

HISTORY OF

SAN MATEO COUNTY CEMETERIES

By

Miguel R. Luna

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San Mateo Junior Coll.
Dr. F. Stanger,
Instructor

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UNION CEMETERY

In Redwood City lies one of the oldest cemeteries in the County. It was founded in 1859 after quite an argument between Horace Hawes and the townspeople.

It seems that a man named William Casey Jones had not minded when a piece of his property was used for a cemetery. In 1859 when this property fell into the hands of Horace Hawes, he stopped further burials there. The people were angered at this and immediately attempted to find out if there was a way in which they could force Mr. Hawes to relinquish this section for a cemetery. They failed in this as the law was on the accused's side.

The next best step was to locate another section of Redwood City for an interment ground. A subscription fund was campaigned and with the results, six acres of land was bought. A committee of C.M. Fox, V.W. Turner, and C. Ayers, held a meeting for the purpose of establishing a cemetery association. The idea was approved by all and so on February 28, 1859, the Union Cemetery Association was organized with J. V. Diller as President; C.N. Fox as Secretary, and Treasurer; J. W. Turner as Superintendent

In March of the same year a step was taken which did not cause much activity then but it has today. By that step I mean the one where the committee of the Association including James Berry Curtis Baird and Rachael Baird of San Mateo County and Soledad Ode Arguello and Jose Ramon Arguello of Santa Clara County, deeded to John B. Meller, Governor of California, the Union Cemetery. C.N. Fox drew up the deed.⁽²³⁾

This was thought a good step in order to insure the safe-keeping of the Cemetery. Today, however, a movement is being made to petition the State to give the cemetery back to the City of Redwood City. It seems that the cemetery has been neglected and the United Veterans Council of Redwood City have started the legal machine to obtain the Cemetery for Redwood City so that it may be improved.⁽²⁴⁾

The cemetery is located at Five Points in Redwood City and it could be made to look attractive since it is situated in an ideal location. Many of the famous people of this County are interred at Union Cemetery. A section of it is set aside for the graves of those who died in service during the Civil War. Very picturesque indeed.

We mentioned that Horace Hawes was the center of much criticism when he objected to the people using his land to bury

their dead. Yet it was the generous contributions of Mr. Hawes which not only made the cemetery possible, but also many other public institutions in this County. He is one of the noted men buried here.

You are likely to discover them anywhere. Little obscure interest groups that suggest a history far more interesting than that of those cemeteries which are larger.

This is one of those pioneer cemeteries with a scenery equivalent to early settler days. Under a clump of oak trees as their guardians, with the blue waters of the Spring Valley Lakes below them, and with King's Mountain beyond the lakes obscuring the view of the Pacific Ocean, these four graves are one of the few things in life which are not affected by the notes of progress and its products. They lie on a little knoll, approximately four miles west of the nearest town which is Belmont. Nearly all the huge Filoli estate. Some reserve lands of San Francisco are nearby.

Elizabeth Finch is the eldest person buried here. Born on February 12, 1821, she died on April 24, 1885 at the age of 64.

Frances M. Meredith is the next oldest, being 72 years old when she died on January 9, 1856.

The youngest was Richard A. Harrington dying at the age of 7 months and 21 days. Date of his death was January 10, 1856.

The last person buried here was Ellen S. Kinnear who died on September 9, 1882 at the age of 18 years and 17 days.

If only tombstones could talk!

BELMONT
ANONYMOUS CEMETERY

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Elizabeth Finch is the eldest person buried here. Born on February 19, 1821, she died on April 24, 1855 at the age of 34.

Frances M. Meredith is the next eldest, being 22 years old when he died on January 7, 1856.

The youngest was Richard A. Harrington dying at the age of 7 months and 21 days. Date of his death was January 10, 1856.

The last person buried here was Eliza S. Kinneson who died on September 9, 1858 at the age of 18 years and 17 days. (25)

If only tombstones could talk!