



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Chamber's Prairie/Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
other names/site number L2-74 (Inventory Number)

2. Location

street & number NW Corner Ruddell & Mullen Roads not for publication
city or town Lacey vicinity
state Washington code WA county Thurston code 067 zip code 98501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Mary M. Thompson 5/18/95
Signature of certifying official Date
Mary Thompson, State Historic Preservation Officer
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.
- See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall 6/30/95
Entered in the
National Register

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Property Name Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery

County and State Thurston, Washington

Page 2

5. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)		<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<input type="checkbox"/> objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a
multiple property listing.)

N/A

No. of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register:

0

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary/Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Funerary/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation N/A
walls _____

roof _____
other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached.

Property Name Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery

County and State Thurston, Washington

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/Settlement

Period of Significance

1853-1945

Significant Dates

1853-founding date

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

Stephen D. Ruddell/Gwin Hicks

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See attached.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 1
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

The Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery is an approximately two-acre rectangular plot lying just south at the intersection of two major roads, Ruddell and Mullen, in the southeast part of Lacey, Washington, in central Thurston County. The cemetery is located on flat prairie ground and is bisected by a center roadway which divides the north and south sections of the plot and in general, historic burials from the more contemporary burials. The cemetery is accessed through a brick gate on Ruddell Road. A more modern cemetery and columbarium are located just east of the historic property in a lower level area.

The cemetery is enclosed on the west, south and part of the east sides by brick pylons which are connected by chains between them. The west side of the cemetery has the main gate which has two large brick piers with adjacent brick wings. It is topped by an arched wrought iron sign which reads "Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery 1852-1916". The north side of the cemetery has a chain link fence with a low laurel hedge adjacent to it in some places. Flanking the entry are four bronze plaques, two on either side affixed to the brick piers. These plaques were originally installed on the 1917-era cemetery gate. One of the plaques reads "This tablet contributed by the Washington State Historical Society commemorates the spot where are buried many of the first settlers of Thurston County and commends the worthy pioneer who set aside from the acres of his original grant this lot as a free burial plot for his neighbors and their descendants. W. P. Bonney, Secretary." Another plaque reads: "In Memory of his ancestors and with a decent regard for the preservation of their last resting place, the undersigned has erected this fence as a barrier between the irreverent few and the revered ground in closed (sic) and calls upon his posterity and the succeeding generations to respect the bones of the first white inhabitants of this countryside. Gwin Hicks" The other two plaques, a paraphrase of Gray's Elegy, were composed by and placed on the site by Gwin Hicks on the occasion of the rededication of the Cemetery in 1917.

The earlier gate, erected in 1916-17 when the cemetery was rededicated, was originally composed of a series of four cobblestone piers, each embedded with a bronze tablet. Surmounting the piers was an iron piece with arched sections containing the letters, "Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery 1852 1916" on a wire grillwork background. A wire fence and gates enclosed the property.

Currently, just east of the entry area are four towering fir trees on the north side and six on the south side of the center roadway paralleling Ruddell Road. These huge trees were reportedly planted by Oliver Beatty, who is buried in the cemetery. Other plantings include a huge maple tree on the south edge of the cemetery near the Parsons

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 2
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

plot and two large garry oaks trees on the east end of the cemetery. Other plantings include small bushes, a flowering cherry tree, and a large ponderosa pine tree. The cemetery is covered with grass.

Although the cemetery is set up in regular rows which run perpendicular to the center roadway, the placement of the stones gives an overall random appearance. There are 36 rows on each side of the center roadway with 23 plots in each row. There are approximately 160 burials on the south side of the plot with fewer and newer interments on the north side. The range of stones includes very early signed marble headstones dating from the 1860s, obelisks, many bevel markers, two zinc ledger markers, small flush metal markers and a few family plot stele markers. Most are hand carved and are mostly made from sandstone. The earliest stone dates from 1854. The burial site of Eliza Jane Leedom Hicks, the first burial, is not known although a marker with "E.J.H." inscribed is located in the Hicks plot. The earliest burials are near the east end of the plot near the Mullen Road which would have been set back from the main thoroughfare, Ruddell Road at the time of interment. About 75 of the burials date from before 1950 and the remainder after that date. There are several "Unknown" markers in the cemetery. There are two curbed lots, the largest belonging the Parsons family. A number of the older markers have fallen over. Some of the sandstone markers are badly weathered and are nearly unreadable. Stephen D. Ruddell's monument is a replacement marker which includes information on many of his accomplishments. Most unusual are the zinc ledger markers which Gwin Hicks installed on his wives' graves. They feature his own poetic tributes to the women.

The north side of the Pioneer Cemetery is primarily devoted to 20th century graves of which most have either bevel or flat markers. A few are distinctive stele markers including a newer one for a Vietnamese grave. To the east of this cemetery is another section of the cemetery which is all new. It lies on lower ground and is not evident when the cemetery is viewed from the main gate. This section of the cemetery which contains a funeral home, fountain and columbarium is not being nominated.

The cemetery, although active, probably conveys its historic appearance especially on the south side. Many of the historic markers are in place although some are displaced and fallen. The cemetery was not a highly landscaped property since it evolved over time. The huge douglas fir trees, maple and ponderosa pine bespeak the age of the sparse landscaping. In addition, some historic concrete curbing is intact.

The south side of the cemetery is reserved exclusively for pioneer burials, but that area is adjacent to the busy Mullen Road. The

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

cemetery itself has recently suffered a loss of territory with the widening of both Mullen and Ruddell Roads by the City of Lacey. Some of the oldest monuments have fallen over and have not been re-set. The large trees especially the south side maple have encroached upon burials and uprooted stones. Some of the stones continue to weather and become more and more unreadable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1A Name of Property Ruddell Cemetery
County and State Thurston Co. WA

In spite of replacement gates and a setting compromised by new roads and new subdivisions, the Ruddell Cemetery is the last tangible link with some of the most prominent individuals in the creation of the Washington Territory and in the settlement of the south Puget Sound area. These individuals include Stephen Ruddell, Urban and Gwin Hicks, and William Parsons. The artistry of period grave markers and integrity of location lend continuity from the history period.

Also in located nearby in Tumwater, the Masonic Cemetery, established at the same time, features important examples of period funerary symbolism and art and also contains the burials of other regionally significant individuals. The Ruddell Cemetery is the singular association for the prominent individuals cited in this nomination. Its association with early settlement and the fact that many of the graves are the only surviving properties associated with these individuals, enable the cemetery to meet exceptional standards for registration.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 1

Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

Narrative Statement of Significance

The Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery in Lacey, Washington is significant under Criterion A for its associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local history. It illustrates the close interrelationships of some of the earliest American settlers to Washington Territory as they staked claims on the natural prairies of what is now Lacey. The location and siting of the cemetery illustrate the settlement patterns of the earliest American settlers in this part of Washington. The cemetery is also significant under Criterion B because it is associated with the lives of persons significant in the formation of both Washington Territory and Washington State. Stephen D. Ruddell, Urban Hicks, Gwin Hicks, William Parsons and others significant in the early years of Washington Territory and state are buried here. Its importance was illustrated by the statewide notice given its rededication in 1917. Also important is the continued stewardship of the cemetery by descendants of the Ruddell, Hicks, Parsons and other families, buried over 140 years ago. The period of significance is drawn from the date of founding and extends until 1945.

Earliest permanent American Settlement on the lower Puget Sound commenced in 1845 with the arrival of the Simmons-Bush Party at Tumwater that year. By the early 1850s they were joined by over 1000 American settlers. The Chambers family for whom the prairie where the cemetery is located was named came in 1847. Many others followed.

Stephen D. Ruddell was originally from Kentucky but moved to Missouri in the early 1840s. He and his family came west to the Oregon Country in 1851 and spent the first winter on the Cowlitz River. By the Spring of 1852, Ruddell and his large extended family had located at Chamber's Prairie, just east of Olympia, Washington about 10 miles from Puget Sound. Here Ruddell built a log house. The property later included a log palisades with log roof and tool house enclosing an area about 200 feet square. The assemblage was known locally as the Ruddell Stockade. Here several families were housed during the Indian War of 1855-56 which broke out following a series of treaty negotiations with area Indians beginning in 1854. The blockhouse stood about 40 rods from the cemetery. Some of the same people who were sheltered in the stockade were later interred at the cemetery.

Ruddell was prominent in early territorial politics. In 1852, he was a delegate to meetings at Monticello south of Olympia to petition Congress for the formation of a separate Washington Territory from

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 2
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

Oregon. He also served as the first Washington Territorial Assessor, taking office in 1853. Ruddell was a Thurston County Commissioner and a member of the Washington Territorial Legislature. He died September 10, 1891.

The Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery was established in 1852 according to accounts from the Ruddell and Hicks families. It has been an active cemetery since that time.

The unexpected death of a young woman in 1853 who was a step-daughter-in-law of Stephen D. Ruddell was reason for the founding of the cemetery. Eliza Jane Leedom Hicks died of consumption at the Ruddell Home in late 1853 and this cemetery was set aside to accommodate her burial near the Ruddell homesite where she was living at the time. Several burials followed in subsequent early years including George Guthrie and his infant daughter in 1854, Paul Ruddell also in 1854, Mrs. Winaford [Winnifred] Ruddell wife of Stephen D. Ruddell in 1856, Janette Croghan Phillips (step-daughter of Stephen D. Ruddell) in 1855, William White, a casualty of the Indian War in 1855 and William E. Klady and Gideon Thompson also before 1860. An infant, son of Mrs. Ruddell was buried there in 1870 and, Mary Himes in 1879. Tyrus Himes and Horace Himes were first interred at the cemetery in 1879 but reburied sometime later in the Olympia Odd Fellows Cemetery. All of the early burials were of families living near the Ruddell home or were directly related to Ruddell's extended family.

The cemetery plot adjoined the main trail first established by Native Americans and later used by the Hudson's Bay Company and early settlers from Chambers Prairie to Yelm on a branch of the Olympia to Nisqually Road. The cemetery was just yards away from the schoolhouse which was built in the area known as "Five Oaks". This area was relatively heavily settled probably because of its proximity to established roads and the open prairie which made it attractive to settlers who did not wish to clear the heavy forests for farming. In the immediate area were homes of the Ruddell family, Gallatin Hartsock, Thomas Chambers, Andrew McMillan and William Pattison as seen on the 1855 government land office survey map of the area.

The cemetery was incorporated by the Washington Territorial Legislature in 1866 as the Chambers' Prairie Cemetery Association by Henry Parsons, S. L. Ruddell and G. W. White. The nearly three acre plot [some accounts give five acres but the 1871 deed cites three acres] was set aside by deed in 1871 when Stephen D. Ruddell and his wife Margaret Stewart White Ruddell sold 160 acres of property to his son Stephen L. Ruddell excepting these three acres for "a burying ground" which he said at that time were "now laid out and located on

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 3
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

said premises." The appearance of the property is unknown at this early period but grave markers from this period are evident at the site.

Around the turn of the century, the Ruddell property was foreclosed and sold in a sheriff's sale to an Ethel Strahlund who in turn sold the entire north half of Section 33 Township 18N Range 1 West to James Southwick for \$6000 in 1904. Southwick later conveyed part of the cemetery property south and east of the present cemetery to Eltham and Wilma Bagley in 1912, excepting the two acres of the cemetery. No official conveyance has been found of the remainder of the property from James Southwick to the Cemetery Association. That document may have been destroyed in a fire in the 1930s which destroyed many of the cemetery records. Descendants of Stephen D. Ruddell quit claimed the cemetery site to the Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery Association in 1913.

The pioneer section of the cemetery is remarkable for the interwoven relationships of the interments and their relationship to Stephen D. Ruddell, its founder. Many of the early burials were noted relatives of Stephen D. Ruddell, and his wife who had been married three times and had three families. Likewise S.D. Ruddell also was married three times and had children from three marriages. These descendants married into many of the adjacent families on Eaton and Chambers Prairies.

Other area families, most notably the William S. and Mary Keys Parsons Family also buried members at the cemetery. Parsons was a Methodist minister who came west in 1852 and in 1853 took up a claim east of Long Lake. His children married into many of the adjacent families including the Fleetwood's, Kagy's and Barnard's, whose descendants are buried in the cemetery.

The Hicks family were descended from Stephen D. Ruddell's second wife, Mrs. Winaford [Winnifred] (Kelley) Hicks-Croghan. Her son, Urban East Hicks and his young wife Eliza Jane Leedom Hicks, came west with the Ruddell Party and it was upon her death that the cemetery was set aside. Urban East Hicks married a member of the Hartsock family, India Ann, after his first wife's death in 1853. The Hartsock's who are buried in the cemetery had a donation claim adjacent to the Ruddell property. Urban East Hicks was a prominent newspaperman and printer, (reputedly a contemporary of Mark Twain) and a noted participant in the Indian War of 1855-56, Fort Hicks in what is now Pierce County was named in his honor. Urban Hick's son, Gwin Hicks also became a prominent printer and politician in Washington. Gwin Hicks served as state printer, deputy collector of internal revenue, newspaper editor, commissioner of the Washington building during the Panama California Exposition and was the only Washington-born member of the Washington State Constitutional Convention in 1889. Gwin Hicks

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 4
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

is buried in the cemetery as are two of his wives who both have distinctive zinc ledger coverings on their graves inscribed with poetry.

It was Gwin Hicks who led the effort in 1916 to re-dedicate the cemetery. "The Ruddell Cemetery Association" who were officially incorporated in 1914 by Dell Kagy, W. W. Fleetwood, Gwin Hicks, G. A. Steadman, W. S. Shaser, M. F. Neat, Walter Barnard, David Fleetwood, Frank Wood and Annie Cruikshank descendants of the Ruddell, Parsons and other pioneer families. The charter specified that "Burial Permits in this corporation's cemetery shall be limited to members of this corporation, their families, and pioneers of Thurston County and their descendants. Permits shall be granted when necessary by the President and Secretary, or by the Board of Trustees. Permits shall be free."

The rededication of the cemetery in 1917 was an occasion of statewide importance which was documented in the Tacoma News Tribune and the Transactions of the Oregon Pioneer Association. The Washington State Historical Society provided a plaque and was represented by Gen. Hazard Stevens. Also on hand was P. D. Moore a pioneer of 1862, and J. W. Brislawn representing then Washington State Governor Ernest Lister. George Himes who had grown up in the area and was then Secretary of the Oregon Pioneer Association gave the main address reminiscing about the area and giving his recollection of the cemetery formation and earliest interments. The cemetery had recently been cleaned according to the article and enclosed with a woven wire fence. Large cobblestone posts had been installed at the entryway along with an ornamental gateway. Gwin Hicks, current Lacey resident and grandson of his namesake recalls that members of pioneer families including his own gathered these cobblestones from the adjacent prairies for the posts. It may have been at this juncture when the date for Eliza Jane Hicks death was given as 1852, when in fact it was 1853. This small discrepancy does not affect the actual date of the property's allocation by Stephen D. Ruddell.

The Cemetery Association decided in 1967 to convey the cemetery to Tim and Ann Burgman, operators of a funeral home and an adjacent cemetery property, because of the difficulty of a volunteer group in maintaining the property. During these years, Hazel Hicks O'Keefe, daughter of Gwin Hicks and main proponent of upkeep of the cemetery, lead many chicken suppers and bake sales to raise funds to maintain the plots. The conveyance was made with the understanding the Burgmans would provide \$25,000 for endowment care. In addition, the front gate of the structure was to be preserved. The conveyance also mandated that the plots would be provided to eligible pioneers free of charge and that the south half of the property would be reserved exclusively for pioneer burials. The determination of eligibility for

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 5
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

pioneer plots would continue to be provided by the Cemetery Association.

In 1976 the new brick entryway and pylons were installed under the auspices of the Cemetery Association. These replaced the earlier cobblestone gateway. Reinstalled on the new brick gateway was a similar wrought iron sign and the plaques presented to the Cemetery Association at the rededication in 1917 including those provided by the Washington State Historical Society and Gwin Hicks. The Cemetery Association continues to be maintained by descendants of the 1917 incorporators.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 1
Name of Property Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery
County and State Thurston, Washington

Bibliography

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Barrows, Florence I. (Jessup), "The Ruddell Story", unpublished manuscript from a notebook provided by Gwin Hicks.

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Information from Thurston County Auditor Recordings.

Information from the Urban East Hicks Collection, Washington State Historical Society.

Interview with Robert Southwick, September, 1993.

Interviews with Gwin Hicks and Emeline Ruddell Kilber, September, 1993.

"Last Resting Place of First Pioneers Rededicated," Tacoma Sunday News Ledger June 3, 1917.

Laws of Washington, 1866.

Obituary for Eliza Jane Hicks, The Columbian, November 19, 1853.

Plat of Pioneer Cemetery, Ruddell Pioneer Cemetery Association.

Reminiscence by Lela Parsons Kagy, Washington State Library.

"Souvenir of the Second Annual Reunion of the Ruddell-Himes Families," pamphlet in the biographical file at the Washington Room at the Washington State Library.