



OUR PIONEER BEGINNINGS

A Self-Guided Tour of Portland's Historic Lone Fir Cemetery

Portland's natural harbor was first noticed by Asa Lovejoy in 1843, just as the first wagon trains began making their way from Missouri, a river of immigrants which kept flowing for thirty years. In an amazing test of human endurance, these many souls gambled their lives, bringing with them all of the ingredients for a complete society, quickly established within a few years of arrival.

Many of these folks are buried at Lone Fir Cemetery, in the heart of Southeast Portland. Reading their names on grave markers is like touring a museum; each piece has a tale to tell, a contribution to the whole. Lone Fir is a very special place, with 30.5 acres of mature trees, a pioneer rose garden, and thousands of headstones to discover.

This tour will get you started...

JB Stephens, early pioneer and visionary, was the first land-claim holder of the cemetery property. His claim ran from Stark St. to Division and from the east riverbank to 21st St. He incorporated the town of East Portland, ran two ferries on the Willamette River, and had Portland's first modular home built back east, disassembled, and shipped to Portland. It still stands at SE 12th and Stephens St, with a plaque out front.



Daniel Lowndale was the first tanner in the Oregon Territory when he set up shop on what became Tanner Creek, at present 16th & Burnside St. His leather goods were so valued that the hides became a second currency. He sold his business and became one of Portland's great promoters. Visiting Europe, he developed a love of city parks, and helped in the establishment of Portland as a 'Park City', donating Lowndale Square.



Stephen Coffin came from Maine in 1847. He happened to get a land claim which ran from the west river bank to W. 18th St.-much of today's downtown Portland. He financed the first steam sawmill in the area and a steamship to trade with San Francisco. He led the building of the Great Plank Road to the Tualatin plains, enabling the transport of farm goods to the ships waiting at Portland's wharf, ensuring her place in the economic scene.



Col. William S. Chapman, Stephen Coffin and Daniel Lowndale - 'The Portland Trio' - formed the Townsite Promotional Company in 1849, to exploit their shared holding of much of the nascent city center. Their vision was complex- a plank road from Yamhill County to Portland's docks and warehouses, with both passenger and freight ships, mail service and a newspaper to promote it all. Risky investments, poor business sense and bad fortune combined to ruin their plans, their fortunes and their friendship. The huge fortunes made from their ventures were enjoyed by others.





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At the entry way to Block One, the oldest part of Lone Fir Cemetery, stands this fine monument, the burial which began the cemetery we know today. *Crawford Dobbins* died when the steamship 'Gazelle' exploded, killing many aboard. *Colburn Barrell*, the owner of the Gazelle, also owned the land which became Lone Fir, which was declared a cemetery with the burial of Dobbins and others who were victims of the explosion. Dobbins intended to name the cemetery Mt. Crawford in honor of his friend, but his wife's suggestion of Lone Fir was the one which stuck.



Joseph Strowbridge came from Ohio, a journey which took his family a year. His father died within days of their arrival in Oregon. All of their herd had arrived safely but died in the hard winter that year. Joseph shipped a crate of apples to San Francisco and soon found himself in the domestic produce industry, as well as manufacturing fine shoes. Other accomplishments include organizing the Portland Library Association and agitating for a bridge across the Willamette River.



Map of Lone Fir Cemetery

| | | | | | | | SE Stark St. | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|----|--------------------|--------|-------------|--------------|----|
| A | | B | 5M | 6M | 11M | C | D | E |
| 1 | | 2 | 3 | 71 | 10M 24 | 25 | 34 | 35 |
| 6 | | 5 Fireman's Lot | 4 | 8M | 9M 23 | | | |
| 7 | | 8 | | Soldier's Monument | 22 | Rose Garden | 26 | 33 |
| 10 | | 9 | | 16 | 21 | 27 | 32 | 37 |
| 11 | | 12 | | Mac Leay | 20 | 28 | 31 | 38 |
| 14 | | 13 | | 18 | 19 | 29 | 30 | 39 |
| SE Morrison Gate (Closed) | | | | | | | | |

SE 21th St. (left side), SE 26th St. (right side), Main Entrance (right side)

Coffin Block 1
Lownsdale Block 1

Stephens Block 1
Colburn Barrel Block 1

Crawford Dobbins Block 1
Strowbridge Block 18