



Women in Union Cemetery: Lora Kyburz Blair

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

Lora Kyburz Blair 1877 – 1957

Buried in Placerville Union Cemetery, Section 01 Block 3 Plot C

Portrayed by Julie Manwaring, Save the Graves 2023 event

Lora Kyburz was born on the Clarksville ranch of her late pioneer grandfather, Samuel Kyburz, in 1877. Though they were working-class dairy farmers, the Kyburz family was proud of their rich heritage in the state of California. Sam and his wife Rebecca worked for John Sutter at his fort in Sacramento well before the start of the gold rush. Both Sam and James Marshall acted as Sutter's right hand at times.

The family has always contended that it was Sam who discovered the Coloma mill site and brought it to Sutter. Ergo – no Sam no Gold Rush.

Lora was raised to be proud of being a Kyburz. Her father Albert bought a resort town near Silver Fork off Highway 50 and named it Kyburz in honor of his father Sam.

Lora was an adventurous young woman who enjoyed biking around the county at a time when it wasn't considered lady-like to do so.

Around 1896, Lora acquired her teaching certificate, and for over a decade, she worked as a teacher in small schoolhouses throughout El Dorado County.

She later married Matthew Blair, III. Matthew and Lora had four children, one of whom, Matthew Gordon Blair, would go on to become Mayor of Placerville. He also joined with his Harris cousins to establish the Blair Brothers Lumber Company.

Lora and Matthew lived at 692 Main Street, between Turner and Sheridan Streets, next to the self-service car wash. The Placerville Biergarten is the most recent of a series of failed restaurants in the location. The inside of the building is interesting. Behind the bar a powder keg and Masonic compass

are carved into a header which leads to a backroom area. Two “cave” rooms are carved into the hillside and fronted with thick rhyolite walls, supposedly a Masonic store which sold explosives.

Matthew and Lora were known for hosting watch parties at their home during Wagon Train Days. They would sit out on the porch and wave as the wagons rolled by.

Lora spent her entire life as a proud resident of El Dorado County.



Lora Kyburz Blair House



The Kyburz house in Clarksville circa 2009. Sam and Rebecca retired here from their ranch off modernday White Rock Road. Lora likely spent a portion of her youth here.

Kyburz House in Clarksville

Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2024

SaveTheGravesElDorado.org

Category

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