Cemeteries

Pilgrim Home Cemetery

Pilgrim Home Cemetery is an outgrowth of the burial grounds of Holland's first log church, built by the colonists in 1847. The log building was used for services until the congregation moved into its new building, the Pillar Church on Ninth Street, in 1857. The first recorded burial in the log church burial ground was September 21, 1854. The name officially became Pilgrim Home Cemetery on October 31, 1889.

In August 1877, the Holland Township Cemetery Association was formed to operate Fairlawn Cemetery on the south side of 16th Street, then the southern city limit. The first recorded burial was September 17, 1877. Fairlawn Cemetery operated until May 15, 1934, when it was deeded to the City of Holland, and became Pilgrim Home Cemetery #2.

Pilgrim Home expanded west of the old Fairlawn Cemetery, into the former fairgrounds area. The north half of the acreage was developed into Pilgrim Home Cemetery #3, opening in 1940. During the fall of 1991, half of the remaining land to the south was developed for the purpose of further expansion.

Graafschap Cemetery

The history of the Graafschap Cemetery area has been handed down from generation to generation more as oral history than written word. Caskets were transported by horse-drawn wagons or hand-carried to the cemetery. One story describes casket bearers, exhausted from illness and malnutrition, making a burial just off the road they were traveling; they were unable to reach the cemetery in Graafschap.

A monument at the Christian Reformed Church in Graafschap recognizes some of Graafschaps first settlers, who were buried near the church. The sixteen pioneers named on the marker were buried 1849-1852.

A Town Board was formed to govern the township area south of the Holland colony in May, 1949. The Board of Health, a division of the Town Board, was instructed to purchase land for a township burying ground in 1859. A two-acre parcel was surveyed, cleared, fenced, and the Board made the necessary regulations. The lots were laid

out and bids received for the purchase of blocks priced at $1.00 each for township residents, and $3.00 for non-residents. Building or repairing of fences, planting trees, sale of lots, and payment for care of the cemetery was handled by a Committee on Cemeteries under the Board of Health. Graafschap Cemetery started on the northeast corner of 32nd Street, extended to the west side of Graafschap Road, and then to the south side of 32nd Street.

A sexton kept records in his home, where most were destroyed by fire. The records have been reconstructed as much as possible, but a portion of the information remains missing. Graafschap Cemetery became part of the City of Holland's cemetery operation in the late 1950's, when the area was annexed by the city.

Columbarium

A columbarium is a place for the respectful and usually public storage of cinerary urns (i.e., urns holding a deceased’s cremated remains). Our columbarium was erected in 2007. Available indoors are glass or granite niches.

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