

Spotlight on Headstones:

Cast Zinc Grave Markers Predominate in Eagle Scout Candidate's Survey of Historical Metal Objects in Salem Pioneer Cemetery

Salem Pioneer Cemetery contains a dozen or more zinc grave markers, a type of metal funerary monument popular in American cemeteries in the late 19th century. The Monumental Bronze Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut and its subsidiaries marketed cast zinc as "white bronze" with the help of motivated salesmen and a nationwide railroad network for distribution. The demand for cast zinc began to fall off after the turn of the 20th century. Subsidiaries in the Mid-West and elsewhere were phased out, and the parent company was liquidated in the Great Depression.

A key selling point of the zinc markers was durability. Unlike true bronze, zinc is a pure metal and does not corrode. Neither does it support biological growth such as moss and lichen that can mar conventional headstones. The casting molds allowed robust elaboration, such as
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The grave marker of Samuel D. Gibson (1836-1897) and his wife, the former Mary Ellen Hiron Foreman, exemplifies the cast zinc monuments in Salem Pioneer Cemetery. Casting the metal from molds allowed elaboration that rivaled the crispness of stone carving.



Eagle Scout candidate Eric Nettleton (center) organized the survey of historical metal objects in the cemetery. He is shown with assistant Scout Master Larry Weber and Mark Crutchfield inspecting the wrought-iron fence enclosing the Asahel Bush family plot.

Endowment Fund Update

Salem Pioneer Cemetery's Endowed Fund was established within The Salem Foundation Charitable Trust in 1999 for long term care and protection of the cemetery. In 2009, the fund's earning power was boosted by \$6,087.75 in gifts from eighty-two individual contributors.

To help the City toward an enhanced level of maintenance and to accomplish betterment work that could not be undertaken otherwise, the ongoing goal is to build the endowment to \$500,000. In the current market, the value of the fund stands at \$447,906.77. Proceeds from the endowment provided the City with supplemental funds in the amount of \$13,663.51 in 2009. Endowment funds typically are used for special cemetery-wide projects and major monument repairs and stabilization. In 2010, part of the proceeds will be used to match a grant from the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries to repair the collapsing paved England family plot near the cemetery's Hoyt Street entrance.

Cast Zinc Grave Marker Survey

(continued from page 1)

decorative motifs in high relief and textures that imitate stone tooling. The hollow metal markers were placed on foundations of masonry or concrete and made-to-order epitaph tablets were bolted into the monument. Entire monuments could be made to order, but more often the client selected a marker from a generous array of designs in company catalogs.

In 2009, Eric Nettleton, a Sprague High School Junior and member of B.S.A. Troop 108, came forward to design and carry out a survey project in fulfillment of requirements for his Eagle Scout badge. Since no statistics had been compiled on the number and condition of historical metal objects in the cemetery, Eric made it his goal to collect the data.

On September 26, the project leader and more than twenty Troop 108 members and their advisors swept through the grounds to locate, measure, describe, and photograph the cast zinc markers, several iron plot fences that remain, and other metal objects. The results of the survey are being compiled by the Eagle Scout candidate as an inventory that FOPC will use to monitor the status of the objects and shed light on historical metal craft in Salem Pioneer Cemetery.



Boy Scouts of America Troop 108 members, from left, Andrew Gosack, Nate Mills, and Zach Stearns record the zinc grave marker of Salem contractor Charles M. Day (1836-1898). Zach points to a symbolic tree motif on the side of the monument.



Kacky Hayes (right), pictured with daughter Hannah, organized the "Take Care of Oregon Days" work party on July 25 that brought out a record number of field volunteers - all from Fourth and Fifth Wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

"Take Care of Oregon Days" Attract Top Volunteer Efforts During Statehood Sesquicentennial

In 2009, Oregonians commemorated 150 years of statehood with "Take Care of Oregon Days" aimed at cleaning up littered stream banks, beaches, and pioneer cemeteries. The Oregon 150 Committee commissioned SOLV (Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism) and other sponsors to organize the statewide initiative. On May 16, the officially-observed date, FOPC led twenty-two community volunteers and high school youth in a pre-Memorial Day spruce-up.

On July 25, a record-setting force of ninety-five adult and youth workers (including a few infant spectators) from South Salem Wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints spread out across the lower grounds and within a few hours collected several tons of hedge trimmings and invasive plants such as Himalayan blackberry, English ivy, wild sweet pea, and moss onto massive debris piles. Several parties of churchmen volunteered to trim and shape from end to end the long boxwood hedge fronting the Commercial Street fence line, a task completed with excellent results. Following their dedicated work effort, the volunteers gathered for a picnic in Bush's Pasture Park.

Remembering Ferne Hellie FOPC Database Genealogist



Ferne Hellie by Thomas Patterson for "South Salem Today," the Statesman Journal, November 7, 2007.

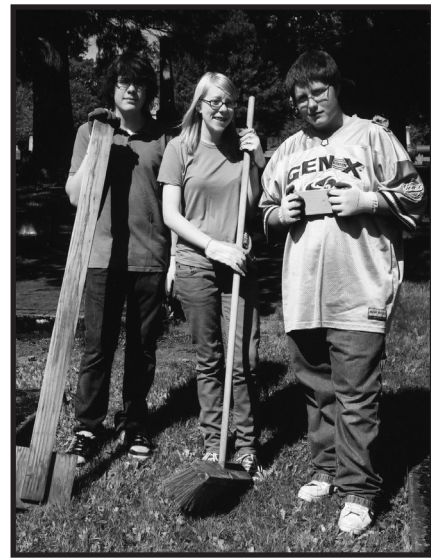
Ferne Hellie (1929-2009) in recent years was the first point of contact for researchers across the United States and in many foreign countries using the Salem Pioneer Cemetery Website, salempioneercemetery.org. For the past fifteen years, she and Addie Dyal Rickey and Tracey Saucy had been mainstays of the genealogical database that began in the 1970s with the collection of data from burial records, field surveys, obituary articles, death certificates, and local histories. Today, the database is available on the Website as a highly useful searchable record.

The FOPC genealogists and their volunteer assistants have been supported in their efforts over the years by the Salem City Parks, Salem Public Library, Marion County Historical Society, and the Oregon State Library.

Ferne was also a longtime volunteer at the Oregon State Library, where, she helped library patrons conduct genealogical research. Through her friendly encouragement and know-how, she inspired others to become active as research assistants.

Speaking of the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery in 2008, Ferne remarked, "Our database is catching the attention of many. I am proud of it and realize how fortunate we are to have Tracey [Saucy managing it]."

The daughter of American missionary parents, Gerald and Marjorie Hibbard, Ferne was born in India and raised on the Pacific Coast. She attended Walla Walla College, where she met her future husband, William G. Hellie. In 1952, the couple settled in Salem, where they raised daughter Karyn and son William "Chip," Jr. Ferne served many years as librarian at Sprague High School while she pursued her interests in Oregon history and genealogy. She is known for her model work on Mount Hope Cemetery (Marion County) in which she presented family histories connected with each burial. Her service in compiling personal histories associated with Salem Pioneer Cemetery is an equally valuable legacy.



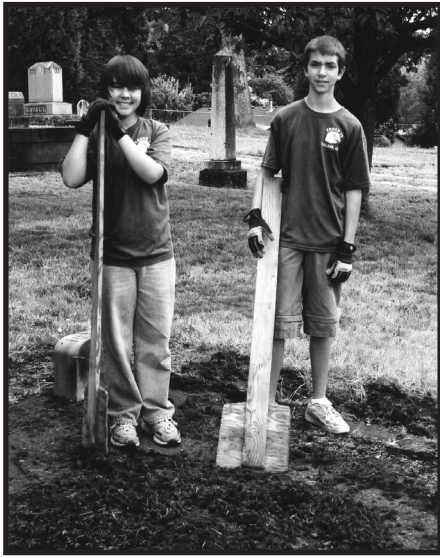
Matt McNabb, Anna Wiles, and Dakota Velasquez were among South Salem High School students who tackled chores during "Take Care of Oregon Days."



Work parties from South Salem Wards of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints turned out en masse.



Frank Teel (left) and Bill Claussen were members of the Church's efficient hedge trimming task force.



Zach Rogers, left, and Michael Burgess of Boy Scout Troop 19 worked diligently to rid the paved plot cover of the Daniel Waldo family of its unwanted moss. They were accompanied by leader Chris Tortorelli.

Community Volunteers are Key to Database Refinements, Headstone Repairs, Grounds Improvement

Website and database manager Tracey Saucy and genealogical database founder Addie Rickey had valuable support from research assistants Karen Tolle and Tom Branigar in the past year. Karen and Tom also helped man the FOPC Help Station for cemetery visitors over Memorial Day weekend.

Once monthly, from March through October, Friends of Pioneer Cemetery field volunteers gather for a Saturday morning session aimed at improving the cemetery one work area at a time. Volunteers from all parts of the community help reset fallen markers, prune heritage roses and ornamental plants, remove moss and vines, collect debris, and carry out other improvements. Those participating in the work parties enjoy spending productive hours in an outdoor setting where they can apply their skills, learn conservation techniques, and encounter the stories of Salem area pioneers.

Dale Palmquist and Mark Fields, leaders of the field crews, were grateful for the help of dozens of volunteers who turned out for work parties in 2009, as follows:

Suzanne Apodaca and daughters Erin and Amie
Judy Brown
Gwen Carr and grandchildren Hanna and Murphy
Caldwell

Tasha Cronin and niece Radian Budlong

Yogi Delena

Jennifer Dunger

Art Fogarty

Cameron and AnnMarie Jones

Marjorie Jordan

Fred Klatz

David and Lorita Mendez

T. Randy Miles

Kathy Moreland

Michelle Murphy and children Shane and Rachel

Pat Norman

Harold Otto

Elisabeth Potter

Susan Robinson

Miriam Royal

Penny and Jose Ruiz

Grant Rutherford

Karen Sewell

Claudine Shaw

Ellen Stevens

Alicia Suarez-Guerrero, daughter Naomi, and

Juan Macias

Karen Tolle

Bill and Linda Warren

Benny C. Williams

Field volunteer crews were supported in their work by the following youth groups and organizations.

Boy Scouts of America, Troop 19

Brownie Troop 231

Daisy Scout Troop 24

Boys and Girls Club of Salem, Teens Torch Club

Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers

South Salem High School, Shannon Holbrook's

Home Room students

Sprague High School students Hannah Walton and

Stefani Atkinson

Fourth and Fifth Wards, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter

Day Saints (See feature, page 2.)

Volunteers are always needed and welcome. For schedule information, contact Tibby Larson, Volunteer Coordinator, Salem Parks Operations Division, tal Larson@cityofsalem.net 503-589-2197.



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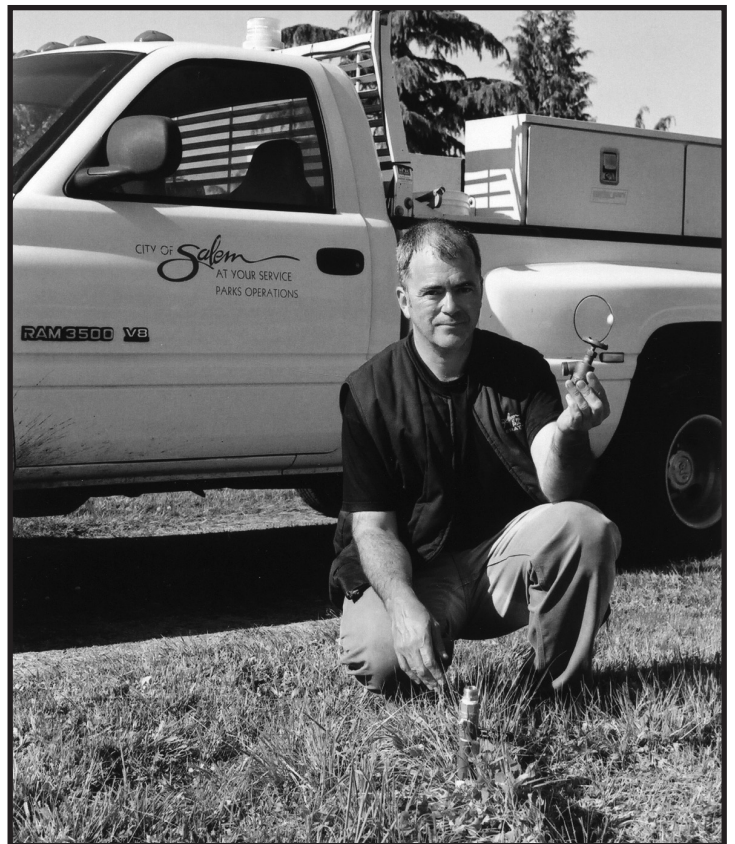
Tokyo International University Students Visit Japanese American Graves, Learn Community History

The long-established sister university program linking Willamette University and Tokyo International University was solidified with the opening of the Tokyo International University of America building adjacent to the Willamette campus in 1989. Last July, the incoming class of TIUA students visited Salem Pioneer Cemetery as part of their “service and learning” orientation exercises. They heard from Georgette Yoshikai and her brother-in-law Henry Yoshikai about Salem’s Japanese American community and afterward worked in the section of Japanese American graves, where they rinsed biological growth from headstones and trimmed turf overgrowth away from headstone bases.



Ten incoming students of Tokyo International University of America (TIUA) visited the cemetery with their student counselors in July to learn about Salem’s Japanese American community from Henry Yoshikai and Georgette Yoshikai, pictured front row, center.

City Parks Personnel Prepare the Grounds, Assist on Memorial Day



On Memorial Day, John Kleeman of the City of Salem Parks Operations organization responded to an urgent call to cap a five-foot gusher that erupted when a vehicle veered from the roadway and broke off a water faucet.