



FRIENDS OF HISTORIC
FOREST GROVE

GRAVE MATTERS CEMETERY TOUR 2017

Editor's note: FHFG presented Grave Matters Cemetery Tour on October 7, 2017. During this tour, actors – dressed in attire from the era – portray former Forest Grove area residents. FHFG and the author of this script retains all rights to this script. Written permission is required for using any parts of this script.



Harry A. Crosley, Photographer

May 11, 1866 – December 27, 1953

Portrayed by Alan Archer

Script written by: Lee Harry Tintary

Background provided by Tom Crosley

"Hello. I wasn't expecting such a large crowd, at least not all at once, but that is no matter; I will accommodate you all. Now, you fine folks come and gather close around, so you can hear me – my voice isn't what it once was when I was a young man.

"CROSLEY PHOTO STUDIO. Is the neatest and best equipped west of Portland. All kinds of photo work done with neatness and dispatch. Special attention also given to enlarged portraits in crayon and watercolors. I employ none but the best artists to do this line of work and do not handle and botched up work, but furnish the best as prices within the reach of all. Why send your work away, when you can get better, and cheaper here. A poor picture is dear at any price. OVER THE POST-OFFICE, FOREST GROVE, OR."

(In bewilderment) Then, you haven't come to have your portraits taken but to learn about me?

Well, let's go back even farther to my father, William Crosley, who brought me here to Forest Grove in 1872. He was a wagon maker by trade; then, he held the position of postmaster from 1889 to 1896. He was also a father to eleven children, my being the fourth. Yet, his greatest accomplishment was fighting to preserve the Union and managing to survive the Civil War. Just a little more than a year after the surrender at Appomattox, I was born on May 11, 1866, in the little town of Henry in Marshall County, Illinois.

But most of my early life was right here in Forest Grove, and as long as I stayed here, I always remained close to my father. On Wednesdays, I stood up for him as a Captain in the Sons of Veterans, Chickamauga Camp No. 14 at the I.O.O.F. Hall.

I learned to become a photographer and worked in various partnerships and on my own. I began in 1888 a few miles to the south in Independence in partnership with Pope. Then, in 1889, I opened a studio in Hillsboro with Charles Fritz, and in 1890 we made the "Old Stand" our studio above the post office where my father worked here in town. We made fine artistic photographs and gave reduced rates to the students of Pacific University. All of the cards read, "Fritz and Crosley, over the post office, Forest Grove."

Fritz was from Switzerland and was a real craftsman. In addition to photography, he had a photo engraving business, and did retouching and finishing, including the publication of Forest Grove Illustrated, which included "important buildings, portraits of prominent people, and scenes in and about our forest city." He traveled to Salem, Woodburn, and Newberg filling orders and he told his customers here in Forest Grove that my work would be guaranteed to provide the same level of satisfaction as he had turned out in his gallery.

I photographed so many people: single men and women, couples, families, brothers and sisters, children and babies. And I always made my customers comfortable in my studio. Sometimes I would have them sit on a pedestal or lean across a roughhewn wooden fence; sometimes I would place the babies across fur rugs. I also took the camera, this large wooden box, out into the field, photographing groups of picnic goers on Sunday afternoons, sitting in circles while the fresh ice cream was being churned or soaking their feet in the creek.

Charles and I had some adventures. In 1889, we ventured up the Columbia to Hood River to photograph Cloud Cap Inn that was being constructed, high on the slopes of Mt. Hood. We hired a livery rig and a guide who took us to Lost Lake, where we made camp for the night. The next day we continued through the forest and up to the snow line but far short of the lodge. Now, we were down to our last food and breakfasted the next morning on eight sardines for three men. Finally, we caught sight of the construction through glasses, but a deep canyon separated us, so we made camp again for the night and proceeded without our cameras or horses at four the next morning. We reached the Inn finally at noon the next day.

Fritz was such a great soul. In the 1888 Presidential election he favored Grover Cleveland and made a wager against Joseph Vaughn and his choice of Benjamin Harrison. Well, Fritz lost to Vaughn and paraded him around Main Street twice in a wheelbarrow before he dumped him into the mud in front of Vert Hall and the Masonic Lodge. The Hatchet ran a story and photos.

Not long after, I married Flora Belle on Christmas Eve, 1891. We had two children, Gladys and Neil. We lived first on my father's property on 21st Ave. and A. Street in what had once served as the Stagecoach house. Then, in 1895 my father and I built homes directly across from each other. My cousin, John Matthews, built my home. It was a grand home with a side porch and gabled eaves. My father's is now gone, but the house I lived in still stands at 2125 A. Street.

The next year I almost lost the studio above the post office when a lamp exploded and set fire to the asphaltum on the floor. I rushed in and used a rug to smother the flames then threw the rug out the window, all ablaze. We had a volunteer fire department in those days, but the city fathers did not provide for horses, so the men had to pull the engine themselves. By the time they arrived, the flames were out. The damages came to \$15.

In 1896, my wife and I moved north to Ilwaco, across the river from Astoria and I turned more of the business over to Fritz. Then, tragedy struck - my own father died in 1898 and Fritz followed in 1899. We moved on to Walla Walla in 1899, and then eventually settled in Tacoma.

We lived in Tacoma for 52 years and became members of the Grace Baptist Church. I tried my hand at cabinet making and carpentry until the end of the War and then returned to photography in 1918, first with a studio on K

St., then in 1921 at 11th and J. I continued to make portraits and made photos of large groups, often of actors and choirs.

Flora Belle died in 1919 when she was only 46, after suffering through a long illness. I married Harriet and we lived together until I died on December 27, 1953 at the age of 87.