



Photo courtesy of Paula Hinkel

# Savannah Update

*El Monte Cemetery Association*

*Volume 4 Number 2*

*December 2009*

## LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

We have given it our best shot, but the picture isn't pretty. Due to a lack of support from the general membership, the local communities, and dwindling donations, this may well be the last newsletter you receive from our beloved Savannah Memorial Park. There is a very, very small number of us who are doing the lion's share of the work, while the rest seem content to sit back in the happy knowledge that things are getting done. We are not youngsters and cannot continue at this pace. It has already taken its toll on family members and cost us in other areas of our lives as well.

Donations have dwindled drastically due to the current economy or perhaps you think Savannah has miraculously become comfortably solvent. Without donations and support, we cannot continue to maintain the cemetery much longer.

Let's look at some cold, hard facts: Average monthly donations this year through September were \$1,561.61, but average monthly expenses were \$3,219.28. [Note: This does not include the very generous donation by M. C. Gill Corporation, which was extraordinary and greatly appreciated, but cannot be counted on each year.] If you annualize those numbers we will net a LOSS of almost \$20,000.00 for the year. In 2008, total income was \$40,244.13, while total expenses were \$51,950.12. A LOSS of \$11,705.99.

There are approximately 1,644 different surnames at Savannah. Even if one member of each of those surname families donated \$20 per year (a small amount, but a completely unrealistic possibility), it might just cover the annual expenses. It would not help us create the reserve we so desperately need.

We do appreciate those few of you who regularly donate and those who have sent in periodic consistent donations. Without you, this notice might have been sent out much sooner.

Attendance at the July 25<sup>th</sup> General Membership meeting was extremely disappointing. Aside from Board members, spouses of Board members, and a volunteer, we had a turnout of precisely four (4). It is obvious that as long as you see things being taken care of, you are no longer interested in participating in the preservation of your family's final resting place. It can be envisioned that we will likely have a repeat of a few years ago when the entire Board resigned. We have just about exhausted our time, talent, and energy so that YOU can relax in the knowledge that Savannah has fared so well in these last 3½ years!

Our General Membership is not alone in their neglect. We no longer receive any support from the City of Rosemead and never really have received any support from the City of El Monte. This is particularly disappointing since Savannah represents their historic past and is, we daresay, their MOST IMPORTANT historic resource. It should be embraced and nurtured by these communities. But because of politics and hard times, they have chosen to turn their backs on Savannah. Without the pioneers who rest in Savannah, El Monte and Rosemead would not be what they are today. El Monte, in particular, owes its historic landmark status with the State of California (No. 975) as the very first American settlement in Southern California to these pioneers and it's a shame to be borne by the city's leaders that they have chosen ignore their history.

Each and every one of you has a particular talent or some knowledge that could be of help to Savannah. You may not think it could be of value to the cemetery, but you'd be surprised how those talents can be expanded on to be of help. We need ideas and PARTICIPATION!! We appreciate that you have family obligations, jobs, hobbies, in other words, other things you would prefer to be doing . . . so do the people who have been doing all the work so far. We also understand that many of you live too far away to physically participate in many things, but with today's technology, there are still things that you can do! That being said, we don't want to hear from you with your disappointment in this small group of dedicated folks who have worked so hard to try to keep things going.

There will be an Annual Meeting in January 23, 2010 at the El Monte Historical Museum. We would hope that you take the time from your busy schedules to attend.

We will be looking at the available options in the hope of protecting Savannah.

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**NOTABLE QUOTABLE**

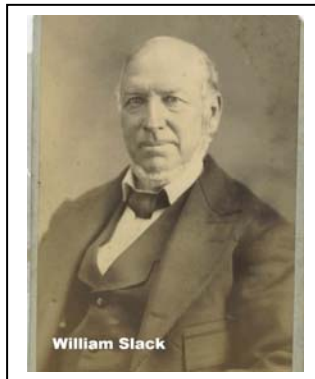
"To forget one's ancestor's is to be a brook without a source, a tree without root"

Chinese Proverb

**An Early Pioneer . . .****William Slack**

William Slack was born in Yorkshire, England, December 27, 1823. His parents were Richard and Ann (Britt) Slack, both natives of England. At the age of fourteen years, Mr. Slack was apprenticed to the trade of a molder, and after serving an apprenticeship of seven years, he followed that occupation as a journeyman until 1848.

In that year he came to the United States, landing in New Orleans. From there he went to Cincinnati, Ohio, and was employed as a foreman in the foundry of Baker & Morton. He held that important position until 1850. He then started overland for Utah. Locating at Salt Lake City, he turned his attention to the mineral resources of that territory, and in partnership with his brother-in-law, Richard Varley, opened iron and coal mines and built the first blast furnace established near Salt Lake. He abandoned his enterprises there, and in 1852 came by the Southern route to California, and located at El Monte. There he rented land and established a dairy, and engaged in general farming, etc., until 1855. He then went to Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, where he was occupied in stock-raising until 1859. In that year he moved to Texas and located at San Antonio. The breaking out of the war in 1861 rendered business enterprises so unsettled in that State that Mr. Slack returned to California and again took up his residence at El Monte. He worked for several months as a superintendent in a distillery, after which he pursued stock growing and farming upon disputed lands in the Temple Tract, south of town. A dispute over this tract of land with Lucky Baldwin developed into a lawsuit which continued for several years, costing both parties a great amount of money. Regardless of the odds against him the legal battle ended finally in a victory for Mr. Slack, he being allowed to retain his land. In 1870 he went to the San Jose Valley, and for the next four years engaged in the stock business, after which he returned to El Monte and purchased eighty acres of land just south of town entering into general farming. He also purchased a

**Calendar of Upcoming Events**

**January 23, 2010**  
**10:00 a.m.**

Annual Membership Meeting  
El Monte Historical Museum,  
3150 Tyler Avenue, El Monte

residence and business building in El Monte, being for a time owner of the store occupied by J. T. Haddox, pioneer merchant.

From 1881 to about 1885, he engaged in the butcher business conducting a meat market in El Monte. For a number of years he served as a trustee of the Lexington School District. He was a Democrat, and very conservative in his political actions.

Mr. Slack was married three times February 13, 1845, he wedded Miss Eliza Varley, a native of Yorkshire, England. She died at El Monte, December 29, 1879. They became the parents of the following named children: Elizabeth, William Thomas, Jonathan, Richard J., and Albert, all of whom are now deceased, and Eliza, Sarah Ann, Mrs. Mathews of Baldwin Park; Mary, Mrs. John Paterson, of Los Angeles; George of Redlands and Arthur V., of Huntington Park. In 1881, Mr. Slack married Mrs. Ann Montgomery, a native of England. Mr. and Mrs. Slack returned to England in 1885, and spent a year visiting the homes of their childhood.

On their return they moved into a residence on Lexington Avenue, and there resided until the death of Mrs. Slack in 1891. In 1892 Mr. Slack was again married, his third wife being Catherine Ogden, a native of Ohio, whose parents were Zechariah and Mattie Hayden also natives of Ohio and early pioneers of San Diego.

No children were born to Mr. Slack except by the first marriage. Following the third marriage, Mr. Slack moved to Los Angeles, on Eastlake Avenue, where they resided for eighteen years. In 1911 they moved to Hollywood where they resided until death called Mrs. Slack in 1914 in her seventy-seventh year.

Fourteen months later, following a full and active life, and gratified in the satisfaction of having contributed his share to the upbuilding of the county he loved, Mr. Slack, at the age of ninety-two, answered the final summons. At his death he proudly claimed ninety-one direct descendents.

Source:

[http://www.cagenweb.com/re/losangeles/ElMonteBios/SLACK\\_William.htm](http://www.cagenweb.com/re/losangeles/ElMonteBios/SLACK_William.htm) (edited)

**OKTOBERFEST 2009**

Once again the City of Rosemead sponsored the annual Oktoberfest with booths, contests, food, and entertainment. Savannah had two booths. We had a 50/50 drawing, which was generously supported. Congratulations to Boy Scout Troop #551 of El Monte for winning the prize! Due to current politics in the City, Savannah no longer receives any support from them, so this event is no longer a source of any significant revenue. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who helped sell raffle tickets and also helped at our booths.



Janice Wiggins White and Walter White "manning" a booth

**SPECIAL THANKS**

Thanks to all our friends who helped sell tickets for the 50/50 Drawing. Without your help we would not have had the success that we did. Special thanks to the following for their extraordinary efforts.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>Alhambra/San Gabriel Elks Lodge</i> | <i>Clark Moseley, City of El Monte</i> |
| <i>Greg &amp; Carolyn Carter</i>       | <i>Barbara Murphy &amp; Friends</i>    |
| <i>El Monte Historical Society</i>     | <i>Anna Guess Pick</i>                 |
| <i>El Monte Moose Lodge</i>            | <i>Rosemead Moose Lodge</i>            |
| <i>Jeff Foutz</i>                      | <i>Robyn &amp; Bruce Steele</i>        |
| <i>Marian Last, City of El Monte</i>   | <i>Janice White</i>                    |

**OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS**



- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Don &amp; Mary Alley</i>                 | <i>Don &amp; Edith Harrington</i> |
| <i>Daughters of the American Revolution</i> | <i>Anna Guess Pick</i>            |
| <i>Stan &amp; Nancy Goldbloom</i>           | <i>Maynard &amp; A. P. Smith</i>  |

*A Very  
Happy and Peaceful  
Holiday Season  
to You and Your Family*

*from El Monte Cemetery  
Association and Savannah  
Memorial Park*

**HONOR A LOVED ONE**

*Honor the memory of a loved one or say  
thank you for a job well done with a  
donation to Savannah!!*

*Or you can make a donation for the  
general upkeep of the final resting place  
of our original pioneers!*

El Monte Cemetery Association  
P. O. Box 4247  
El Monte, California 91734

Or use PayPal at  
[www.savannahcemetery.org](http://www.savannahcemetery.org)

Los Angeles Times  
April 19, 1927, Page A14

## **CELEBRATE BIRTHDAY OF EL MONTE PIONEER**

EL MONTE, April 18 – Mrs. Minerva B. Dodson, the one remaining pioneer living in this locality, will celebrate her eighty-seventh anniversary birthday Thursday, the 21<sup>st</sup> inst. She came to El Monte when a girl of 12, and has passed practically all her life in this locality. Mrs. Dodson’s birthday anniversary is also the seventy-fifth anniversary of the arrival of the wagon train to the present site of El Monte and the driving of the first location stakes by the pioneers.

Last year Mrs. Dodson was serenaded by the High School Band and scores of El Monte citizens called during the day to pay her their respects. This year many have announced their intention of observing the day in a similar manner. Mrs. Dodson is recuperating from a recent severe illness.



**REMEMBER YOUR FAMILY IN THIS TIME OF LOVE AND REMEMBRANCE  
SEND A DONATION TO SAVANNAH**

El Monte Cemetery Association  
P. O. Box 4247  
El Monte, California 91734