silhouette.

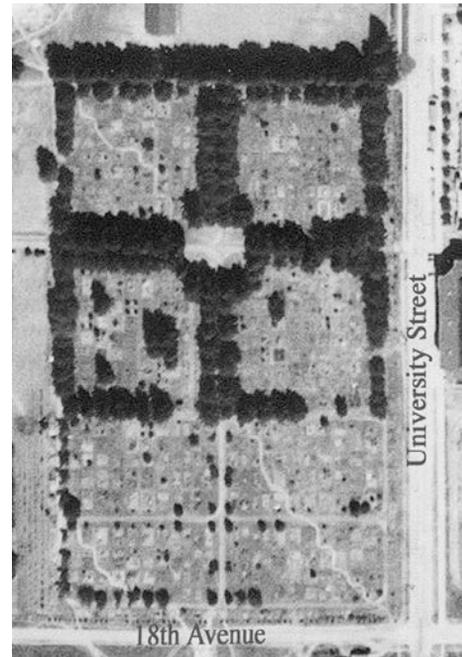
Broad-leafed trees such as oaks and maples were apparently not part of the initial planting or, if they were, they failed to get established. The native oaks are relatively difficult to transplant, and our lovely native bigleaf maples, although easy to transplant, would have had difficulty getting established on the more droughty "hill soils" such as those at the cemetery, unlike the deep, fertile river loam of downtown Eugene, where the maples thrived and were very popular.

The first aerial photograph of the cemetery site was taken in 1936 and shows clearly the formal design of the early plantings. A single row of conifers—mostly Douglas-firs, but also quite a few incense-cedars—in the shape of a perfect square outlines the northern part of the current cemetery. *Double* rows of conifers, then, marched toward the center of the square from the midpoint of each of the square's sides. These double rows or allées of trees terminated just before arriving at the open area in the square's center.

Later plantings began to fill in other parts of the initial square and extended somewhat toward the southwest portion of the site. Interestingly, the *southeast* part of the cemetery remained largely treeless until fairly recently.

These days, conifers still dominate the site—with many of them, of course, well over a century old—but a few broad-leafed trees have moved in as well, mostly on their own. They include bigleaf maples, English oaks (probably brought in by squirrels or jays from the oaks in Memorial Quad north of Knight Library), madrones, a lovely eastern black walnut in the cemetery's southwest sector, and even a single Oregon white oak near the intersection of 18th and Potter!

Although many decades passed without any new tree plantings, more than a dozen Douglas-firs were recently planted in the southeastern part of the site, helping to ensure that Oregon's state tree will continue to grace the cemetery grounds for many, many decades to come.



1936 ARIEL VIEW OF OUR CEMETERY



2012 ARIEL VIEW OF OUR CEMETERY

SPRING WORK PARTY SCHEDULED

*"We never get finished cleaning up the cemetery – we simply do our best to stay up with things."
(George Beebe)*

EPCA Director George Beebe has scheduled the Spring work party in the Cemetery. George has to set each work party up months in advance in order to get crews from the Lane County Sheriff. Typically, we get crews of about ten people - both men and women - from the Lane County jail. These folks do an excellent job for us, and they regard it as a privilege to be outdoors and helping improve the looks of the Cemetery. A week or so before, several of us "walk-thru" to look things over and agree upon what needs to get tackled by the work party.

The Spring work party will be on the Friday before Memorial Day:
Walk-thru - 11:30 a.m. Thursday, May 16th, 2013;
Work Party from 9 a.m. -> 3: p.m. on May 24th.

Come join us if you like, we can always use your help!

Eugene Pioneer Cemetery Association

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED