



Women in Union Cemetery: Amanda Schooley Blair

The women featured in this series of articles are part of the Women in Union Cemetery Tour conducted by Mike Roberts in 2024.

Amanda Schooley Blair 1842 – 1916

Buried in Placerville Union Cemetery, Section 21A Block 28 Plot A

Portrayed by Constance Blair Brehm, Save the Graves 2022 event

Amanda Schooley was raised in upstate New York as one of eight children. In 1850, Amanda's father, Ezra, left NY in pursuit of gold in California, leaving his family behind. He died 10-miles outside of Coloma that same year.

Amanda later made her way to El Dorado County with her mother and several siblings. She met James Blair of J & J Blair Lumber fame, and the flame was lit. Amanda Schooley married James Blair I in 1862. The newlyweds lived at Sportsman's Hall until 1865, when they built a home on Cedar Ravine Road across the street from the home of James's brother and business partner, John. James and Amanda raised 6 children in Placerville.

Amanda was a cousin to the family of William H. Seward, U.S. Secretary of State during the Civil War. She was a frequent inhabitant of the Seward household as the companion to their young daughter, Fanny Seward. Amanda was proud of her familial connection to the Sewards and even lobbied one of her sons, Ernest, to name his first son Seward in honor of her cousins.

William Seward was a former New York Governor and Senator. He was widely regarded as the leading candidate for the Republican nomination. Several factors, including his vocal opposition to slavery and his support for immigrants and Catholics cost him the nomination to an upstart lawyer from Illinois named Abraham Lincoln. The loss devastated him but he campaigned for Lincoln and was appointed Secretary of State as the country tilted toward Civil War. His firm stance against foreign intervention helped deter the UK and France from recognizing the independence of the Confederate states. He was seriously wounded in the 1865 assassination attacks that killed Lincoln.

Amanda's grandson, James "Bud" Blair, III, would later become El Dorado County's first Olympic gold medalist in 1932. All three of her sons, James, Ernest, and Roy, went on to become

successful businessmen-much like their father-James I.



Sportsman's Hall, built circa 1850-1

Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2024

SaveTheGravesElDorado.org

Category

1. Women in Union Cemetery

Date Created

2024/07/04