

# Greenwood Hills Cemetery History

Century-old Greenwood Hills Cemetery is the final resting place for many early Oregon pioneers and prominent settlers of Portland. Platted in 1882, Greenwood Hills began as the Portland Masonic Cemetery and opened in 1884 with fifteen graves transferred from the Masonic plot in Lone Fir Cemetery.

In 1882, the Portland Masonic Cemetery, originally 40 acres, sold off two acres to the Grand Army of the Republic for burial of Civil War veterans. As well, the International Order of the Oddfellows bought a large rectangular lot which was maintained by their members until 1943 when its care was transferred to River View Cemetery.

The area is known as Palatine Hill and is host to several other cemeteries all founded in the late 1880's, including nearby River View Cemetery and two Jewish cemeteries. Historically, interment within the city was frowned upon by the public because of health concerns; yet, Palatine Hill was located just outside city limits. Notably, all the cemeteries in the area

are developed in the "lawn-park" style of open green space with scenic vistas overlooking Portland. Native fir and cottonwoods were replaced with chestnuts, yew, and holly, and the grand old redwood that stands inside the upper circle of Greenwood Hills and the Cedar of Lebanon that stands just inside the cemetery entrance.

Between 1950 and 1986, property for three homesites and two additional lots were sold; Greenwood Hills Cemetery was sold a final time in 1986. Now comprised of 12 acres, Greenwood Hills Cemetery contains over 12,000 graves—the oldest gravemarker dates back to 1851 and belongs to the Kellogg family. Joseph Kellogg brought the Masonic Charter to Oregon City and was instrumental in beginning the Portland Masonic Cemetery. This and other pre-1884 graves were relocated from farms and other cemeteries.

Gravemarkers in the cemetery vary from old highmarkers to the more modern flat granite markers. Woodmen of the World monuments, carved in the shape of tree trunks, are quite distinctive highmarkers as are the massive, wrought hewn boulders which bear witness to the frontier spirit of several pioneering families. During your visit, you will notice Masonic emblems and inscriptions on many of the gravestones throughout the cemetery.

Greenwood Hills Cemetery is an active cemetery with four to six burials per year; however, no new plots can be sold. The cemetery was adopted in 1986 and is now maintained by volunteers of Greenwood Hills Cemetery and administered by the board of Greenwood Hills Cemetery Maintenance Association.

