

# Evergreen is Living Again

There were paths with names like Elk, Hawthorne, Deer and Myrtle, long ago...

They are hidden under dirt, bushes and vines today.

There are mysteries. For example, the original deed creating Evergreen Cemetery is dated June 7, 1858, but people were buried there long before that date. Some in 1850.

Some burials are not in the records. Records are not complete.

One whole section, the Chinese burial part, has been hidden under tons of vines and over-growth for years. Recent clearing work by Cabrillo College students revealed several old wood head markers, a brick used as a headstone, a concrete marker, the remains of a meditation bench and — surprise! a large brick oven where the clothing of the deceased was burned during ceremonies.

Work on an old burying ground can reveal interesting things. For example, a diphtheria epidemic struck Santa Cruz in the winter of 1869-70.

Evergreen, one of the first Protestant grave sites in California, was founded formally by Samuel A. Bartlett, R.C. Kirby, F.M. Kittredge and William F. Cooper.

Bartlett was a preacher, Kirby was a prosperous tannery operator, Kittredge was a highly esteemed physician and Cooper was a merchant who is down in annals as befriending the last of the Mission Indians.

Originally there were 241 lots laid out on the cemetery property, according to the records that are now available. In 1922 owners of the deeds to those sites formed the Evergreen Cemetery Association, a non-profit organization of plot owners.

Present secretary-treasurer of the association is La Salle Bachelder whose husband, Charles, and daughter, Celeste, are buried at Evergreen.

The cemetery association purchased additional property in the 1920s and the cemetery now comprises about eight acres, on Evergreen Street in the vicinity of Harvey West Park and Wagner's Grove.

The cemetery is divided into five main sections: the old section, Freemasons, Grand Army of the Republic, Chinese and the newer acquisition which is called Evergreen Extension.

In 1968 Evergreen was designated a Point of Historical Interest by the State of California.

Believed to be the first person buried at Evergreen is Julia Arcan who died in infancy. Among the other colorful characters lying at rest there, are Isaac Graham, who had a quick trigger finger and an equally quick eye

for a pretty girl, and A.A. Taylor, the five-foot tall but lion-like editor of the Santa Cruz Evening Surf.

For years the cemetery has been neglected as to paths, weeds and toppled headstones. Many of the old families no longer have anyone in Santa Cruz to look out for the family plots. Mrs. Bachelder and her husband held on in spite of age and failing health, but there is just so much a person can do. It takes many more than one or two — and long hours of work as well as money and materials.

On February 6, 1974, a group of citizens was called together by a concerned woman — Renie Leaman. Mrs. Leaman has no family buried at Evergreen, but she felt deeply and sincerely that something must be done or Evergreen would go down the drain. She organized HELP (Help Evergreen Live Permanently.)

Mrs. Leaman, on investigation, found that the plots, each 20 by 20 feet (accommodating 12 grave sites), had been sold for prices ranging from \$8 to \$20, leaving little or nothing to help fund a perpetual care treasury. She also found that the cemetery association has a small endowment, but by law the principal must remain intact. The interest is enough only to pay annually for the services of one caretaker for the Memorial Day clean-up.

HELP organized committees and affiliated with the Santa Cruz Historical Society as a non-profit organization.

Officers are: Mrs. Leaman, chairman; Andrew V. Crain, treasurer; Stella M. Bartle, director; William Rees, John Bilodeau and Elmer Geyer, directors.

Donating time and elbow grease in recent weeks have been Cabrillo College History and Anthropology classes, Surf City Kiwanis Club members, National Guard, Army Reserve and UCSC.

Material donations have come in from: Big Creek Lumber Company, Santa Cruz Lumber Company, Scarborough Lumber Company, Granite Rock, Mission Printers, Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation, soft drinks from Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola and Graham Hill Liquors, and help with the brochure on Evergreen has come from Joan Ward and Kathy Wells of University of California at Santa Cruz staff.

Past donations of money have come in from several individuals who wish to remain anonymous, from Santa Cruz Business and Professional Woman's Club, Santa Cruz Historical Society and from County Bank. The Bank has handled finances for the cemetery for years, as a public service. Santa Cruz Land Title Company likewise has handled transactions as a public service.



Donations of everything — including money — are still needed, however, and everyone is invited to join HELP.

One last item that has not yet been taken care of: the black man who gave his entire fortune to Santa Cruz Public Schools District 1 is buried at Evergreen. Loudon Nelson or London Nelson — the name is in question. He was an ex-slave, a shoe cobbler who had a cabin on Water Street. He could neither read or write, but he made a will and placed his mark on it — to leave his estate to the school which at that time was in desperate financial straits.

Two years ago, vandals went into the cemetery and broke Loudon Nelson's marble headstone. The pieces were picked up and stored for safekeeping by La Salle Bachelder.

The old headstone should be put back, in a way in which vandals could not break it or steal it. And there should be a ceremony during which public school children place flowers on Loudon's grave. For years there was such a ceremony, conducted by Mission Hill children. But in recent years, the custom has died out.

Loudon's "fortune," by the way, was about \$300. It was all he had in the world, including a crop of onions he was raising.

The stories about Evergreen and who is resting there under the ivy and myrtle could go on and on and on...

Fascinating stories. Important stories. Vital stories and sad stories. All a piece of what made Santa Cruz into a town.

People are what molded the town and gave to it their talents, their hopes, their fears and their toil.

Evergreen is their resting place. MARGARET KOCH



Santa Cruz Business and Professional Women's Club is one of the first organizations to raise funds to help restore the historic Evergreen Cemetery. Looking at one of the early headstones are BPW President Beryl Zottola and a past president, Amey Weiser.

## Exhibit At UCSC

Now on display at Eloise Pickard Smith Gallery at Cowell College, UCSC, are representative selections from the Morris and Company Archives, from the private collection of Mr. and

Oxford, Morris was a 19th century craftsman, poet, designer and theorist who revolutionized the field of decorative art.

Included in the Cowell College exhibit are samples



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