



# CURBSIDE: A HARD SURFACE, ACCESSABLE TOUR

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

*Crawford Dobbins* was one of many killed in the explosion of the steamship 'Gazelle' at Canemah in April of 1854. As the owner of both the *Gazelle* and some land which had come with a small, private cemetery on it, Colburn Barrell dedicated ten acres of his land as cemetery and buried his friend *Crawford Dobbins* there. The monument is carved from our native Columbia basalt, and contains a masterful carving of a Douglas fir tree broken off at the top, a motif which signifies a premature death. The monument is signed by the carver, indicating his pride in this piece.



This Douglas fir tree is the *Lone Fir* for which the cemetery is named. At the time, this tree was the only one in the vicinity. Named by Aurelia Barrell, the bronze plaque was added by the Pioneer Rose Association to commemorate its significance. Prior to this, the cemetery was called 'Mt. Crawford', in honor of Mr. Dobbins.

This beautifully-carved marble bowl marks the grave of *James Frush*, and once sat on the bar of the First Street Saloon where he was the bartender. On holidays, free drinks would be served from the mouth of the carved head. For some years, his friends would take the urn back to the saloon at Christmas and toast their favorite bartender.



*Asa Lovejoy*, an attorney in Oregon City, stopped at a clearing on the riverside while boating home from Fort Vancouver. He noticed the natural harbor and staked a claim. The name of the city was decided with a coin toss between Lovejoy (Boston, Mass.) and his partner, Francis Pettygrove (Portland, Maine). Lovejoy was a huge

civic booster, lobbying for a city planned with abundant parkland.



An Oregon Poet Laureate, *Samuel Simpson* emigrated as a child to Corvallis, learning his alphabet by tracing letters in the ashes on the hearth of their log cabin. His

father, the Hon. Ben Simpson, helped found Willamette University, in Salem. Sam, though educated as a lawyer, spent his life publishing small-town newspapers, publishing his sentimental poetry in them. The poem 'Beautiful Willamette' was written in response to a depression, lifted by gazing at the river, and garnered the acclaim for which he is known.

This beautiful sugar marble Celtic Cross is the only such monument at Lone Fir, a stunning display of Scottish symbolism. Oddly, this marker has no inscription. Cemetery records indicate it was the grave of *Mary Alice Oberle*, a 'fancy house' prostitute, reputed to have had '6,000 lovers'. Legend tells it was erected by her devoted clientele and that her sister was so horrified that she had her sister moved and the inscription erased. Our research verifies the two sisters lie side by side at Mt. Calvary cemetery, with very simple markers.



*James Turk* was a notorious shanghai captain, one who procured merchant sailors for the many sailing ships



trading in the harbor. Unsuspecting young men would find themselves captive in the basements of saloons, having fallen through trap doors made for the purpose. Tunnels ran from the basement cages to the docks, where the captives were loaded aboard ships bound for ports around the world. Shanghai, China was the furthest port back then, hence the name.



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The *Donald MacLeay* mausoleum is the largest mausoleum in the cemetery, with a chapel on the second floor. Built in neo-Gothic style and made of soft red sandstone, it is reminiscent of his family home in Ross-Shire, Scotland. Built for his wife Martha, who died in childbirth with their fourth child, the mausoleum cost \$13,500 to construct. Business magnate and philanthropist, MacLeay donated MacLeay Park to the City. Martha landscaped their home with plants from around the world brought by Donald's ships' captains. Many of these plants became the foundation for the landscape industry in Oregon.



The *Pioneer Rose Garden* at Lone Fir is a living jewel, a special connection with Oregon's pioneer heritage. The 23 different roses are documented to have come across



the Oregon Trail with the settlers. In the 1940's, gardener Mary Drain Albro formed the Pioneer Rose Association to search for roses legend held had made the journey.

They traveled from the Whitman Mission in Walla Walls, Washington through the Willamette Valley to the Applegate Valley, along the southern branch of the Trail. In all, 23 roses were found, propagated, and planted around the state, in four gardens. The one at Lone Fir is the only one left, truly a hidden gem. The Pioneer Rose Association also sponsored events at Lone Fir, planted trees and shrubs, and had bronze plaques placed on specimen trees throughout the cemetery.

Nationally renowned in the field of mental care, *Dr. James Hawthorne's* monument fits his standing in the community. He was hired in 1859, charged with providing care to the many pioneers who had stress disorders from the horrors they faced on their journeys. The asylum was on Hawthorne St., which was then called Asylum Avenue. He had a philosophy rare in his time, respecting his patients as human beings and treating them with dignity. They had time outdoors, religious services, holiday observances and musical performances. The hospital was visited twice by suffragist Dorthea Dix, who gave it her approval both times. Hawthorne personally paid for the burial of 132 of his patients here at Lone Fir Cemetery.



Born Leslie Carter Hansen, *Eric Ladd* used the stage name he took while involved in local theater productions in his other life. Better known as the 'Father of Historic Preservation' in Oregon, Ladd spend many years salvaging cast iron ornamentation from the many historic buildings demolished in the name of progress. His goal was to remount these

pieces on other buildings, and that has happened numerous times. One example is the iron gate at the northeast side of Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland. It was taken from the hotel which occupied the space before the square was built. The Bosco-Milligan Foundation, a local historic preservation organization, now conserves the acres of cast iron saved by Ladd.



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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	36
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)								

*Crawford Dobbins* Block 1  
*James Frush* Block 2

*Lone Fir Tree* Block 2  
*Asa Lovejoy* Block 4

*James Turk* Block 13  
*Sam Simpson* Block 13

*Celtic Cross* Block 13