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# Pioneer

If the University is ever called upon to produce a mystery, it can present the Odd Fellows Cemetery, commonly referred to as the Pioneer Cemetery. Like a century-old enigma, it clings to the south edge of the University on 18th Avenue and has persevered while Eugene grew around it.

Predating University classes by three years, the International Order of Oddfellows Cemetery of Eugene, its original title, was formed in 1873 and plots were put on the market.

In the 100-plus years since the first burial in September of 1873, the cemetery has survived attempted relocations and, in turn, has evolved into a multi-purpose area with different appeal to different people.

For some it offers a wooded area for a tranquil jog; for others it's a place to get loud and rowdy late at night, as evidenced by empty beer cans, broken liquor bottles and toppled tombstones.

Some have looked at the scrambled array of plant life and called it an eyesore, while others are intrigued by the variety of trees, shrubs and flowers.

A few people come to pay respects to specific grave sites, but many more come out of curiosity. And the curiosity-seekers are not left wanting.

A plethora of monuments and tombstones, many of 19th century origin, grace the cemetery, and the setting is unlike any modern graveyard.

With the exception of occasional mowings, the area receives little care so the trees and shrubs appear wild and natural.

Though not open to traffic, wide roadways are maintained and navigable throughout the cemetery, yet years of students hurrying to classes have created meandering paths, worn smooth and brown.

All these, the criss-crossing of

paths and roadways, the unmanaged flora and the age of the cemetery combine to give it a special, yet undefinable, ambiance.

A leisurely stroll through the graveyard can provide images of stark contrast. One gravesite marked with a small, simple, oblong headstone, reminiscent of a TV western's version of a Boothill marker, lies not far from an elaborate monument featuring benches and slabs arranged in a stepping stone manner.

One's eye is likely to be drawn skyward by a towering statue of a Civil War soldier in uniform with a rifle, but in so doing, a person might step on one of the small, flat markers that lay ground level and quietly note one of the cemetery's 4,000-odd burials.

Just as likely, a person will be attracted by the occasional and sparse, bright floral arrangement adorning some headstone. The reds and yellows that usually make up such assortments seem to jump out of the browns and greens that dominate the cemetery.

Nearly as prominent as the bright colors are the immaculate



This obelisk is just one of the many types of monuments in the Pioneer Cemetery.

grave sites. Most of the plots receive none but the barest of maintenance, and those few that are weeded, groomed and decorated stand out as their neighbors are overgrown with foliage and have headstones caked in decaying moss.

A walk through the cemetery at night can be just as interesting, even if it's a night without drunks and vandals.

No self-respecting graveyard would be without its share of bats, and the Pioneer Cemetery is no exception. "Bats forage and feed there at night," says Gordon Murphy of the University's biology department.

Because the cemetery is one of the favorite local feeding areas of bats, another member of the biology department, Prof. James Simmons, sometimes takes classes there at night, Murphy says.

Using a receiver that picks up the high frequency emissions of bats and makes them audible, Simmons is able to let his class hear the noises of the bats squeaking as they dart and dive after insects.

Yet another member of the faculty, geography Prof. Carl Johannessen, has used the

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