HISTORY OF LINKVILLE CEMETERY

Mrs. Beverly Aper, teacher and Genealogist, was the guest speaker at the January 26th meeting of the Historical Society. While visiting her son and family near Chicago, Illinois she chanced to notice in the Chicago Tribune a full page spread on a Cemetery Association of 1,000 members in the United States, who study the signs and symbols and the different things on headstones. This Association also had learned the professional way to clean headstones and how to rub them for an impression so as not to harm them. The eastern states have many interesting old colonial ones. Some of the writings on the stones include whether or not that person was nice, nasty or mean. The headstones in the cemeteries at Fort Beauford and Fort Union told whether the person had been assassinated or killed by Indians, whether they were drunk and other things.

Always looking for program ideas, Mrs. Aper thought the history of Linkville Cemetery would make an interesting one. First she started at the Museum where a little information was found and in one of the Klamath Echoes. Gene Webb, Caretaker for the City Cemeteries, had taken some information from old newspapers. All in all there wasn't much information but this is what she found.

"We cannot definitely say where the first burial ground for the settlers of Linkville was located. In the dedication of the townsite of Linkville made by George Nurse on February 26, 1879 (Vol. 1, Record of Plats, page 3) there is no mention of a plot set aside for a cemetery."
It has long been claimed that George Nurse gave the site for the cemetery. The History of Klamath County, page 61 makes a brief mention of this original cemetery. According to George's sister-in-law, Frances Boyd, his public services include..."the setting apart of the present cemetery and moving of remains from the first burying ground, where the Elks Temple now stands". The consensus of opinion places the old cemetery at the northwest corner or 3rd and Pine by the "old" Presbyterian Church. It appears that he may have donated land for the original cemetery.

By 1885, the citizens of Linkville needed to find a new location for the cemetery we find at 3rd and Pine, as the digging of William Steele's ditch, later called the Ankeny Canal, would cut through the cemetery.

So on January 19, 1885, twelve local citizens of the town of Linkville met for the purpose of forming a cemetery association. They organized and adjourned. A week later they met again and adopted the name 'Linkville Cemetery Association.' Those who signed the paper were:

W.C. Hale       R.E. Davis       Paul Breitenstein
J.R. McClellen   E.M. Devoe      G.W. Smith
George T. Baldwin E.R. Reames    J.A. Bowdoin
Charles S. Moore  J.P. Roberts   J.W. Hamaker

The by-laws provided that any citizen of the county who purchased a burial lot for $5.00 was entitled to membership.

They chose a parcel of land for the new cemetery "way out in the county," on a hill for good drainage. They purchased 20 acres from the B.F. Crouch ranch. It was purchased by George Baldwin and E.R. Reames in August of 1885. Records state it was then purchased by Mr. Breitenstein. (haven't found the reason)

The land became known as "Linkville Cemetery" and is in that same location today. The City has built around the cemetery and it is now near the center of town again, not "way out in the county."

Adjacent to this acreage was a parcel of land that may have been filed as early as 1880, as the IOOF Cemetery, International Order of Oddfellows.

In 1923, the last survivors of the Linkville Cemetery Association deeded the property over to the City. In the early
1950's, the IOOF Cemetery was deeded to the City.

**LINKVILLE CEMETERY: 46 years later.**

**THE EVENING HERALD........March 4, 1931**

"To those who remember the Linkville Cemetery as an eyesore; sage-covered, rock and refuse-strewn, an unkept hill, it will be, henceforth, a pleasure to drive through the cemetery and observe the great amount of improvements which are being done.

The improvements are being planned and carried out under the supervision of J.E. Van Camp, chairman of the cemetery committee and city councilman, with money allocated by the city council.

Within a few weeks, motorists driving into the cemetery to attend funerals, or to care for their plots, will enter stately portals at both main entrances. The stone gates will be built of colored rock and will offer a pleasing, motley effect; attractive as well as sturdy. It is the present plan to collect rock from Glass Mountain, red rock from Geary's Ranch, and other rock, to form the posts for a gateway. The stone piers will taper from three feet at the base to two feet at the top. At some time they may be topped by electric lights.

The large gates will probably be closed at 8 o'clock each evening, and open early in the morning. During the hours the gates are closed, pedestrians may gain admittance into the burial grounds by using small gates that will be placed at other entrances.

The old wooden fence will be torn down and an attractive wire fence will completely surround the cemetery. The fence will be five feet high with iron posts placed 10 feet apart. The fence will also embrace the Odd Fellows Cemetery which adjoins the Linkville Cemetery.

Streets are being covered with fine, crushed rock. One-hundred trees will be planted as soon as they arrive. Along one street will be planted Elm trees lining both sides of the road. Another street will be lined on both sides by Maples. On the lower streets, those that are narrow, lilac bushes and smaller shrubs will be planted. It is also the present plan to plant a double row of weeping willows running east and west through the
entire cemetery. It is also possible that the streets will be named after the trees.

An attractive service building containing men and ladies rest rooms, a 10 by 12 tool house, and an office will be erected.

A map of all the plots in the cemetery will be placed in each one of the offices. The maps will correspond to those kept on file at city hall. This is being done in order that those inquiring for graves will have no difficulty in locating the one they desire to visit.

Another commendable improvement which is being planned is a park that is being planted in the center of the cemetery. It will be 200 by 30 feet, where the unknown bodies from the old cemetery are buried. This plot will be planted as lawn. Cedar boxes will form a hedge around the small park, and pansy beds will decorate each end.

Previously, there was a question about what to do with the 300 graves that occupy a part of Lexington Street. The graves were dug right in the center of the street and several property owners raised objections. That part of Lexington Street will be closed, and the graves will not have to be moved.

It will be the best thing for Klamath Falls residents to forget the unsightly condition of the "old Linkville Cemetery"; to forget the old tin cans, sticks and boulders that were formerly strewn among the graves. Suffice to say that ten truckloads of such rubbish have been hauled away and burned. This work is still continuing and it will be several days before the entire cemetery is cleared off. Sagebrush has been grubbed from the entire cemetery. Soon the entire area will be carefully raked.

Boulders have been dug up and those of corresponding size have been arranged into neat borders along the main roads.

By Decoration Day, May 30th, the cemetery will be in fine condition according to Mr. Van Camp. Plots will be put in order and the stones along the driveway will be whitewashed."
THE EVENING HERALD.........January 10, 1935.

"In December of 1934 there was some confusion as to whether the City of Klamath Falls could accept a $1,000 bequest from the estate of Rufus B. Moore, designated for the Linkville Cemetery Association.

City Attorney A.L. Leavitt believed the city could receive the money direct, but D.V. Kuykendall, attorney for the Moore estate, held that the money could not be turned over to the city, after he delved into the history of Linkville Cemetery. He maintained that since the Linkville Cemetery Association of 1923 had disbanded and the cemetery had been deeded to the city, there was no association to receive it. He thought the best procedure would be to reorganize.

So on December 17, 1934, a group of citizens, some members of the old Association, met and conducted an election in order to qualify for receiving the bequest:

Charles I. Roberts, son of one of the charter members along with Mrs. Hazel Van Riper and Ray Telford, were elected trustees. E.W. Vannice was named clerk. These officers signed a receipt and were given the $1,000 for the cemetery, from the will of Rufus B. Moore.

The Association hopes to get SERA labor and will use the money for improvements to the cemetery."

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"On a warm summery day, take a leisurely walk through Linkville Cemetery, as I did last summer. The roads are now paved. The Elm and Maple trees have grown tall and dominate the landscape. Birds sing in their branches. The lilac bushes add to the scenery. You have a feeling of calm and tranquility.

The inscriptions on the headstones in the old section of the cemetery reveal a history of a community called Linkville, and a Klamath Basin (then called Lake County) that were not so peaceful during their early days of settlement. Cattle rustling was common and gun-toting vigilante groups took their revenge.

Consider old man Laws, for instance. Rumor has it that there was a cattle feud among the early pioneers of the Bonanza, Langell Valley District where the Laws' Family lived. Mr. Laws
was a suspected cattle rustler. One day the sheriff placed him under arrest and took him into Linkville. Meanwhile, a masked vigilante group surrounded the Laws' cabin and shot into it. His sons, who were 15 and 19, were killed. Another article says they were shot and killed while standing on their porch cutting meat from a shank of beef hung to cure. Some say it was a feud between two families who had been feuding for years, and a member of the other family had been shot in the back while riding horseback. Later Mr. Laws escaped. The band of assassins then rode into Linkville and "shot up the hotel," killing a deputy and several others.

As you come into Linkville Cemetery through the old rock gate in the southeast corner, on Upham and East Streets, the small park set aside in the 1931 improvements is directly ahead. The road divides to the right and left around it.

In the center of the park is a flagpole, a monument to the unknown whose remains were moved here from the early Pine and Third Street cemetery; and a headstone that bears the name:

Albert Handy....died September 24, 1881 at 62 years.

Some say the stone was brought here from Yreka by horseback. Others say he was in partnership with J.P. Roberts in a hardware store at Merganser, a community in the vicinity of what is now Reames Country Club. Most newspaper articles list him as the first burial in Linkville Cemetery. It could be that his grave was already on this plot of land when the cemetery was begun in 1885.

The Laws' Family headstone is to the right of the park. And close by are two headstones for infants, children of George Smith. Their dates of death are 1869 and 1872, so were the stones moved to this location?

We also have one headstone that reads:

Mary A. Wilcox assassinated Feb. 8, 1916 at age 64 and Maggie E. Jones assassinated on the same date, who was 46 years. (no reason given)

1. One headstone reads: "Killed by Modoc Indians October 29, 1872.
2. Here is an interesting stone:
   Emaline F. O'Brian 1859-1931
   "She nursed Mark Twain's first child"

3. Here's another:
   Catherine Spencer 1840 - 1920
   "She saved the American flag from desecration at Harper's Ferry, 1863" Plaque placed by the Grand Army of the Republic (by hiding the flag under her petticoat in order to save it.)
   She was married to William E. Moore

4. The inscription on the headstone for Joseph Conger, who died in 1908, reads:
   "To the public schools, this man gave his fortune, that the youth of his country, might benefit therefrom." (Conger School)

5. There are many headstones with names familiar to us because streets and county roads are named after them, or their descendants are still living in this community:
   Breitenstein          Summers
   Baldwin               Baldwin
   Applegate             Lucas
   Moore                  and others

6. There are people buried in the cemetery who served in the Spanish American War, and World War I. But there are two large plots that are sad reminders of World War II; persons who never served in the military during World War II, but were tragically affected by it;
   One plaque reads: "In memory of deceased internees of Tulelake Relocation Center; Flowers Faded in the Wind" Dedicated by the Japanese-American Citizens League on September 10, 1989.

7. And a headstone that reads "According to His Mercy, He Saved Us."

   Edward Engen         Joan Patzke         Dick Patzke
   1931-1945            1931-1945            1930-1945
   "All killed by an Enemy Balloon Bomb"
May 5, 1945. Bly, OR. (Herald and News)

When we phoned the Army, they barked, "Don't touch anything. We'll be right there!" reported Herb Hadley, Fremont National Forest Ranger. It was 10:00 A.M. Saturday morning. Four boys and a girl had gone on a picnic with their Sunday School teacher, Elsie Mitchell and her husband Rev. Archie Mitchell.

Mrs. Mitchell, who was pregnant, and the kids were strolling through the trees when one of the boys yelled that the group had found something. Just as Rev. Mitchell was about to yell "Don't touch it," a bomb went off that had been hanging from a gas-filled balloon, in a tree. All five kids and Mrs. Mitchell were killed. Mr. Mitchell was standing by his car and survived.

The balloon bomb had been launched from Japan and blown here by the wind. The Japanese had launched 6,000 to try to set the West Coast on fire. Wind currents caused most of them to fall in the ocean. The story was censored until after the war.

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Mrs. Aper suggested that as the weather gets warmer, a visit to Linkville Cemetery would prove very interesting. "One is made like a bed. The blanket is pulled back at one corner and there's a pillow. All is concrete and covers a grave. Another one has a fence around it and on the four corner posts there are acorns. Of course the Baldwins are there. I didn't know until recently that Maude Baldwin was not allowed to be buried inside the cemetery fence because she had committed suicide. But later on (1946) they moved her body in. So all the Baldwins are in the cemetery. There is a children's park over at one side."

"Gene Webb said the stones are old and some in such a precarious position that some of them might fall over and hurt someone and also some are so old that they are crumbling. So his words were: "Please don't go up there and rub the headstones!"

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Friday May 15, 1987 a beautiful Baldwin Family Marker was dedicated in Linkville Cemetery by the Klamath County Historical Society. This marker was made for the Historical Society by
Chuck Houser of the Klamath Monuments and Markers Inc. To find this marker, enter the upper gate at East and Upham Streets. Drive past the green house on the right. The marker is about 50 feet or so from it on the left hand side of the road. It is near the road beside a tall tree and at the foot of a large lilac bush. (taken from the April, May, June 1987 issue of The Trumpeter.)

Mrs. Aper's talk brought back memories to several people. One was Chet Hamaker. He told us: "My Grandfather's brother, J.W. Hamaker was here in 1875. He was a lawyer and became quite wealthy. He copied all the records from Lake County when this became Klamath County. He died in 1906 and left his three children $10,000 apiece and that was a lot of money back then. His wife, Amanda, we called her Aunt Mandy, lived on the corner of Third and Pine Streets close to where the old cemetery was". (138 North Third Street.)

"All the Hamaker men went by their middle names and Uncle Wes had about the biggest headstone up there. Gene Webb phoned one day and said the "kids are pushing the headstones over and that one is too much of a strain on our backs to lift it up". So, I told him just to leave it laying down. Later they got a backhoe in there to raise the big old headstones and Uncle Wes' stone is erect again".

Jeane MacBeth mentioned that at one time Gene Webb and his workers were planing to take many of the curbs out and lay some of the headstones down flat so the grounds could be maintained better. Some of them had been cemented over because of the poor maintenance. But that was to have been removed and the grounds slanted and planted into lawn.

The subject of the Linkville Cemetery was so interesting and thought provoking, I couldn’t resist doing a little research on my own.

Ethel Carlson Goeller was born here and having lived on Riverside Drive all of her life with the exception of the two years between 1912 and 1914 when her family was in Sweden, she remembers the old First Presbyterian Church very well.

The family walked from Riverside Drive across the old Link
River bridge and up to Second Street where in 1926 construction was begun on the Willard Hotel by W.D. Miller (now named the Lakeside Towers). There were steps leading up Second Street to Pine Street that had to be climbed. Then they walked towards Third Street, crossed the foot bridge over the Ankeny Canal in order to enter the Church at 219 Pine Street. Ethel remembers the parsonage being to the right of the Church but for some reason the Ministers didn't want to live there so the building was used for Sunday School classes and meetings. Ethel remembers that Miss Georgia Porter was her Sunday School teacher.

Miss Porter married Andrew Collier in 1916 and their first home was on Conger Avenue, a native stone house on the right side of the street. They had three daughters, Marie (Ragland), Carolyn (Larson) and Phyllis (Kerns).

The old First Presbyterian Church had become too crowded with the influx of new people to Klamath Falls after the Southern Pacific arrived in 1905 but because of finances it was impossible to build a larger one. In 1919 Andrew Collier bought the old church property thus making it possible for the new church to be built at 601 Pine at the corner of Sixth. (Centennial Booklet from First Presbyterian Church. Feb. 19, 1984.) The old church and parsonage were razed and building contractor, R.E. Wattenburg began to build a 1 1/2 story home at 219 Pine (more recently a bed & breakfast but now up for sale) and on the corner of Pine and Third (204 Third) a home for Andrew Collier and his family. Carolyn Larson said they shared a driveway and garage with the Wattenburgs.

Ethel Goeller remembers the Borel family buying the property between Main and Third streets and building a home there and having a garden in the backyard extending up towards Pine Street. Then in 1915 the Elks bought the land and erected the Elk's Temple (now the Courthouse Annex.) As a child Carolyn Larson remembers a playground in back of the Elk's Temple where the neighborhood children played.

So although I gathered a lot of information from different sources I came no closer to finding the original burial grounds than did Beverly Aper. "Rumor" still persists though that as people dug basements and foundations around there, they found old graves. ------------------------------- Mae L. Smith