

Historic Old Cemetery Holds Story Of Pioneer Hardships and Heroism

Burial Place Now Close to Business Section Holds Remains of Men Killed in Indian Wars and Mothers who Braved Dangers

(By Merle R. Chessman.)

In the heart of Pendleton's choicest resident district is situated the first graveyard in eastern Oregon, a burial ground more than half a century old, which has been unused for years and yet which may not be converted to another use because of the provisions made when it was first laid out. Protected by the law and yet with no one to care for it, its monuments and tombstones crumbling and broken down, it is itself a monument to neglect and ruin.

There has in it a little plot of bare ground, dedicated to the grim reaper for over half a century, and beneath its uneven, weed grown surface lies the dust of those whose hands first opened the gates of an empire. Within the narrow boundaries of that desolate area.

"Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep."

and by their bones, long since decayed and crumbled, is that spot consecrated and hallowed, and made forever sacred.

It has been written to "let the dead past bury its dead," but that command does not enjoin a complete forgetfulness and disregard for that which has gone before, for in the graves of the past are the roots of the trees of the present, and he is almost a criminal who fails in his inherent obligations to cherish the things bygone. History with its narrowed pages can touch but lightly upon its multitude of makers, and thus, the duty is imposed upon each community to perpetuate the names of those whose toll, sacrifice and martyrdom secured for it the peace and prosperity it now enjoys. And the least it can do is to show some external respect and reverence for the last resting place of these dead heroes.

To the stranger, who, from curiosity allows his footsteps to lead him within this "silent city of the dead," as he moves from mound to mound and reads the few inscriptions carved in marble there, those scattered graves may be but scattered graves with no other significance, or if he be of a meditative cast or gifted with an imagination, he may guess something of what lies hidden there within; but to the few remnants of the pioneer band who saw this land as a wild frontier, those earthen billows, mately speak of a thousand incidents of other times. From out of those tombs rise spectres of former friends, and before their retrospective vision are enacted scenes in a drama which tells of

an empire in the making.

It was the body of Ella Bailey that was first interred in that historic cemetery. She was a daughter of Judge D. W. Bailey, and a sister of the present D. W. Bailey, who is still a resident of this city. She fell a victim to pneumonia late in the '60s when only the Bailey and Goodwin families constituted the sole population of the area whereon now dwell 7000 people. After her death the few acres which now comprise the burial ground were deeded to the county by M. E. Goodwin, and soon other graves appeared within its confines.

Many of these were strangers to the few people who then inhabited this section. Oftentimes a train of immigrants would draw sadly to this spot, bearing in their midst the body of one of their number, fallen on the journey, a victim to disease, accident or violence. A grave would be hastily dug, a few simple words would be said and the lifeless form of one held

dear lowered into the earthen cell. A few tears would be dropped as the dirt was gently heaped over the corpse and then with one last lingering look behind, on to the west, to the promised land where hopes and dreams were to be fulfilled. Often a rude slab was erected to mark the spot and the name and years and perhaps a homely verse carved thereon, all of which have long since been erased by time and the warring elements. Those rugged pioneers, with their uncertain futures, were given neither time nor opportunity for the funeral rites and observances of civilization, and that they left no marble tributes over their dead, but made the living monument in their memories more lasting.

Then, too, in that burial ground, as it is today, are many shallow holes where the mouldering bones of former occupants have been disinterred and removed to other places. In one of these for many years rested the remains of M. E. Goodwin whose name shall stand imperishable as that of

the founder of Pendleton. He it was who a half century ago built a way house on the spot where now stands the Pendleton hotel, and for many years conducted it with the aid of his thrifty wife. And he it was also who first bridged the Umatilla, building the structure of timbers hewn and whipsawed by his own hand, and remunerating his labors by charging toll to the constant stream of homeseekers and gold hunters which passed this way. And later in the year 1865 it was he and Judge G. W. Bailey who contributed the funds for the erection of the first Umatilla county court house which was built and stood for many years where the Red Cross drug store, Schaefer's jewelry store and the Peoples Warehouse are now located. Scarcely an incident of the early history of this county but with which his name is identified and linked inseparably, and the very ground upon which a great many of the business blocks and residences of this city are now built is a part of his former 160 acre homestead tract. His aged widow, who after his death, was married again to Henry Raley, passed away scarcely a month ago.

In one corner of the old cemetery there still lies a piece of broken marble over a grass grown grave which tells that there lies all that remains of the body of G. W. Bailey, the fourth judge of Umatilla county, and the first who held court in Pendleton; another pioneer whose labors in this section of eastern Oregon makes him a prominent figure in its early history.

On one of the few tombstones which

have withstood the assaults of winds and rains is an inscription which recalls one of the most thrilling periods of the early days, the defense of homes against hostile Indians. On one side it reads:

"In memory of William Lamar, sergeant in Captain Sperry's company of Pendleton volunteers, killed in fight with the Indians at Willow Springs, July 6, 1878."

On the reverse side is chiseled: "By the friends, who, during his short stay with us, learned to esteem him, this monument is erected as a tribute to his manly worth, and to commemorate his gallant conduct."

In that burial ground, too, is the grave of George Cogran, who with Fred Foster and Al Bunker, was betrayed by an Indian woman he had long known, and who was killed by her tribesmen while riding from Cayuse to this city. Bunker was wounded at the same time and fell in the bed of a stream where he was found next morning by a rescue party.

Stirring times those, when danger walked hand in hand with those early settlers with death always lurking near to claim them as his own.

Standing in the center of the abandoned graveyard is a tall, imposing monument which, despite the storms which have played about it, stands as straight as on the day it was erected to mark the last resting place of an honored pioneer. On its untarnished surface is engraved the name of Hon. George A. La Dow and the

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