

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	2100 Commercial St SE Salem, Marion County	historic name:	Salem Pioneer Cemetery
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery
location descr:	NW Corner Hoyt and Commercial Streets	block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	7S 3W 27
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Site	height (stories):	
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	4
prim constr date:	1854	second date:	1861
		total inelig resources:	4
primary orig use:	Cemetery	NR Status:	Individually Listed
second orig use:		date indiv listed:	09/11/2013
primary style:	Victorian Era: Other	orig use comments:	
secondary style:	Late 19th/20th Period Revivals: Other	prim style comments:	
primary siding:	Stone:Other/Undefined	sec style comments:	
secondary siding:	Metal: Other/Undefined	siding comments:	
plan type:		architect:	Monroe & Staiger Marble Works, Capital Monumental Works
		builder:	AJ Monroe stone cutter, William Staiger
comments/notes:			
<p>formal DOE 1981 - Eligible 12/26/17 Additional documentation approved due to a typographical error on the original nomination. Section 7, page 3, paragraph 3, the text incorrectly states that the expansion of 1861 surrounded the original five-acre plat on three sides. The 1861 expansion actually surrounds the original plan on all four sides, as is shown in Figure 1 under Additional Documentation, page 50. TZ Additional Documentation approved 11-5-18 On page 34, Section 8, under the heading William H. Hillson, change the sentence about Chloe Aurelia Clark Willson to "A notable accompanying interment is that of Chloe Aurelia Clarke Willson (1818-1874), a Connecticut native educated at Wilbraham Academy in Massachusetts and the missionary teacher whom Willson married in 1840." With these changes, the spelling of Chloe's maiden name changed from Clark to Clarke and her birthplace changed from Illinois to Connecticut. Additional Documentation approved 2/20/2025 On page 5, in Section 7 under the heading "Landscape Values," correct the spelling of the flowering cherry cultivar from "Kazan" to "Kanzan."</p>			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Salem Inventory Update RLS 2009	Survey & Inventory Project		2009
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	09/11/2013	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>The cemetery established in the capital city by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows in 1854 is among the very oldest fraternal society burial grounds in Oregon. The initial plat of five acres on the east slope of a gently-ascending ridge one and a half miles south of the town center was enlarged by subsequent acquisitions of 1861 and 1890 that brought the burial ground to its full extent of 17.05 acres. The 560-foot-wide gridiron plat extends upslope from Commercial Street, historic alignment of the territorial road, approximately 1,300 feet toward the crest of the ridge. The grid is bisected by a broad, unpaved central longitudinal carriage drive from which four curving side lanes branch north and south in formal, mirror-image fashion. The plots, or blocks composed of sixteen grave lots, are predominantly grass-covered and typically enclosed by low curbs of concrete or stone. A few plot fences of cast iron or wrought iron remain in place as survivors of war-time scrap metal drives. Some full-size plots are mounded above grade with earth contained by retaining walls. Many of the plots were capped by concrete after the turn of the 20th century in the expectation of eliminating the necessity for annual grave-tending. The array of monuments is extensive enough to include examples of every common grave marker type and most of the grand obelisks and shafts that were available through catalog order by the turn of the 20th century. In the heart of the cemetery are two family mausoleums offset from one another on opposite edges of the central drive. The qualities that identify Salem Pioneer Cemetery as the city's singular example of cemetery development in the Rural Cemetery tradition are its size and its historic separation from the city center by a rural environment that only after a half century was gradually transformed by residential subdivisions and advancing commercial development along the thoroughfare. The picturesque qualities of the site come not from expansive, rolling terrain like that of the models in the eastern United States, where winding lanes were bent to the contours of hills. Instead, the Rural Cemetery ideal was expressed here in the elevated site above the thoroughfare which affords a scenic view to the east over the city and Willamette Valley to the distant backdrop of the Cascade Range and its snow-capped peaks of Mt. Jerrerson and Mt. Hood. With an awareness of high fashion as well as practical requirements, the cemetery's founders relieved the regularity of the narrow, elongated gridiron of burial plots with curvilinear carriage turn-arounds and side lanes with radiused sections that gave access to sections on either side of the central avenue. A scattered tree cover of native oaks, madrones, and conifers and thousands of monuments both stately and humble make up a funerary landscape that is among the best representations of the historic Rural Cemetery movement in Oregon's mid-Willamette Valley.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>Salem Pioneer Cemetery is significant to the City of Salem under Criterion A in the area of community planning and development both as the last resting place of a concentration of founders and developers of the Salem town site from the time of its Methodist Mission beginnings in 1841 and as the larger of the two early community burial grounds established more or less concurrently at opposite ends of the capital city in the 1850s. The cemetery is significant to the State of Oregon in the areas of government and social history as the final resting place of a significant number of founders and officers of Oregon government before and after statehood as well as Oregon Territory's first delegate to the Congress of the United States 1849-1851. The town site that became the seat of county, territorial, and state government was less than ten years old when burials began on the ridge slope a mile and a half south of the town center. Notables and citizens of every kind are represented in the permanent interments, including Chinese and Japanese-Americans, emancipated African-American slaves, churchmen, architects, inventors, industrialists, farmers, merchants and tradesmen; explorers, educators, nurses, woman suffrage leaders, and newspapermen, to name a few. The cemetery also is the resting place of the indigent and virtually anonymous whose burials in county-owned lots in the historic period, though recorded, often went unmarked. Historical patterns such as periods of war, epidemic, economic depression, and prevalence of childbirth mortality, can be discerned from thoughtful study of headstone epitaphs. The cemetery is significant to the City of Salem under Criterion C in the areas of landscape architecture and art as the city's highest expression of a community cemetery intentionally developed in the style of picturesque landscaped cemeteries on elevated view sites in the eastern United States that were the models of the Rural Cemetery movement. The cemetery contains a wide array of funerary objects that includes most of the common grave marker types, from marble tablets, wooden headboards, and cast zinc</p>			

grave markers to lofty shafts on pedestals and family mausoleums. The objects are significant individually and in aggregate as illustrations of high-quality hand craftsmanship and as a demonstration of the transition to more mechanized production and new modes of supply and distribution in the monument industry in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Salem's Founding and Emergence as Territorial Capital Salem, the capital city of Oregon, is situated predominantly on the east bank of the Willamette River in a broad and fertile alluvial plain bounded by the Cascade Range on the east and the Coast Range on the west. Snow-capped peaks of the Cascades are a distant backdrop to timbered areas which, here and there, border Salem at closer range. The outlying countryside is generally level, particularly to the north and east, and is ideal for cultivation and settlement, both of which developed steadily from the time the town was founded by disbanded Methodist missionaries in the 1840s. In the fall of 1834, the small band of Methodist missionaries under the Rev. Jason Lee established on Willamette River bottom land about ten miles north of Salem the first mission to Indians in the Pacific Northwest. From the original central station in the homeland of the Kalapuya, the missionaries established satellite stations around the region: at Nisqually on Puget Sound, on Clatsop Plains at the mouth of the Columbia, at the Falls of the Willamette, and at The Dalles of the Columbia. Since 1818, the Oregon Country had been jointly occupied under treaty between the United States and Great Britain, and the established authority in the Columbia District was the British-backed Hudson's Bay Company.²⁹ The district's chief factor, Dr. John McLoughlin, received newcomers from the United States charitably while at the same time directing the missionaries into the valley south of the Columbia River, one area of which, around Champoege on French Prairie, was already under cultivation by retired fur trappers. There, the beaver had been well trapped out. Jason Lee returned to the United States in 1838-1839 to tour the western border states and the eastern conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church to raise support for the mission and encourage emigration to Oregon. The mission had been attracted to a new purpose due in part to lack of success where smallpox and other diseases introduced in the heyday of the fur trade had drastically reduced the native populations. In addition to Christianizing the native people, the Methodist missionaries sought to prepare the way for serving a thriving Euro-American settler community. The mission was bolstered by two successive reinforcements of funds and personnel and, in the spring of 1841, mission superintendent Lee directed a shift of the mission headquarters to Chemeketa prairie, the future site of Salem, where a stream offered a sufficient fall of water to operate a sawmill and gristmill. Here it was that the mission's first frame buildings were erected, the most imposing of which was the three-story Indian Manual Labor Training School. When dissension over development of the secular program came to a head, the New York-based Board of Managers of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church ordered reorganization of what had become an elaborate enterprise and sent agents to phase out the mission, dispose of assets, and form the Methodist conferences and preaching circuits on the Pacific Coast. In the transition carried out between 1844 and 1849, a number of the missionaries chose to remain at Chemeketa and take up adjoining claims from which portions were held in trust for the benefit of the Oregon Institute, the academic enterprise for settlers' children which the school's trustees moved into the vacant Indian School they acquired in 1844. The Oregon Institute, chartered as Willamette University by the Territorial Legislature in 1853, became the leading cultural institution of the community. The original plat of Salem was laid out in 1846 by William H. Willson, a former lay member of the Methodist mission. The gridiron plat was placed in parallel alignment with the Willamette River. At its center was a five-block corridor known as Willson Avenue which was reserved for public buildings befitting a future capital and seat of county government. At a perpendicular axis to the river, the mall, or open space corridor was so arranged that the capitol building would occupy the slightly higher ground at the head, where it would be opposed by the county courthouse at the foot. The Methodist Church and Willamette University's old Oregon Institute building (succeeded by University Hall) closely bordered Willson Avenue on the south. The core of Willson's town site reflected the fundamental part that the Methodist missionaries played in the founding and development of Salem. The Methodists and supporters of their school were equally important figures in the organization of government in Oregon. A series of gatherings of male members of the Willamette Valley settlements had culminated in a pivotal meeting at Champoege on May 2, 1843, during which the French Canadians and American settlers and missionaries considered whether to organize for the protection of property through the enforcement of law and order. With a narrow majority, about fifty-two of those present voted for civil organization to provide for an orderly transition to the time when the United States would extend its jurisdiction over the Oregon Country. The provisional government of Oregon was organized at Oregon City at the Falls of the Willamette and was managed by executive committee and then by a governor through February 1849, by which time Oregon had been declared a Territory of the United States by act of Congress on August 14, 1848. The territorial government was organized upon the arrival of President Polk's appointed governor, General Joseph Lane, in Oregon City in March 1849. Marion County, before it was renamed by the Territorial Legislature in 1849 and ~~quasi~~ subdivided, had been one of the vast original political districts (Champoege) delineated by the provisional government in 1843. The Territorial Legislature designated Salem the seat of county government. Locating the seat of territorial government, on the other hand, proved controversial. Vying for status with the Methodist town site was Oregon City, which had been the seat of the provisional government. Even after Congress confirmed Salem as capital of the Territory of Oregon in 1852, there had been an attempt to relocate the government to Corvallis. While designation of the capital was disputed by supporters of the contending Willamette Valley settlements, the Territorial Legislature met in Salem, generally, from 1851 onward.³⁰ The Oregon Statesman, one of the early newspapers of the territory which was started in Oregon City in 1851, moved to Salem in 1853. The Territorial Legislature authorized construction of a capitol building on Block 84 at the head of Willson Avenue. The wood frame building stood for barely a year before it was destroyed by fire in 1855. A signal event of transition to statehood was the convention held at Salem in 1857 for the purpose of drafting the constitution, which was a prerequisite for Congress's admitting Oregon to the union of states. Sixty delegates representing each of the territory's county subdivisions participated in the deliberations. For twenty years after the territorial capitol burned, the period which included achievement of statehood by act of Congress on February 14, 1859, the Oregon legislature was convened in rented rooms in commercial buildings near the Salem riverfront. Throughout this time, until the Oregon & California Railroad connected the city to the Columbia River and the developing transcontinental rail network beginning in 1870, Salem's competitive standing in commerce and manufacturing was assured by shipping on the Willamette River. Salem's Early Community Burial Grounds A map of the survey of claims in Township 7S, Range 3W of the Willamette Meridian, Oregon Territory filed with the Surveyor General's Office on February 5, 1852, shows the relationship of land claims surrounding the 65-block Willson plat of Salem. On the south edge of the town site was the claim of the Rev. David Leslie, who had been deputy superintendent of the Methodist mission under Jason Lee, and his wife Adelia.³¹ It was within the southwestern edge of Leslie's claim that the initial five acres would be purchased by Chemeketa Lodge No. 1, Independent Order of Odd Fellows and Salem Freemasons for a community cemetery in 1854. In time, Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery became the final resting place of a significant number of the town founders, shapers of government, and builders of commercial and industrial enterprise. The jurisdiction of Oregon Territory encompassed the present states of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and portions of Montana and Wyoming west of the Rocky Mountains. The United States census for 1850 shows that the population of Oregon Territory was mostly concentrated in the lower Willamette Valley and areas on the north side of the Columbia River. The total enumeration was 12,093 individuals, of whom 11,873 were living in settlements south of the Columbia. Salem in the territorial decade 1849-1859 was a churchly, interdependent community. Not until 1870 did the population of the capital exceed one thousand, and by that time the city of Portland at the mouth of the Willamette River had achieved its supremacy as Oregon's metropolis. In Salem, much of what was accomplished for the public good before organization of state social institutions was the work of churches and the groups described as "secret and benevolent societies." Strongly associated with cemetery development in 19th century America as the nation pushed westward into territories open to new settlement, the Ancient Free and Accepted Masons (Freemasons) and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) were organized in Salem at an early date. It was a charter obligation of such societies to provide for the last needs of their members, and it was often they who established the earliest community burial grounds. They were not exclusive. To finance the acquisition of suitable land and support of a caretaker, lots were sold to any who cared to pay. Odd Fellowship arose in 18th century England and was loosely patterned after medieval guilds which were organized for common support and advancement of their craftsmen. The American branch was founded in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1819 and spread throughout the country. The mother lodge of Odd Fellowship in Oregon was formed at Salem as Chemeketa Lodge No. 1 on December 6, 1852. In accord with its charter obligation to bury the dead, Chemeketa Lodge No. 1 formed a committee to pursue acquisition of land suitable for a burial ground in April 1854, and a five-acre parcel on the west edge of the claim of David and Adelia Leslie was acquired on July 10 in partnership with the Salem Masonic Lodge. The lodges divided equally responsibility for the purchase price of \$125.00 and in the fall commenced clearing the ground for a survey that would be the basis for drawing a plat. When the Masons decided to withdraw from the partnership in May 1855, the Odd Fellows purchased their partners' interest and pressed forward independently. The first burial of a member of the I.O.O.F. was recorded in 1855. Initially, burial lots were reserved for members of the founding societies, but sale of burial lots to the public was opened late in 1859 after formal dedication of Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery had been celebrated on May 5 of that year. The Odd Fellows kept accounts of their plot and individual grave lot transactions, and the deeds were recorded by Marion County. Expansion of the cemetery followed in 1861 with the \$300.00 acquisition from E.M. Barnum of an additional eleven acres surrounding three sides of the original 210 plots and extending upslope to the west. The Lodge cleared oaks, firs, and underbrush to lay out the large new section and began employing a caretaker. The number of plots was now 960. Marion County commenced purchasing burial lots along the north edge of the grounds for infants, indigents, anonymous strangers, and inmates of state and local institutions who died without family to claim remains and arrange for interments. With the introduction of additional carriage lanes having curved sections, the plat was taking on the aspects of a fashionable landscaped cemetery. In the Salem Directory for 1871, the first directory published for the capital city, the compiler J. Henry Brown, a member of Chemeketa Lodge No. 1, described the aspiration of the Odd Fellows to pattern their cemetery after the models of the Rural Cemetery movement in the eastern United States, where the rural cemetery ideal was a park-like setting well apart from the town center, filled with stately monuments and situated to afford pleasing views of surrounding countryside. With the additional acreage on the ridge slope under development, Brown was confident in stating: "The Cemetery is being beautifully improved by the Order who have it in charge. In after times, we hope it will be to Salem as Greenwood Cemetery is to New York; a sweet resting place for her citizens after the toils and cares of life are over." By the 1870s, the early-established societies had several chapters, or lodges, and many men of fraternal orders maintained memberships in more than one society. According to the "Societies" section of the Salem Directory for 1874, for example, there were at that time two bodies of Masons active in Salem, as well as five lodges of the I.O.O.F. including one, the Rebekahs, for women. There were also the Good Templars and men's and women's bodies of Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. In the Odd Fellows cemetery a number of the monuments and substantial granite grave markers of fraternal men erected in the late 19th and early 20th centuries incorporated dual insignias of Masons and Odd Fellows, the common Masonic emblem being the square and compass with an all-seeing eye and the symbol of the I.O.O.F. being composed of three links a chain representing the interlocking ideals of Friendship, Love, and Truth. Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery became the city's first focal point for observances of the national day of remembrance that had been proclaimed by General John A. Logan, commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in 1868 for fallen Union soldiers of the Civil War. In time, Decoration, or Memorial Day, May 30, came to honor all the nation's war dead. The Daily Statesman for Sunday, June 1,

1884, described the procession which formed at the town center before making its way south on Commercial Street. A detailed account was given of the proceedings, including prayers and addresses by Grand Army of the Republic Post officers and chaplain, musical selections from band and chorus, and scattering of flowers upon a symbolic grave. Memorial Day was observed in Salem Friday with the usual parade and splendor. Promptly at the hour of one o'clock, the various societies assembled in their respective halls, and, after due preparation, began to assemble upon the streets. By the hour of two the column was formed on Commercial street, in front of Marion Square, in the following order: Band, Capital Guards, Fire Department, I.O.O.F. Lodges, A.O.U.W. Lodge [Ancient Order of United Workmen], Knights of Pythias, Sedgwick Post No. 10, G.A.R., Thirteen girls in Liberty car, Ladies Relief Corps in carriages, State, County and City officers, Citizens in carriages. The procession then moved promptly up Commercial street to the I.O.O.F. Cemetery, where the exercises were held. Ten years later, by which time the Capital City street car line on Commercial Street provided public transportation to the cemetery, it was noted by the Weekly Oregon Statesman that on Memorial Day "each urn upon the post of the iron fence bordering the front of Rural cemetery contained a bouquet." In 1890, Chemeketa Lodge No. 1, I.O.O.F. purchased a 0.38-acre strip of land along Hoyt Street from M.S. and Frances Matthews for \$138.00. The acquisition added sixty-four half-size plots described as the First Addition to the 16-acre plat of 1914 and brought the cemetery's total area to 17.05 acres. A plat of the First Addition was not filed until 1927. In May of 1893, E.G. Cross, W.H. Holmes, and J.P. Frizzell, incorporators of City View Cemetery, purchased land adjoining the west boundary of Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery to lay out a neighboring burial ground which in its earliest-developed section continued the style of the older grounds but developed as a perpetual-care lawn cemetery in the 20th century. City View Cemetery claimed a generous acreage at the top of the ridge, which afforded views both east over the city and west over the Willamette River and foothills of the Coast Range beyond. A prominent feature of the new cemetery was the Grand Army of the Republic Circle laid out in three concentric circular "rows" for the burial of Civil War veterans of the Union Army. Patterned after the archetype at Gettysburg, the circle was placed on axis with the Rural Cemetery's central avenue. By the end of the decade, Memorial Day processions were making their way from Commercial Street up the central avenue of the older cemetery toward the ridge top to observances at the new focal point. By c. 1904, the G.A.R. circle was provided with its centerpiece, a cast-zinc statue of a Union soldier standing sentry on a high pedestal embellished with badges of the G.A.R. and its auxiliary, the Woman's Relief Corps. Burial records show that several Union veterans interred in a plot in the Rural Cemetery purchased by Sedgwick Post No. 10 of the G.A.R. were re-interred after the commemorative circle was opened for use in City View Cemetery. Two other cemeteries were established in Salem in the 19th century. The first of these had origins contemporaneous with the founding of Odd Fellows Rural Cemetery but was not formally organized until fifteen years after the fraternal lodges started their enterprise on the southern outskirts of town. Meeting criteria considerations as the final resting place of a sizable concentration of missionaries, clergymen, educators, and lay leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the West Coast, Lee Mission Cemetery at 2104 D Street NE in north Salem was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The Reverend Josiah Parrish and his wife, Elizabeth Winn Parrish, acquired the easterly half of one of the Methodist missionaries' trust claims from which a parcel of 4.77 acres was deeded for a cemetery. The parcel is thought to have been in use informally as a burial ground as early as 1852 or 1853, but it was not constituted as a community cemetery before the Parrishes' donation and incorporation by a board of trustees acting under authority of the local conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in January 1869. Lee Mission Cemetery was enlarged by addition of deeded and donated parcels until the cemetery reached its full extent of 15.67 acres in 1890. It occupies partially open, mostly level ground on which the oldest section is shaded by stately conifers and deciduous trees. The number of burials in the still-active cemetery is estimated to be 3,200. The distinctive feature of the otherwise conventional gridiron plat is the "Diamond Square," a square precinct turned on point, enclosed by a cast-iron railing and containing the graves of key members of the Methodist mission family, including founding mission superintendent Jason Lee, his first and second wives and his daughter, the first mission school teacher, Cyrus Shepard, and Gustavus Hines, preacher in charge of the mission's Willamette station at Chemeketa and director of the Indian Manual Labor Training School, as well as the initial cemetery donors Josiah and Elizabeth Parrish. Notable among the many Methodist pioneer figures interred elsewhere on the grounds are William Roberts, the last mission superintendent and organizer of the Oregon and California Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and James H. Wilbur, organizer of Methodist churches and academies in Oregon City, Portland, and the Umpqua region. St. Barbara's Cemetery at the junction of Liberty Road SE and Missouri Street in south Salem, maintained by the Roman Catholic Parish of St. Joseph, was established between 1863 and 1867. It occupies a mostly open parcel of 3.34 acres bounded on its street fronts by a low brick wall that is augmented by boxwood hedges. The compact grounds, now filled to capacity, are covered with the varied grave markers of perhaps as many as 2,000 interments. By the turn of the 20th century, I.O.O.F. lodges had established one or more cemeteries in thirty-three of the state's thirty-six counties. An informal tally of I.O.O.F. cemeteries statewide shows that the I.O.O.F. was associated with some stage of development of as many as ninety-seven community burial grounds. Making allowances for those cemeteries for which the date of first burial is offered when the date of formal organization is unknown, it is plausible that where settlements had been established in the Willamette Valley and in southern Oregon at an early date, the Odd Fellows were the sponsors or co-sponsors of a number, perhaps as many as eight or ten community burial grounds opened for use in the 1850s. What the state's burial guides show without a doubt is that the I.O.O.F. "established more cemeteries in Oregon than any other fraternal society" and that the Masonic Order, of which the I.O.O.F. was an offshoot, was the next most industrious in that sphere. Salem's Odd Fellows, having organized the region's mother lodge of Odd Fellowship as early as 1852 and having launched their public enterprise in cooperation with the Masons in 1854, unquestionably were in the vanguard of community cemetery founders in Oregon. The Movement for Public Oversight of Salem Pioneer Cemetery Chemeketa Lodge No. 1, Independent Order of Odd Fellows engaged a caretaker for the Rural Cemetery as early as 1868, but the longest-serving steward was James Plant, cemetery sexton for thirty-five years, from about 1909 to the time of his death and burial in the cemetery in 1944. Although rare ~~historians~~ views of the cemetery show that there were caretaker's maintenance sheds on the grounds north of the central carriage drive, the sextons are believed to have lived off premises "nearby." Polk's Salem City and Marion County Directory, for example, listed James Plant and his wife Mary Ann as residents of 1548 Saginaw Street in 1924. During the Second World War, the Odd Fellows found themselves strained in their cemetery care-taking efforts, particularly after the loss of their long-time sexton. The grounds slipped into a disordered state. Since 1900, the Salem Odd Fellows had occupied rooms in the Richardsonian Romanesque-style multi-use building erected by the mother lodge in the heyday of fraternal societies at High and Court streets across from the Marion County Courthouse. By 1946, in the same year the Rural Cemetery came into the city limits of Salem by annexation, Chemeketa Lodge No. 1 was compelled to explain its withdrawal from active part in keeping up the cemetery. In an open letter to the public published in the Oregon Statesman, the lodge pointed out that the cemetery was no longer a rural one, but now within the city limits and that the modern concept of perpetual care was never envisioned by the founders who had simply wished to respond to the settlers' urgent need for a dedicated place of burial. "...In those days the cemetery maintenance was simple; they set aside one day each year and the entire community with horses, wagons, picnic lunches and the children would go to the cemetery and spend the day in cleaning and beautifying the graves of relatives and friends and the cemetery in general... The actual cost in those days was nothing as they did the work themselves... At the beginning all roadways and alleys... were immediately dedicated to the public. All through the past ninety years the Odd Fellows Lodge of Salem, without assistance from any other source, has endeavored to maintain these many miles of roadways and alleys. But nature's constant growth together with the accumulations caused by visitors create an increasing and never ending problem... Records show that all lots in the Odd Fellows Cemetery, comprising sixteen grave spaces, were sold by the Lodge at an average price of \$20.00 per lot, or \$1.25 per grave. This project had been developed as a public spirited one with no thought of profit or remuneration for services rendered for anyone and the selling price of the property was determined to cover actual costs of that time. The records further show that by the year 1900 the Lodge had very little of its own property left for sale... For a good many years the Odd Fellows Lodge of Salem has returned back to the Cemetery all funds received from it and in addition have made many appropriations from their own funds for cemetery use. It is very disheartening, to say the least, to our organization which has fostered the cemetery for the public welfare for nearly a century, at no additional cost to the property owners and no contributions from any other source, to receive only condemnation and criticism... Is there any other organization which has done as much for the Salem community and received so little credit? We want it distinctly understood that there is no unfilled obligation on the part of the Odd Fellows Lodge to the community of Salem to continue to assume the maintaining of that rural cemetery originated ninety years ago by the public spirited men who started it and which was quite adequate to meet the needs of their time... The Lodge members' eloquent defense bordering on rebuke for ingratitude concerning the public spirit of their founding brethren did not satisfy the public's expectations for long, but it did make the point that descendants of the pioneers and the community at large had "a distinct obligation" to shoulder some responsibility. The Odd Fellows' open letter may have been a spur to formation of the Salem Pioneer Cemetery Association in December 1949. Among remedies advocated by the association was public ownership of the cemetery. The first step toward assignment of responsibility to local government was taken when a bill authorizing Marion County to take over the stewardship role was passed by the Oregon State Legislature. Senator Fred Lamport of Salem, representing District 1, Marion County, introduced S.B. 225 to the Forty-sixth Legislative Assembly in February during the 1951 regular session. The bill's purpose was to authorize Marion County "to acquire ownership and control of the Odd Fellows Cemetery" and to provide "for the care and preservation of said cemetery and the graves therein." The bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government and was reported back with a recommendation that it do pass. S.B. 225 was read for the first time in the House of Representatives in March and referred to the House Committee on Local Government, where it was explained by Representative Roy L. Houck of Salem. The bill was reported back to the full body with a "do pass" recommendation which was adopted. The bill was signed into law by Governor Douglas McKay on March 17, 1951. The county's response to the authority bestowed by the state legislature was largely ineffective for lack of funds. New legislation, S.B. 148, was introduced in 1953 to authorize the City of Salem to share in the responsibility. When the Legislative Assembly was convened in regular session in 1953, Senator Lamport was joined in sponsorship of the new bill by his Senate colleague from District 1, Marion County, Douglas Yeater; and by Representatives W.W. Chadwick, Robert L. Elfstrom, Mark O. Hatfield, and Lee V. Ohmart, who constituted the entire group of representatives of House District 12, all Salem men. This bill authorized Marion County and the City of Salem to jointly "acquire, own, control, operate, and maintain the Odd Fellows' Cemetery." Upon the bill's being referred to the Senate Committee on Local Government, Senator Lamport, according to minutes of the meeting on February 9, explained: "Many outstanding pioneers of Oregon are buried in this cemetery which has become a neglected and unsightly property within the city." S.B. 148 was reported out with a "do pass" recommendation. Representative W.W. Chadwick, chairman of the House Committee on Local Government, explained the background of S.B. 148 to his committee during a meeting on February 17. "...in 1951 Marion County was given authority to acquire the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Salem and to operate and maintain it. Since then the city and county want to go together on the project and in order to do this it is necessary to repeal the 1951 section and substitute the section contained in this bill. The committee was made aware of the fact that in 1951 an enabling act allowing cities to control and operate cemeteries had been passed. It was decided to ask the Salem city attorney to appear at the next meeting. When the House Committee on Local Government was reconvened on February 19, Salem

City Attorney Chris J. Kowitz explained that, although there was enabling legislation allowing cities to operate cemeteries, t

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title Records	Census Records	Property Tax Records	Local Histories
Sanborn Maps	Biographical Sources	SHPO Files	Interviews
Obituaries	Newspapers	State Archives	Historic Photographs
City Directories	Building Permits	State Library	

Local Library:

University Library:

Historical Society:

Other Respository:

Bibliography:

Interview with Virginia Felton, Friends of Pioneer Cemetery organizer, 4/21/94; Friends of Pioneer Cemetery brochure