



Women in Union Cemetery: Dorothea Zeisz

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

Dorothea Zeisz 1841 – 1919

Buried in Placerville Union Cemetery, Section 21C Block 55 Plot D

Portrayed by Erika Maruri, Save the Graves 2022 event

Dorothea Hartman was born in Alsace-Lorraine and married Jacob Zeisz in Placerville in 1859. Jacob was born in Bavaria and trained there in the art of making fine beer. Jacob built the large Zeisz brewery on Upper Main Street in 1862.

The couple had 10 children and built their home onto the brewery building. In 1881, shortly after their last child was born, Jacob returned to Bavaria and never came back. Dorothea was tasked with making a living for her large family. Leaving her with few options, Dorothea continued the brewery business with her older sons, and began renting rooms in the large home, operating a card room and a dining room, doing much of the cooking herself, at 25 cents for a meal.

Dorothea spent her mornings cooking and tried to sit a spell in the afternoon. But even then, her hands were never idle. She knitted sweaters and socks for the family and braided rugs to sell.

The entire family pitched in with the work. They had to. A vegetable garden provided fresh produce and they kept a cow, chickens, turkeys, and geese. Dorothea continued to work in the family business until 1915 when she gave notice in the Mountain Democrat that “on account of my health giving out I am compelled to close my boarding house.” Thanking the people of El Dorado County for their kind patronage for a great many years.

She passed away in her home on December 5, 1919, and was survived by her eight surviving children.

The dilapidated building was torn down in 1964, but remnants, including the distinctive beer barrel, are still visible on the south canyon wall on upper Main St. All that is left of the building is a carved limestone block with the word “ZEISZ” that was over the door to the brewery at 660 Main Street in Placerville.



Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2024

[SaveTheGravesElDorado.org](https://www.savethegraveseldorado.org)

Category

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