



Woodmen of the World

In the frighteningly dangerous early timber industry, the Woodmen of the World offered life insurance plus the trappings of a fraternal order. Employees of formative Placerville timber enterprise J. & J. Blair were most certainly members. If they became victims of a broken cable or any one of hundreds of other all-too-common misfortunes, their families received a sustaining cash death benefit, and they received a tombstone.

The most well-known Woodmen tombstones are the “tree stones” which resemble a log. We have a good example locally at El Dorado Cemetery located at 4740 Church Street in El Dorado, CA.

In Placerville Union Cemetery, located at 650 Bee Street, the closest we come is the Woodmen of the World symbol which contains several smaller symbols plus the Latin epitaph DUM TACET CLAMAT, “Though silent, he speaks.” Doc Ashbrook’s Woodmen of the World tombstone can be found in Section 11 Row 35.

The former fraternal lives on today as Woodmen Life, an insurance company.

Union Cemetery also contains a member of the Supreme Forest Woodmen Circle, which was an early Woodmen woman’s auxiliary, launched as a separate fraternal benefit society in 1895.

The emblem for the SFWC is a shield with stars and stripes. It also includes the familiar axe, wedge, and “beetle” or hammer, but the ladies get no log.



Interpretation by Mike Roberts, 2023

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