



TRAIL 1

Life, Death & Memorialisation in Early Townsville

WEST END CEMETERY TRAILS



**Heritage
Trails**
of Townsville

INTRODUCTION

The West End Cemetery is the oldest known historic cemetery in Townsville. The cemetery is an excellent example of a Victorian period cemetery, containing early headstones, plantings and perimeter fencing.

The West End Cemetery 'Life, Death and Memorialisation in Early Townsville' is a self-guided trail, which endeavours to provide an insight into the lives of some of Townsville's most famous individuals, shifts in how death was memorialised during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and trends in monumental headstone design. The trail also provides the opportunity to experience the history associated with Townsville's earliest historic cemetery.

CEMETERY TRAILS

This is the first in a series of trails that have been produced to enable visitors to the West End Cemetery to undertake self-guided walks. Projects such as this provide the community with a better understanding of the city's rich history, who the people were and what life was like.

The focus of this trail is on the lives of some of Townsville's most well-known individuals, recognising their important contribution to the development of the city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Among the individuals recognised on this trail are Thankful Percy Willmet, John Philp and the Captain Henry Daniel Sinclair.

It is the endeavour of Townsville City Council to undertake continuous conservation of the cemetery. The work is being undertaken according to the recommendations in the West End Cemetery Conservation Strategy.

WELCOME TO TOWNSVILLE'S WEST END CEMETERY

The West End Cemetery operated as Townsville's general cemetery between 1866 and 1902.

Individuals buried at the cemetery include people that have made significant contributions to the history of Townsville and the surrounding region.

The headstones at the cemetery highlight the symbolism favoured during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

As you walk through the cemetery you may notice the following symbols:

- Broken Column:** Life cut short
- Dove and Twig:** Noah's dove – symbolising faith and renewal of the world
- Ivy:** Fidelity and eternal life
- Hour Glass:** The passing of time
- Anchor:** Faith
- Shell:** Fertility
- IHS:** The first three letters of the name 'Jesus' in Greek.
- Lamb:** Innocence
- Shamrock:** Individual of Irish Origin
- Rose:** Individual of English Origin

Headstones at the cemetery also demonstrate trends in monumental designs as well as the shift from extravagant monuments erected during the mid-to-late nineteenth century to the more functional and simple monuments erected at the beginning of the twentieth century. Many of the headstones were manufactured by local stonemasons with sandstone, marble, and granite from New South Wales.

The cemetery is a valuable and unique source of historical information. While a large amount of information can be obtained on individuals buried within the grounds, the cemetery also provides information on the memorialisation of death and trends in monumental designs.

1 WALTER & AMY CLIFTON

(1869-1869) & (1867-1870)

This monument marks the resting place of Walter and Amy Clifton. Walter and Amy were children of William Clifton who was a partner in Townsville general merchants and agents, Clifton & Aplin. This headstone is among the earliest erected in the cemetery and is made from a sandstone slab.

The monument also serves to highlight the high number of infant deaths in early Townsville. Headstones at the cemetery indicate that 21% of burials between 1865 and 1890 were erected for infants under one year old.

2 THANKFUL PERCY WILLMETT

(1831-1907)

Thankful Percy Willmett arrived in Townsville in 1870 from the Cape River Goldfields, where he had run a store and acted as a post master. Once in Townsville he established a stationery supply business, performing printing, book binding and lithographs. Thankful served as a member of Townsville City Council for 10 years, with four years as Mayor.

Thankful Percy Willmett was an ardent separationist who was heavily involved in the Northern Separation League from its inception. He served as the President of the Separation Council in 1885.



Grave of Walter and Amy Clifton



Grave of Thankful Percy Willmett

3 SWAILS FAMILY GRAVE

This headstone was erected for five members of the Swails family. The marble slab headstone features a decorative motif of clasped hands. This motif symbolises farewell and reunion. Often the clasped hands feature the cuffs of a man and a woman.

Another feature on the headstone is a symbol for fidelity and eternal life, with the Ivy motif. This monument was manufactured by local stonemasons Melrose and Fenwick.



Swails family grave

4 WILLIAM THOMAS MORRIS (1835-1886)

William Thomas Morris was an auctioneer and commission agent. In 1866 he unsuccessfully applied for the position of Council Inspector of Nuisances. During the 'Jetty Site' controversy in 1875, Morris believed that the 'local jetty committee' had the right to tell the government in the south how money should be spent. A feature of his headstone is the compass and square motif which symbolises a lodge / union membership.



Grave of William Thomas Morris

5 FOLEY FAMILY GRAVE

Thomas Foley was a unionist, Alderman for Townsville City Council and Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Mundingburra between 1912–1920. In the early 1890s, Foley campaigned for his daughter Mary, a state scholarship winner, to attend Townsville Grammar School. Mary was enrolled in 1893, making Townsville Grammar the first co-educational school in Townsville. This headstone is made of polished granite and features elaborate cast iron surrounding around the entire plot.



Foley family grave

CHURCH STREET

CAST IRON SURROUND

JAMES MCDOWELL

WILLIAM STEVENSON

CAPTAIN HENRY
DANIEL SINCLAIR

WALTER AND
AMY CLIFTON

WILLIAM
THOMAS
MORRIS

SWAILS FAMILY GRAVE

THANKFUL
PERCY
WILLMETT

ENTRY

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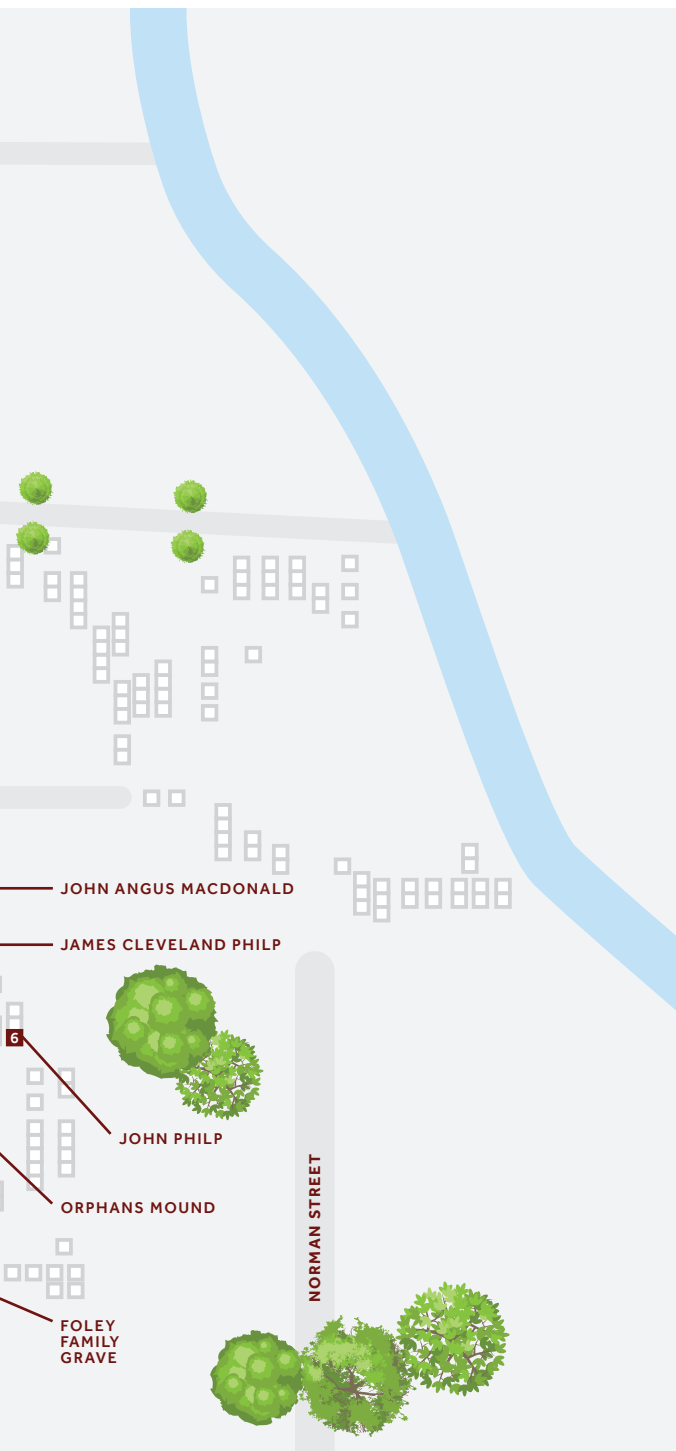
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Grave of John Philp



Orphans Mound

6 JOHN PHILP

(1815-1891)

John Philp was born in Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1815. Philp was a proprietor of a cotton mill before moving to Glasgow where he owned a lime kiln, which exported lime to the West Indies.

John came to Australia in 1862 on the *Helenslee* with his wife Mary Ann Wylie and children John, Robert and Angus. After obtaining the lease on the Municipal Baths in Alice Street Brisbane, he established a home for the family in Kangaroo Point. In 1873 his wife Mary and grandchild were lost at sea when the schooner *Agnes* disappeared on a trip from Mackay to Brisbane. Following their deaths, John returned to Scotland before moving to Townsville in 1882. Establishing a quarry and lime works at Philp's Siding near the Reid River west of the city, he remained in Townsville until his death at 76.

7 ORPHANS' MOUND

This mound is rumoured to contain the graves of children from the Townsville orphanage. Townsville's first orphanage was opened in 1879 and was located in the current suburb of North Ward.



Grave of James Cleveland Philp



Grave of John Angus MacDonald

8 JAMES CLEVELAND PHILP

(1884-1884)

James Cleveland Philp was the third son of Robert and Jessie Philp. Robert Philp married Jessie Bannister in Brisbane in 1878. Their union produced five daughters and three sons, with James Cleveland dying in infancy. Jessie died in 1890. In 1898 Robert Philp remarried. Robert Philp was a partner in the merchant firm Burns Philp. He was the State Member for Townsville from 1888 to 1915 and was the Premier of Queensland between 1898–1903 and 1907–1908.

9 JOHN ANGUS MACDONALD

(1839-1892)

John Angus MacDonald was born in Goulburn, New South Wales in 1839. A miner on the Croydon Goldfield, he died in 1892 aged 52 years, bequeathing his estate to the Croydon Hospital.

The elaborate sandstone monument is in two sections and reflects a classical influence. The upper part of the base section features a carved garland of leaves and flowers, crowned by a pediment. An obelisk tops the base section. The entire grave is surrounded by an iron picket fence set into a cement base.

10 CAST IRON SURROUND

The fabric of the cemetery often reflects the resourcefulness of people. Cast iron balustrading would appear to have been used for this surround and many others throughout the cemetery.



Cast Iron Surround

11 JAMES McDOWALL (C.1859-1882)

This monument was erected for James McDowall who died in 1882. The headstone is a sandstone slab with floral decoration. There are remnants of black paint on the headstone and it would appear that many other sandstone headstones were also painted black. This headstone was later painted white.



Grave of James McDowall

12 WILLIAM STEVENSON (1881-1898)

William Stevenson died at Ross Island (South Townsville) in 1898. His cause of death was listed as being 'peritonitis caused by obstruction of the bowels produced by over lifting'. Appropriately the headstone is in the shape of a broken column symbolising a life cut short.



Grave of William Stevenson



Regatta at Ross Creek (date unknown)

13 CAPTAIN HENRY DANIEL SINCLAIR (1818-1868)

This sandstone headstone would appear to be the oldest in situ monument in the cemetery.

Captain Henry Daniel Sinclair discovered Port Denison (Port of Bowen) with James Gordon in the cutter Santa Barbara in 1859. He drowned in Cleveland Bay while participating in the St Patrick's Day Regatta in 1868. He was 50 years old.



Grave of Henry Daniel Sinclair



The conservation of the West End Cemetery is a long-term project supported by Townsville City Council and the National Trust of Queensland. Several volunteers repair and restore monuments and infrastructure in the cemetery grounds and have made major contributions to the conservation of this important heritage site.

You can contribute to the conservation of the West End Cemetery by assisting the volunteers that work at the cemetery. For more information contact Council on 13 48 10 or visit townsville.qld.gov.au.



**TOWNSVILLE
TOURS & TRAILS
FREE APP**

