

# FRIENDS OF PIONEER CEMETERY ANNUAL REPORT Dec. 31, 2007

The Salem Foundation Charitable Trust, Pioneer Trust Bank, N. A., Trustee  
PO Box 2305, Salem OR 97308

## *Spotlight on Headstones: Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers Memorial Dedicated February 1, 2007*

The opening of nationally-observed Black History Month was a propitious time for the organization known as Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers to dedicate a memorial that honors with name inscriptions all forty-three Black pioneers known to have been interred in Salem Pioneer Cemetery from 1858 to the period of the Second World War. Because headstones are standing to mark only a handful of the individual graves and because the burial locations of a number of the others are unknown, an omnibus memorial was created to give tribute to the Black community in early-day Salem as a whole.

Set on a vacant portion of Plot 85 in the heart of the cemetery, adjacent to the central drive, the memorial was financed by Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers and dedicated in a stirring public ceremony on February 1.

*(Continued on Page 2)*



*On Memorial Day U.S. Army R.O.T.C. students from North Salem High School placed flags at the graves of American military veterans throughout the cemetery under the traditional sponsorship of American Legion Post 136. Left to right are Richard Arenz, Brad Smith, Sgt. Shad Certain, Ricky Ruiz, and Harry Berkheimer.*

## *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. During the 2007 calendar year, the fund's earning power was boosted by just over \$9,000 by the welcome contributions of eighty individual donors and a bequest from the estate of Melvin D. Goode.

To help the City toward an enhanced level of maintenance and to accomplish betterment work that could not be undertaken otherwise, the present goal is to build the endowment to \$500,000. The current market value of the fund is \$481,702. Proceeds from the endowment provided the City with supplemental funds in the amount of \$13,855 in the past year. Endowment funds typically are used for special cemetery-wide projects and major monument repairs and stabilization.



*Directors of Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers gathered to dedicate a marker honoring pioneers in graves both marked and unmarked. L to R are Marie Bradford-Blevins, Sedonia Harsh, Jack Caynon, Willie Richardson, Gwen Carr, and Jason Caldwell.*

## *Black Pioneers Memorial Stone*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Mayor Janet Taylor accepted the monument on behalf of the City of Salem and remarks were made by other dignitaries including First Lady Mary Oberst, Carol Davis, founder of the local Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers group, pastors Gail McDougle, First Congregational Church of Salem, and Chris Haydon, Trinity Covenant Church.

Willie B. Richardson chaired the event for Oregon Northwest Pioneers, and Gwen Carr was vice-chair. Friends of Pioneer Cemetery, the Salem Parks Operations Division, and City View Cemetery supported the event by providing the organization with research service, advice on stone selection and placement, and preparation of the memorial site.

The names of the forty-three individuals are inscribed on the memorial stone's east face. Log on to [salempioneercemetery.org](http://salempioneercemetery.org) for a list and biographical information. Text on the west face (pictured below) is as follows: "In Remembrance of Oregon's Black Pioneers, Named and Unnamed, in Salem Pioneer Cemetery. Presented to the City of Salem by Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers. Dedicated February 2007."



*The memorial stone placed by Oregon Northwest Black Pioneers was acquired from Capital Monument Company. City View Cemetery personnel David Samples (left) and Eduardo Gonzalez set the stone and its rock-faced base in advance of the dedication.*



*Salem history enthusiast Norma Gekakis (left) and Friends of Pioneer Cemetery Database volunteer Tracey Saucy inspect the ledger used by cemetery sexton James Plant for noting burials during his long tenure. Ms. Gekakis recently gave her antique store find to the Friends to fill a gap in available records.*

## *Gift of Sexton's Burial Register Fills Information Gap 1914-1944*

James Plant served as cemetery sexton for Chemeketa Lodge No. 1, Independent Order of Odd Fellows from about 1909 to the time of his death and burial in the cemetery in 1944. Throughout those years he dutifully entered the names and dates of interments in a ledger which later disappeared. About sixteen years ago, Norma Gekakis was attracted by a finely-made, leather-bound book in a Salem antique store and acquired it. Because the title page and opening leaves were missing, it was not obvious what kind of record book it was, but its binding was intact and could be appreciated as a decorative object.

Last November, Ms. Gekakis saw an article about the Pioneer Cemetery founded by the Odd Fellows and made the connection. She graciously offered the burial register for addition to records of the Friends of Pioneer Cemetery. Her gift is invaluable to ongoing research and reconciling database information for the period 1914-1944.

## *In Memoriam*

Respectfully, and with regret, we note the passing of the following friends and supporters through 2007.

*Richard H. Olcott*

(May 28, 1915-May 23, 2004)

*Burch R. Judson*

(August 14, 1920-June 14, 2006)

*Otto J. Wilson, Jr.*

(June 9, 1917-June 23, 2007)

*Nancy Jarvis Scriber*

(January 23, 1945-June 29, 2007)

*C. M. "Mort" Bishop, Jr.*

(January 24, 1925-July 11, 2007)

*Tom T. Yoshikai*

(July 13, 1925-August 7, 2007)

*Garlen L. "Spot" Simpson*

(October 7, 1905-August 26, 2007)

*Melvin D. Goode*

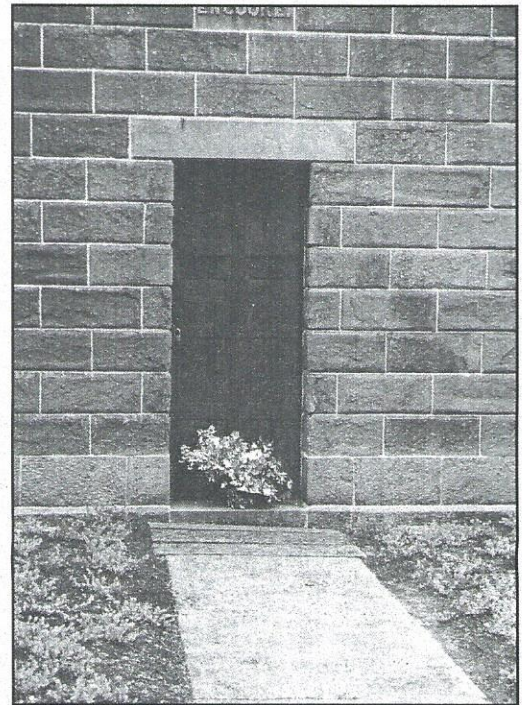
(August 8, 1929-Sept. 25, 2007)

*Pauline Winslow Elgin*

(June 28, 1916-November 14, 2007)

*Luella Patton Charlton*

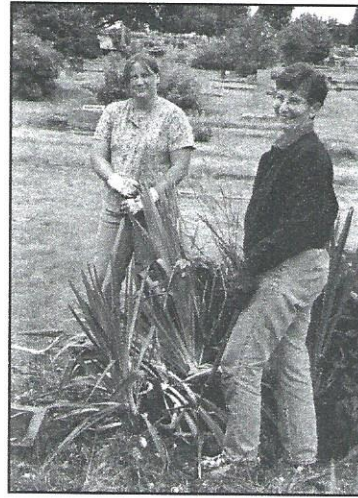
(February 16, 1898-December 23, 2007)



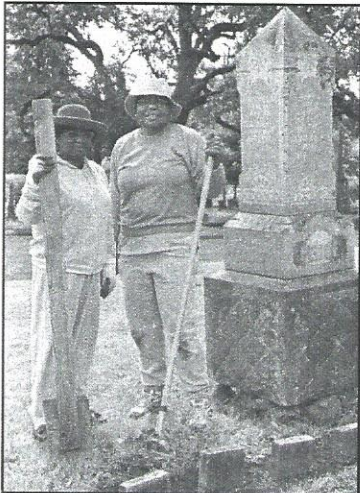
*The final resting place of long-time benefactor Luella Patton Charlton is the stately mausoleum first used by the Cooke-Patton family in 1879. The masonry structure was restored under City auspices in 2006.*



*Moya McKeehan was assisted by Middle Schooler Shane Cooper as the two weeded and groomed grave lots in June.*



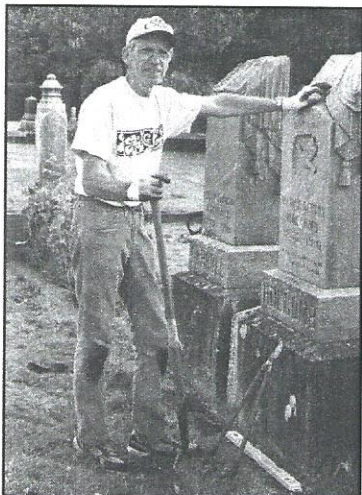
*In July, Penny Ruiz (left) and Karen Sewell reduced some spreading Yuccas, popular plants of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*



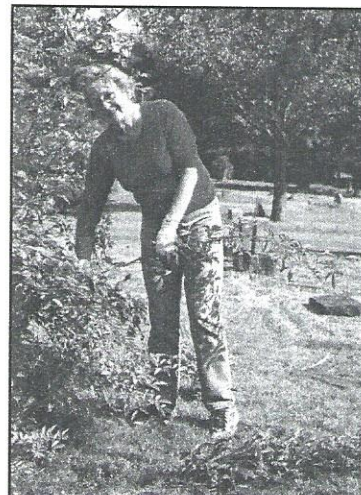
*During the May work party, Willie Richardson (left) and Gwen Carr, directors of the Oregon Black Pioneers group, spruced up the Paige plot.*



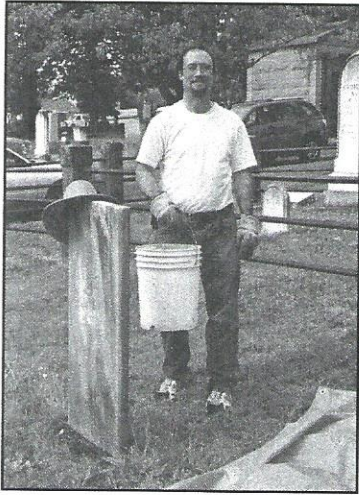
*Sharon Jones pulled unwanted sweet pea and other weeds from a pebble-covered grave plot during the June work day.*



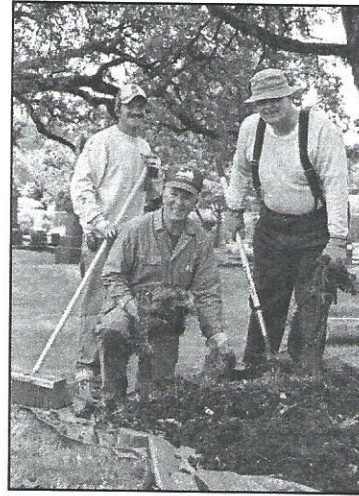
*Bill Warren helped level monuments in the Benson-Holcomb plot adjacent to the cemetery entrance road on a Saturday in August.*



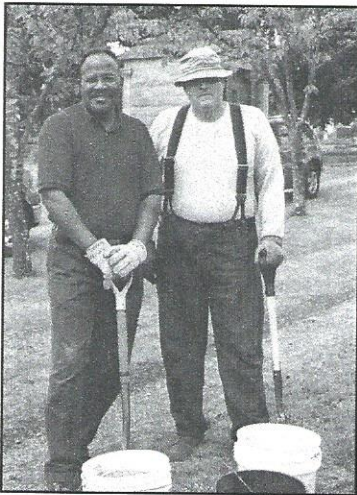
*Linda Warren, an experienced pruner, gave needed attention to several of the cemetery's heritage roses planted by pioneers and their descendants.*



*John Turner was part of the team packing gravel to level the bases of leaning headstones during the June work party.*



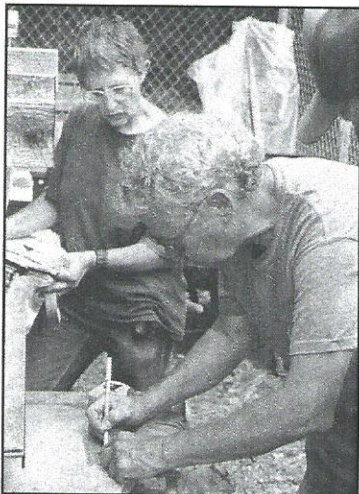
*In May, David Mendez (left) and Fred Klatz (right) helped Dale Palmquist rid paved grave lots of their unwanted burdens of moss.*



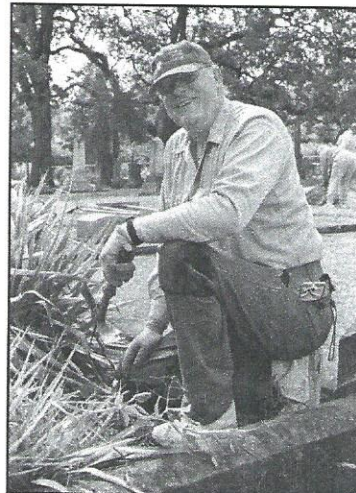
*During the June work session, Benny Williams (left) and Fred Klatz applied shovel and sand to the job of leveling headstone bases.*



*Grant Rutherford (right) supported Dale Palmquist in operating the chain hoist to lift a massive headstone element into upright position.*



*Last July, Claudine Shaw and Mark Fields labeled broken stones selected for placement in secure storage pending repair.*

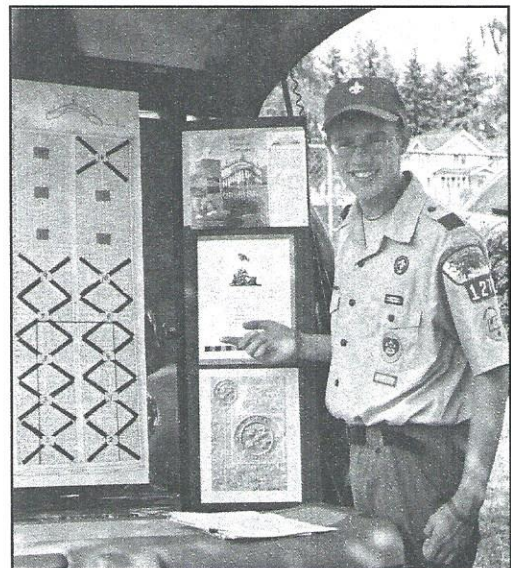


*K. C. Meaders made several visits in May to weed, prune, and tend roses in the densely-planted, raised plot of Jonathan Waldo Smith.*

## *Eagle Scout Candidate Leads Survey of Military Burials*

When West Salem High School student Jason Anderson volunteered to undertake a project at Pioneer Cemetery that would satisfy requirements for his Eagle Scout badge, the Friends suggested a survey to verify the type, location and condition of grave markers of all men and women who served in the United States armed forces. The Salem Pioneer Cemetery database identifies about 220 such burials. Supported by his younger brother Peter, a fellow Scout of Troop 127, Jason devised a method for cross-checking the database with field work which turned up as many as fifty burials not included in the cemetery's list of military veterans.

Over the summer, dozens of volunteers from several Scout troops fanned out across the 16-acre grounds searching for grave medals and epitaphs that would identify a veteran's grave. Once the results are fully compiled, Jason and Peter's survey will become the basis for updating the online database and planning future interpretive work. Log on to [salempioneercemetery.org](http://salempioneercemetery.org) to see the list. A complete list of military graves, together with a map plotting the locations, will improve chances that all graves of veterans from the War of 1812 onward are decorated with flags on Memorial Day.



*Eagle Scout candidate Jason Anderson of Troop 127 designed and led a survey of military burials. In August he demonstrated the progress of his project.*



*Terry Partipilo and son Chris, a Blanchet High School student, prepared site of monument to Black Pioneers for re-seeding during September's work party.*

## *Volunteers Repair Stones, Tackle Small Scale Betterment Projects*

Once monthly, from March through October, Friends of Pioneer Cemetery field volunteers gather for Saturday morning sessions aimed at improving the cemetery one work area at a time. Volunteers from throughout 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.

Leaders of the field volunteers, Dale Palmquist and Mark Fields, were grateful for the valued support of twenty-four workers over the past year, as follows: Stacey and John Anderson, Steve and Debbie Bartol, Gwen Carr, Shane Cooper, Sharon Jones, Marjorie Jordan, Fred Klatz, Moya McKeehan, K. C. Meaders, David Mendez, Terry and Chris Partipilo, Elisabeth Potter, Willie Richardson, Penny Ruiz, Grant Rutherford, Karen Sewell, Claudine Shaw, John Turner, Bill and Linda Warren, and Benny Williams.

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



Friends of Pioneer Cemetery  
The Salem Foundation, Pioneer Trust Bank, NA  
PO Box 2305  
Salem OR 97308

PRSRT  
FIRST CLASS  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
SALEM OR  
PERMIT NO 102

## *About this Mailing*

Friends of Pioneer Cemetery provides this Annual Report for your information in association with the Salem Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services. If you wish to contribute to the Salem Pioneer Cemetery Fund, make additions or corrections to the mailing list, or have your name removed from the mailing list, a return envelope is provided within.



*On behalf of the City, Mayor Janet Taylor accepted the memorial to Salem's Black Pioneers during a dedication ceremony last February. Details pages 1-2.*



*Discoverers of the trunk-trapped and ivy-covered cast-iron fence gate to the Munkers Plot in May were, from left, Travis Reece, Lyle Brockett, and Dale Shellito.*

## *Corrections Division Work Force Teams Vital to Cemetery Upkeep*

Supervised crews from the Oregon Department of Corrections perform essential services such as grooming the grounds in advance of the Memorial Day weekend. Last May, a team from the Mill Creek Correctional Facility labored to remove an overgrown ivy bush that engulfed a tree stump in a fenced plot at the heart of the cemetery. The team was cheered to discover the decorative cast-iron fence gate trapped in the trunk once hidden by ivy.