2026 TALKING HEADSTONES

Molly Sharp, Sacajawea Chapter, DAR, presenting "The Brown Pioneer Family Narrative" Union Pioneer Calvary Cemetery. Tumwater, WA.

Good afternoon! I would like to thank you all for coming today to learn about some of the pioneer families that settled in Thurston County, WA, mine included. My name is Sarah Elizabeth Brown. I was a mother, grandmother, wife, sister, and aunt to many and I am buried in this very cemetery. I was born on March 5th, 1801, in the state of Virginia. I am the daughter of Marshall Stone and Lydia Minshell. In January of 1818 in Saline, Illinois, I married my beloved Samuel Brown. Throughout our marriage, we had 6 sons and 3 daughters. I died on October 15th, 1884, at the age of 83.

My family and I traveled by wagon from Illinois to Missouri, and all throughout the United States and its territories until we finally chose Thurston County as our home.

One of my sons was Sydney Hampton Brown. He was born on October 27th, 1843, in Springfield, Illinois. He married Rebecca Pethoud on July 7th, 1872, and together they had 17 children! He was a resident of Thurston County and farmed the land here for many years until he passed away from pneumonia at his Waddle Creek home on December 30th, 1914. He was 71 years old. He was survived by his wife and 10 of his children.

My daughter-in-law Rebecca was born in the Nebraska territory on May 17th, 1856. She married Sydney and was a homemaker to those 17 children. She died in her family home located in the Black Lake area of Thurston County on October 12th, 1923. She was 67 years old. Rebecca was laid to rest by her husband right here in this cemetery.

Three of my grandchildren were buried next to their parents. They were Eddie Brown who died June 12th, 1871, Joseph Brown who was born in 1879 and then died on June 1st, 1882, at only 3 years old. Finally, there was Eugene Marvin Brown who was born in Clay County, Kansas on December 13th, 1876, and died on May 24th, 1905. Eugene was only 28 years old when he died. On his grave marker is a picture of a wagon train.

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All of my family members that I mentioned are interred here in the Union Pioneer Cemetery. As a side note, my grave marker was hidden for many years in this cemetery until Franida Mausley of the Sacajawea Chapter for DAR discovered it in 2025. It was her last attempt at finding my headstone and finally, I was revealed. Thank you Franida!

Narrative written by Velma Boyd.