

Lee Mission Cemetery Newsletter

January 2018



Lee Mission Cemetery 2104 D Street Salem, OR 97301

From the President:

It has been quite an eventful summer. The cemetery had gone through a bad news-good news chain of events in the last six months.

Fencing:

The bad news started in June of 2017 year when a 25-foot section of the historic fencing that was surrounding Diamond Square rusted through and fell over. Previous attempts to get it repaired and restored had failed. The fence has been deteriorating for years and had gone from a historic feature to a safety and liability issue.

The fence was originally installed c1906 in conjunction with the re-interment ceremonies of Jason Lee. It was installed as a rectangle and in doing so reconfigured the original diamond shape that the area was historically known for.

The Lee Mission Cemetery Board takes very seriously their responsibility of maintaining and preserving the history of the cemetery. After much deliberation by the Board of Directors it was felt the board could not sustain the liability that the remaining historic fence represented. It appeared that the fencing was rusting from the inside and there was no way of telling what the condition was of the remaining fence.

In previous conversations with the City of Salem Preservation office, the board was under the impression that there would be no process involved in dealing with the historic fence. With

that in mind the board ordered a new wrought iron picket fence appropriate for that early time-period and began having it installed. When the new fence was almost completed the City of Salem Preservation office put a stop order on the completion of the fence. After hearings and fees along with filing costs and a large investment of time, the City determined that the new fence needed to be removed and the historic fence restored. The cemetery will now have to sustain the cost of installing and removing the new fence.

It is important to point out that many of the posts and railings have rusted out and have been lost over time. Almost the entire section of the fence along the front of Diamond Square was rusted through or missing. The east side section of fence that broke off did so 6-8" above the ground making those posts unusable. All that remains of the original fence are the sections along the back and west side.

The cemetery board does not have the resources to restore the fence. A small group of preservationists in partnership with the City of Salem have determined that they have the resources to move ahead on the restoration. They have obtained a donor, a craftsman to do the work and will move forward on the project. Although the cemetery is private property, the board of directors was given no choice in the decision regarding the restoration of the fencing and takes no credit or responsibility for the outcome. The plan, as it is understood at this point, states they will restore what can be restored. The posts and rails that are unusable or missing will be replaced by plain posts and rails to outline where the original fence was located.

Feelings on the subject have ranged from anger against those who created the issue, to those in favor of preservation, to those who wonder why anyone cares one way or the other. The majority who approached the board preferred the new fence and liked the feel it gave to the area. A few expressed a desire to preserve all things historic. Several agreed with the individual who stated, "Who the heck cares anyway." It was, and still is, a subject that has divided those involved. There were no winners.

Vandalism:

Our second bad news story relates to the fact that Waller Vault was vandalized with graffiti in October. It was sprayed with a bright blue paint. The graffiti enforcement team was contacted immediately. They came out with high pressure washers and removed the paint.

In addition, we have had several instances over the past year of people cutting the chain link fence at the back of the cemetery to gain entry at night after the gates are locked. After the last event the security company started making unscheduled trips to run off people gaining illegal entry and it seems to have helped.

I have mentioned many times the need to get rid of the blackberries at the back of the cemetery. After visiting with the City of Salem Police Department, I have changed my mind on the subject. The officer I spoke to pointed out that letting the blackberries fill the areas down to the fence at the back was the best solution to keeping people out. He also pointed out (with a smile) that planting poison oak along the fence line would also be a solution. At this point we are sticking with the blackberries.

Maintenance:

Lee Mission Cemetery encompasses 15 acres of land. For many years it was maintained by a one-man company owned by Jerry Shay of J.P. Services. We are grateful for his years of service and the many times he donated his time to help over and above his maintenance duties. The sad truth is that the cemetery is just too big for one man.

The good news is that in November the cemetery board hired a professional landscaping company, Arne Jensen Landscaping to take over maintenance of the cemetery. They are doing a remarkable job and I am sure the results are noticed by all. As with all things lately, it comes with a cost. We will be giving it at least a year to see if we can sustain the impact on the cemetery finances.

Ann Wilbur Was Lost and Now She's Found:

The following is adapted from the conclusion of Dr. Michael McKenzie's manuscript on the Methodist Church in the Pacific Northwest. Ann Wilbur was the child of James Wilbur, an important Methodist clergyman of the 19th-century. Employing modern technology, McKenzie investigates whether a burial site can teach us anything about what happened to the Methodist church in the Pacific Northwest.

“I found solid literary evidence that Ann Wilbur, James and Lucretia Wilbur's only child, was reinterred from an old defunct pioneer cemetery in Portland, to Lee Mission in 1892 (she had passed in 1851, and had been buried near the old Methodist Church built by James Wilbur near the junction of Taylor and Third Street in Portland. In an article in the Methodist newspaper The Pacific Christian Advocate, I found the notice of reburial at her parents' plot in Lee Mission. The Wilbur side of the Wilbur-Roberts plot is larger, and I theorized that that larger space was because of Ann's reinternment there, at the one edge on the Wilbur side.

This past summer I paid for a GPR (Ground Penetrating Radar) team to go over the whole plot, to see if any specific evidence was there to substantiate the newspaper account (and one letter that mentions the reburial) accounts. In their resultant video, the Roberts couple is clearly visible, since they likely had metal coffins, and there are suggestive reads for James and Lucretia Wilbur (who just as likely had wood coffins, so their burials left less trace). But the real find was what I see as a confirmation of the newspaper account about Ann.

In what can only be described as a very substantial, intriguing discovery, the crew found evidence of a shallow (approx. 2 feet) burial at the edge of the Wilbur side.”

The crew created a video of their investigation and placed it on youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSrOvxFYFAA> [(look for the red flash at about 00:18 in the video)

The Ann Wilbur burial site is unmarked. There has been some discussion about securing donations to mark her grave site. No formal effort has been made, at this point, towards that end.

LEE MISSION CEMETERY
DONATIONS JUNE -DECEMBER 2017

Friend Up to \$49

Jacaline Sowers
Karen Heuberger
 In memory of Mr & Mrs Roe Betterton
Mary Brock
Willard & Dolores Turner
 In memory of Alanson Beers
Pete Dane
Peter & Norma Gekakis
Tammy Goesch
 In memory of Anna Maria Pittman
Kim Blanding
 In memory of Robert P. Blanding

Supporter \$50 – 99

Bishop Calvin D. McConnell
Janet Hoffman
 In memory of Richard C. Hoffman
George L. Knox
David Smedema
Ken Betterton
 In memory of Jessie A. Betterton
Katharine Hagerty
 In memory of Edwin & Sarah Snider

Sponsor \$100 – 249

Albert & Virginia Furtwangler
Wilbur & Lela Jackson
Grant & Marian Fittje
Lorinda Macomber
 In memory of Jerry C. Payne
David Poindexter

Preservation \$250-499

Phyllis Gillis
 In memory of Richard M. Gillis
Clark Family
 In memory of Ned Clark
City View Funeral Home
Jean W. Hand
 In memory of Dick Gillis & Phil Hanni

Historian \$500 - 2499

Guardian \$2500+

Jason Lee United Methodist Church



Donations

Lee Mission Cemetery is a 501(c)13 not-for-profit Corporation. All donations are tax deductible.

100% of donations made to the cemetery go toward improvement and maintenance. Officers and board members volunteer their time and receive no compensation.

Lee Mission Cemetery
P O Box 2011
Salem, OR 97308

Lee Mission Cemetery is licensed through the **Oregon State Mortuary Board**
Phone: 971-673-1500

Board of Directors:

Stephenie L. Flora, President
Sherrill Hochspeier, Secretary-Treasurer
Mimi Stang
Tom Bowers
Phyllis Gillis
Pat Glass
Margaret Stephens
Sean O'Harra

Contact Information:

Lee Mission Cemetery (503) 851-1803
Lot Sales: Rick (503) 559-2242

Web Site:

<http://www.leemissioncemetery.com/>

Comments, additions and corrections regarding the website or the newsletter can be sent to SLFlora47@msn.com

Stephenie@leemissioncemetery.com



*Lee Mission Cemetery
PO Box 2011
Salem, OR 97308*

