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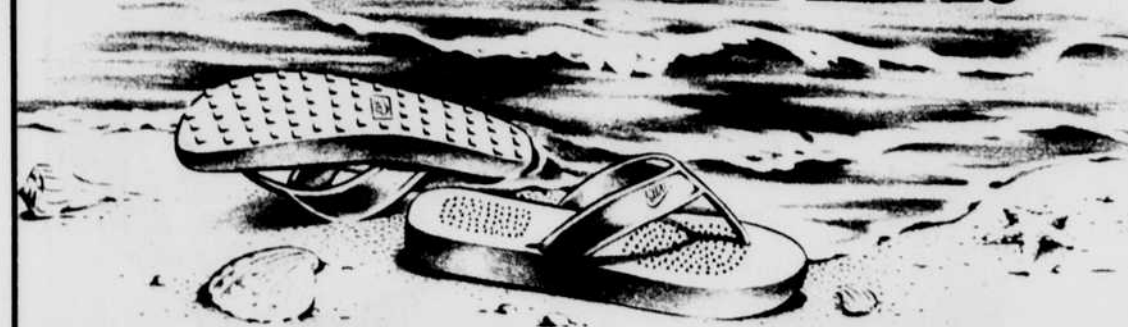
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The Hidden Monuments

Decades ago, monument building was the rage in the United States. With civic duty in mind, societies, government agencies and organizations erected the stone or wood objects in honor of legendary individuals and sites.

But things have changed over the years, and today monuments are slowly creeping out of sight.

"Markers are very expensive now. And they get ripped off," says May King, vice regent of Eugene's Lewis and Clark Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, an organization responsible for many of the monuments.

"In some cases we've done a rededication and put up another one," King says.

One such lost marker was placed in the Pioneer Cemetery by the DAR in 1928 in memory of Anne Mallory Reilly, a daughter of a revolutionary ancestor. Another was located at Fourth Avenue and Blair Street in honor of Pryor Blair, an early-day pioneer.

"In the late 1920s, they did a lot. But of course there was a lot more to mark then," King says.

Why organizations mark locations and honor people by erecting monuments appears, at first, to be a

feeble attempt to achieve immortality. Cement, rocks, mortar, hardened steel and other long-lasting materials are not used because they are decorative. But King believes there's another more prominent reason.

"It's just to help preserve our history. It's something the national society has encouraged us to do," she says.

In Lane County, the significant monuments that remain tell much of the history of the area. And while those days are long gone, a reading of the monuments provides a chance to daydream and imagine what life was like more than a century ago.

•The old Cartwright House, later known as Mountain House Hotel, was razed in 1973, but a monument marks the spot where it once stood on Territorial Road south of Lorane. The old stage coach from San Francisco and Portland rode in front of the structure from 1848 to 1865, and the first news of President Lincoln's assassination to reach Lane County came via telegraph to the home. It also served as a post office for years.

•Elijah Bristow was one of the first settlers to reach Lane County when he settled near Pleasant Hill in 1846. Bristow, a veteran of Andrew Jackson's army, helped establish the county's first school and church with

the aid of his wife, Susannah. A wooden marker and a replica of their fireplace made from the original stones lies off Highway 58 in Pleasant Hill.

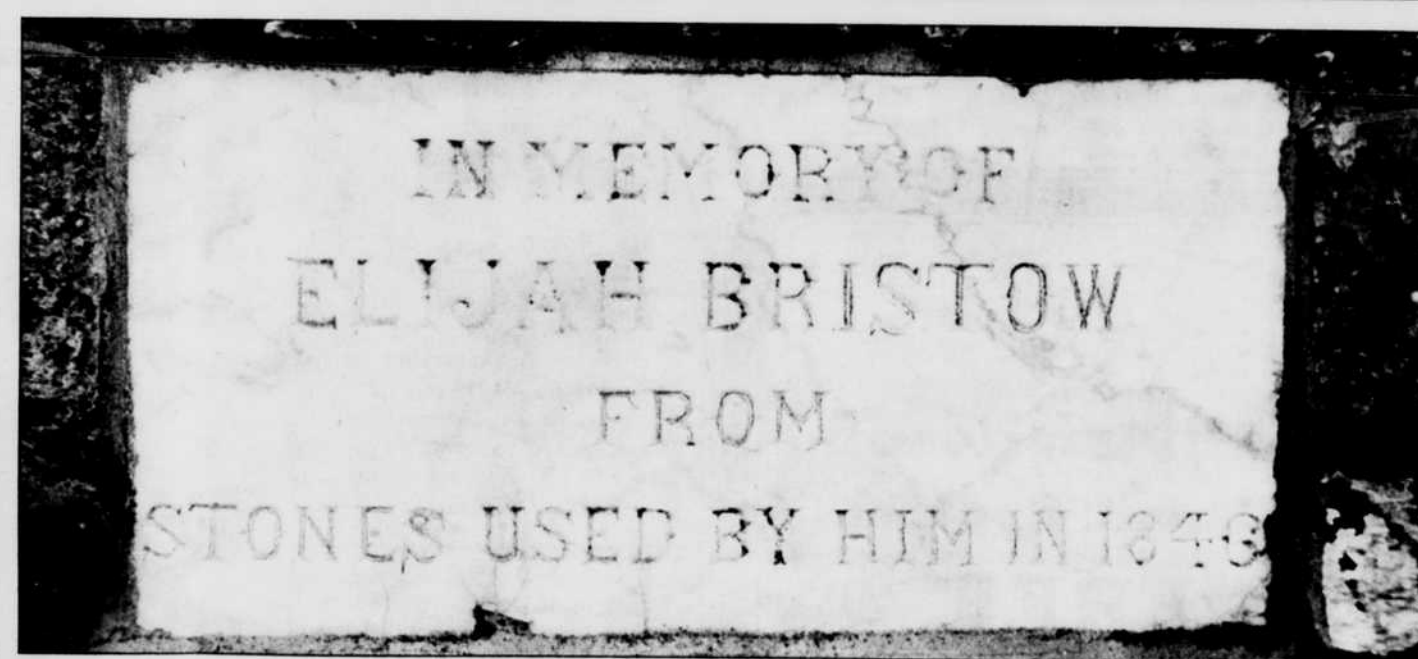
•Fielden McMurry was another Lane County pioneer. An early-day farmer with 640 donation land claim acres to his name, he erected Point of the Hills School in 1854 at what is now 25th Avenue and University Street. A monument at the corner marks the spot of Eugene's first school.

It's no surprise that many of the monuments are in out-of-the-way places. Such is the case when towns grow and the old is replaced with the new. But when one does catch a glimpse of the antiquities, the accompanying gaze lends itself to an eerie feeling of curious nostalgia.

Some things really don't change.

— STEPHEN MAHER

Story by
Stephen Maher
Photos by
John Giustina



(Clockwise from top left) The first news to reach Lane County of Lincoln's assassination came to the old Cartwright House, later known as the Mountain House Hotel, marked by a simple stone and plaque two miles south of Lorane; erected in 1950 near the General Store in Franklin, Ore., the Daniel Smith landmark honors Smith for donating the townsites; in Pleasant Hill, stones from Elijah Bristow's cabin make up a monument that remembers him as one of the county's first settlers; and at 19th Avenue and Olive Street, a section of columnar basalt attests to the existence of Columbia College.

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