

Trees of Particular Interest

Many of the cemetery's Douglas-firs have a curious bulge part way up their trunks. These bulges developed after the trees had their tops cut off more than 60 years ago. Over time, each tree developed a new top from a lateral branch, just below the cut. In the early years, the trees had a very noticeable crook at



Trees heal by growing new wood over their injury.

that point. Over time the crook has been covered by the growing trunk, so all we see now is a bulge.

One Douglas-fir east of the Public Square has a long scar that spirals down its trunk from high in the canopy. This tree was struck by lightning in September of 2001. The lightning coursed down the outside of the tree, stripping bark and casting it in all directions, some as far as 60 feet from the base of the tree. The next morning a woodpecker and an owl were found dead, directly below where they had been roosting when the lightning struck the tree. For months, visitors came from both near and far to pay their respects.

During February of 2002, two firs lost their tops during a severe windstorm. One tree was home to a wild honey bee colony which lived in a cavi-

ty nearly 25 feet from the ground. When the tree snapped, the honey comb scattered. The sweet bounty was retrieved and enjoyed by neighbors. Both of these "snags" have been retained to provide cavity habitat for birds, insects, and other creatures that rely on the dead trees for feeding, roosting, or nesting.



One of three snags providing habitat.

Special thanks to the Masonic Cemetery Landscape Advisory Committee and Whitey Lueck. Brochure by Beneda Design.

Tree Trivia and Fun Facts

1. Recently, small black identification tags have been affixed to some trees to help visitors identify the different species and appreciate the wonderful trees that make the cemetery such an inviting place. Can you locate the 30 trees that are tagged?
2. During the spring of 1997 third grade students from nearby Edison Elementary School participated in planting 100 dogwood trees. The trees were small and planted densely, with the hope that a quarter or more would survive. We estimate close to thirty remain, with the majority of these having grown to a height of at least five feet. It takes approximately ten years for a dogwood to bloom, so we shouldn't have to wait much longer!
3. The cemetery's one artificial stump is located on the northwest slope of the cemetery. This is

a six foot tall Woodmen of the World (WOW) monument, carved from sandstone and erected in 1909 to commemorate the life of WOW member Robert Kirkpatrick. The tree stump with broken limbs represents a life cut short.



4. Does lichen hurt its host tree? No, a lichen is composed of an alga and a fungus, and it uses tree branches for support. When lichens fall

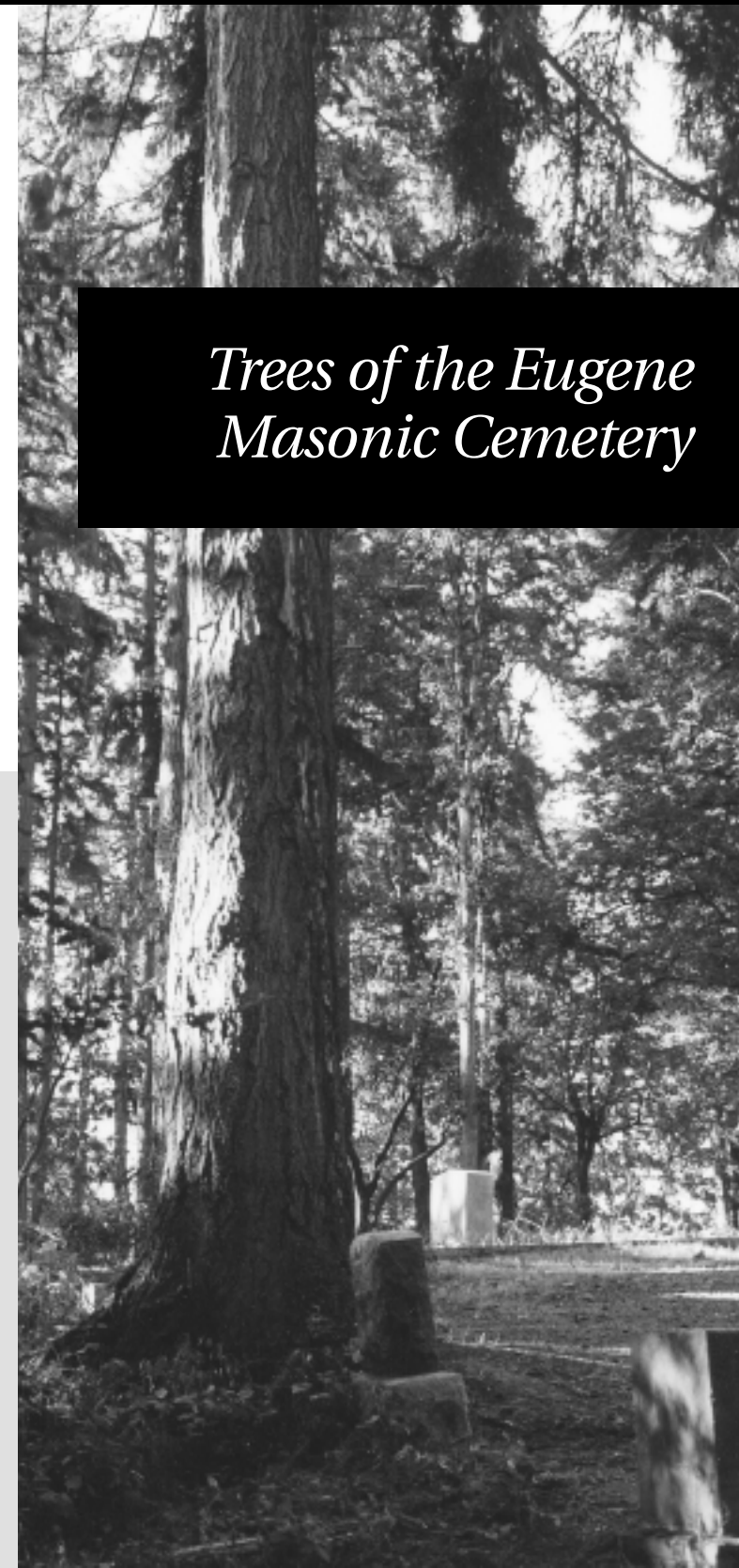
to the ground they decompose and provide nutrients for the tree.

5. The quinine conk on the cabled snag is the spore-producing body of *Fomitopsis officinalis*, a tree pathogen which is commonly known as brown trunk rot or felted heart rot. The conk tastes bitter like quinine which is why some believe that it has anti-malarial properties. This is no longer considered true, though at present the quinine conk is classified as a laxative.



The quinine conk adds a new spore producing layer every year.

Trees of the Eugene Masonic Cemetery



The Past Landscape

What did the cemetery originally look like?

When visiting the Masonic Cemetery and wandering along woodland paths, it is difficult to imagine that only 150 years ago this promontory of Eugene's east hills was covered with a prairie of grasses and wildflowers. Indeed, it is likely that the site was virtually treeless for many centuries before the arrival of Euro-American settlers. This was due to frequent fires set by the native peoples of our region. The fires, which facilitated hunting and gathering, burned across the valley floor and into surrounding hills preventing the growth of trees.

By the mid-nineteenth century, with the cessation of burning, seeds from scattered trees grew in the nearby hills and the indigenous trees naturally took hold. Early photographs of Eugene illustrate a grove of young conifers at the Masonic Cemetery with some scrubby oaks along the west and south edges.

Following the cessation of burning scattered trees grew in the nearby hills and the indigenous trees naturally seeded and took hold. Early pho-



Two miles of trails course through the cemetery's mature dry fir forest.

tographs of Eugene illustrate a grove of young conifers at the Masonic Cemetery with some scrubby oaks along the west and south edges.

The Present Landscape

What might a visitor see today?

The cemetery is now dominated by a stand of mature Douglas-fir trees with a middle canopy of bigleaf maple and madrone. The west and south edges have developed into a mixture of oak woodland, where tree canopies touch each other, and oak savanna, where trees are more widely spaced.

Most trees in the cemetery are native to the upper Willamette Valley. Native conifers include Douglas-firs, valley ponderosa pine, Port Orford cedar, and a recently planted incense cedar. Western hemlock, western red cedar, and Pacific yew, planted on the moist slope of the cemetery's northeast corner, are also recent introductions.

The cemetery has two non-native conifers. One is a juniper. The other is an Irish yew planted by descendants to ornament the Thomas Condon burial plot.

Native deciduous broadleaf trees include bigleaf maple, Oregon ash, Oregon white oak, and a single California black oak on the east side of the Public Square. Pacific dogwood and cascara

have recently been planted in the stand of firs along the cemetery's north ridge.

The cemetery has one native broadleaf evergreen, the madrone. The cemetery's other broadleaf evergreen species, the laurel and the holly, like the yew, were deliberately planted in the cemetery for memorial purposes. Since the



Several acres of oak woodland and savanna lie east of the mausoleum.

holly was first introduced, birds have been dining on its striking red berries and spreading it in the same manner as the cemetery's deciduous non-native broadleaf trees: the cherry, the plum, and the apple.

The Future Landscape

What do we want the cemetery to look like fifty or a hundred years from now?

The cemetery is a diverse landscape and it will continue to change and evolve into the future. Trees age and die, or are damaged by disease, insects, lightning and wind. New trees arrive by seed or are intentionally planted to ensure that the cemetery will always have a tree canopy. The site managers are committed to making man-

agement decisions which will maintain this island of native woodland.

With an eye toward the future every effort is made to maintain the existing variety of habitats rather than let the cemetery become all woodland or dominated by non-native trees that might colonize the site naturally. For example, in the sunny southwest corner of the cemetery is one of south Eugene's best examples of an oak savanna. With this in mind, the cemetery's landscape management plan stipulates that the grassland and savanna habitat be mowed annually to prevent the establishment of new trees which, if left to grow, would shade out established wildflowers.

Volunteers Erik and Ann Muller help plant the cemetery's ponderosa pine tree grove in 2003.



Our trees are an important part of the Masonic Cemetery's legacy to future generations. Please help us with your donations of time or money to help us maintain our pioneer forest.

Contact Information:
The Eugene Masonic Cemetery Association,
P.O. Box 5934,
Eugene, Oregon 97405

Phone Number:
541-684-0949



Above: The Masonic Cemetery and Hope Abbey viewed from the College Hill Reservoir in 1938.

Left: The big leaf maple produces fragrant male and female flowers on the same graceful stem.

