

2022

STORIES FROM MEET THE PIONEERS

Living History Tours presented in Jacksonville, Oregon's Pioneer Cemetery

2022 – Our Fourteenth Year

Vignettes

Marian B. Towne, First Woman Elected to the Legislature in Oregon

A Son's Promise

Narratives

The “Queen of the Pacific” and Jacksonville’s First Fire Engine and Fire Company

Oregon Becomes a State

Individual Stories

Miss Popularity 1908

Patrick and Lizzie Ryan

Judge James Russell and Minnie Helm Neil – Lives of Service

Alice Berry Kane – A Station Master’ Wife

A Jacksonville Love Story – John Swan and Anna Sophia Love

Note: When author Dirk Siedlecki passed on January 31, 2023, he had not yet updated the manuscript of his book to include the then-very-recently-completed production of Meet the Pioneers (2022). The text that follows for each vignette, narrative, and individual story is from the Pioneer Profiles section of the 2022 souvenir program, written for the event by Dirk.

MEET THE PIONEERS

2022



Character

Alice Berry Kane
Lady Oregon
David Linn
Anna Sophia Love
John Swan Love
James Russell Neil
Minnie Helm Neil

Player

Constance Jesser
Becky Durango
David Sours
Carolyn Kingsnorth
Stephen Corelis
Robert Hight
Anne Peugh

Character

Laura Neuber
Thomas Reames
Lizzie Ryan
Patrick Ryan
Mrs. Eliza Tice
Marian B. Towne
Col. William T'Vault

Player

Ann Wilton
Eric Poppick
Lynn Ransford
Michael Sneary
Carolyn Embry
Marcy McQuillan
David Rowley

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Vignette - Marian B. Towne, First Woman Elected to the Legislature in Oregon

Marian Towne was a leader in expanding opportunities for Oregon women in the early twentieth century. Marian was raised in Phoenix, Oregon and began her journey as a clerk for Jackson County, working during the day and studying law at night.

In 1914, she ran for office and defeated a well-known Republican by 339 votes! Marian said that throughout her life, “I never feared the men, but I looked out for the women.”

Marian died on February 16, 1966 at the age of 86 and is buried in her home town in the Phoenix Pioneer Cemetery.

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Vignette – A Son’s Promise

On March 24, 1851, and shortly after his 18th birthday, John Rappelyea Tice left an angry father and a weeping mother behind in Covington, Indiana making a promise to return. Young and full of adventure he did not want to miss the chance to see the west and make his fortune. John was sure that it would only take a year, maybe two, and he would be able to start sending money home and one day return to Indiana a very rich man.

John’s promise to return home kept being delayed for one reason or another which he explained in his letters home. Finally, in 1882, John returned to Indiana for a long overdue reunion with his parents and siblings.

John Tice and his wife Margaret are buried in the City section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in block 94.

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Narrative – Grounding of the “Queen of the Pacific”, Jacksonville’s First Fire Engine and Fire Company

In May 1883, the Board of Trustees sent David Linn off to purchase the town’s first fire engine. A Rumsey pumper wagon was purchased from Seneca Falls, New York at a cost of \$865.

Moving it from New York to Oregon was no easy task as heavy items like this first had to go by boat sailing around Cape Horn then to San Francisco. From San Francisco the engine had to go by steamship north to Portland, Oregon where during its journey on the Queen of the Pacific it became stranded on a sandbar off Astoria. The ship’s crew threw cargo overboard while trying to free the ship from the sand bar. The Queen finally made it to Portland with Jacksonville’s fire engine still on board however, the town had to come up with another \$220 to cover the salvage costs.

The engine is on display at the Applebaker Fire Hall just behind Jacksonville’s Old City Hall on South Oregon Street.

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Narrative – Oregon Becomes a State

Residents of Jacksonville, as well as those living in the Oregon Country, were growing anxious and frustrated with the delays and lack of news from back east with regard to Oregon being admitted as a state.

There were numerous delays in preparing the required state constitution, with the question of slavery being one hurdle among others. Oregon's new state constitution was approved by the United States Senate on June 18, 1858. Trying to calm restless residents, and assuming the House would immediately follow the Senate's approval, the newspaper reported that Oregon had been admitted as a State.

Unfortunately, the House did not approve Oregon being admitted until February 12, 1859, some nine months later.

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Laura Neuber – Miss Popularity

In 1908, Laura Neuber was just 13 years of age and living in Jacksonville. She entered a popularity contest that was actually a newspaper circulation contest that two relatively new Medford newspapers were running. Those entering the contest had to get people to sign up for new subscriptions or extend existing ones.

On February 22, 1908, Laura was announced the winner and now owner of a brand new 1908 REO roadster! Still too young to drive, photos were taken of her sitting behind the wheel.

Laura passed in 1983 and is buried in New Hampshire.

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Patrick and Lizzie Ryan

Patrick came from Ireland at the age of twelve and came west to Jacksonville when he was 22. He worked as a clerk, and soon became a business owner and later started constructing buildings and got into real estate.

He married Lizzy in 1862, whom he met while she was passing through Jacksonville in a Travelin' Show. Patrick was very fond of sun-bathing in the nude and called it his daily heliotherapy ritual.

Patrick died in 1908 and Lizzy died in 1913. They are buried in the City section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in block 104.

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Judge James and Minnie Neil

A loving couple they were married in 1865 and had 43 years together. Minnie felt her purpose in life was to make a loving home for her husband and sons Frank and George.

James practiced law in Jacksonville and was elected District Attorney three times as well as a County Judge. He covered several counties and was away from Minnie and his family much of the time. He reflects back on those absences with regret.

Minnie died in 1908, and James tragically died in a house fire in 1917. Both are buried in the Masonic section of the Jacksonville Cemetery block 387.

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Alice Berry Kane

Born in Jacksonville in 1860, Alice would later marry Ellsworth Charles Kane, who went by E.C. They built a home in Ashland and had two children.

E.C. worked for the railroad and traveled the rail line and was often away from home for days at a time. One day Alice picked up the mail at the depot and found a letter addressed to Ellsworth Kane. Surprised as no one called her husband Ellsworth, it was either E.C. or Charles, she opened the envelope and discovered E.C. was keeping another family.

Alice is buried in the Masonic section of the Jacksonville Cemetery in block 440.

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A Jacksonville Love Story

Tragedy would bring John Swan Love and Anna Sophia Harris together as husband and wife in 1860. Life was good. John's business interests continued to grow, they had three children and built a new home, the Love House, on 3rd and C Streets in Jacksonville.

Then tragedy struck again, John died of tuberculosis at the age of 37, Sophia was pregnant with their fourth child. A year and a half later, Sophia and her daughter Maggie, both died of smallpox.

The Love family are buried in the Masonic section of the cemetery block 443.

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