

Ish Family

Looking upon the Ish family gravesite, our attention is drawn to the elaborate hand-carved headstones, which are an excellent example of Victorian-era style monuments. Many of the headstone symbols represent the rewards of resurrection, purity and devotion. The tilted square signifies an earthly existence pointing toward both heaven and earth, the orb symbolizes the reward of resurrection, and the cross characterizes faith, love and hope. The Odd Fellows symbol of three links represents friendship, love and truth.

One can surmise the Ish family were devoted, charitable and kind with a strong commitment to faith and family. The threat of Civil War may have been the inspiration for Jacob and his first wife Eleanor to sell their farm in Virginia and settle in Oregon, along with Jacob's three brothers.

In 1860 Jacob purchased 320 acres and eventually became one of the largest landowners in Jackson County, owning more than 5,000 acres. The Ish Ranch soon became known for its broad and fertile acres, sturdy stock and immaculately maintained buildings. Ish found it profitable to supply provisions to the soldiers at nearby Fort Klamath along with most of the stage stations between Grants Pass and San Francisco.

In 1877, Eleanor's sister Sarah arrived in Oregon. She had traveled from Virginia, sailing around South America's Cape Horn, to come and care for Eleanor. Sadly, Eleanor died of cancer just two weeks before Sarah arrived.

Sarah stayed to help Jacob raise his young daughter Sopenia, and niece Phenie, daughter of brother William and his wife Ann. Sarah and Jacob were married the following year. When Jacob died three years later from bronchitis, he left Sarah as one of the wealthiest women in the county.