

Tales of early Oregon history...

Eugene's Masonic Cemetery is important as the first official burial place in the city and as the final resting place of the city's founder, Eugene F. Skinner; the first governor of Oregon, John Whiteaker; and the first president of the University of Oregon, John Wesley Johnson. The variety of markers and monuments in the cemetery read like a "Who's Who" of Eugene streets and places;

Oregon is a "land of enchantment. The country is new, we have no aristocracy and no high style of living. Still we enjoy life full as well as those who roll in luxuries."

- letter from Eugene Skinner to relatives back East - 1865



Patterson, Harlow, Condon, Friendly, Hendricks, Collier, Kerns, Chambers, Kincaid, McCornack, Dillard, Bristow, Seavey, and many others. A visit to the

cemetery evokes images of early Eugene, the Willamette Valley, and the Oregon Trail: horse drawn carriages, street cars, Sunday afternoon picnics, July 4th celebrations...



Eugene and Mary Skinner's tiny cabin was the first stop south of Salem for travelers on the Applegate Trail. Between child care, homemaking, and mopping up after successive floods at "Skinner's Mudhole", Mary provided hospitality for many Oregon Pioneers.



July 4th in Eugene, 1885



*I desire no future that will
break the ties of the past.*

– George Eliot

The Masonic Cemetery was established in 1859 on ten acres of grassy, sloping hillside on the outskirts of what was then Eugene City. Purchased from Fielding McMurry for \$336, the cemetery offered burial plots to the public for \$15. On the northwest corner of the cemetery was the first private school in Eugene — the Point of the Hills School founded by Mr. McMurry in 1850. The northeast corner of the cemetery marks the site of Eugene’s first brickyard, the source of bricks for two of Oregon’s landmark buildings, Deady Hall (1877) and Villard Hall (1885) on the University of Oregon campus.



“...our town is wholly unprovided with a place for burial of the dead. It is well known that your respected fraternity rarely omits to provide at a very early day, a suitable cemetery... for their own use, at least.”

– letter from Eugene attorney S. Ellsworth, to Masonic Lodge #11, November 27, 1857

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It’s got great tales to tell...



Eugene’s Masonic Cemetery

