Van Raalte Farm

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Location

Van Raalte Farm is located on 160 acres of land at the northwest corner of 24th Street and Country Club Road with entrances off of 16th Street, 24th Street and Country Club Road.

History

This site is significant in the history of Holland. Reverend Albertus Van Raalte, founding father of the City of Holland, purchased the land from the federal government over 140 years ago for $2.32/acre. Shortly after the Civil War, the barns were built, and then in 1872 the house was begun. The land remained in the family until it was purchased by the City of Holland in 1983 for $350,000 from the Reimold family. (Rev. Albertus Van Raalte's granddaughter, Julia Van Raalte, married Orlando S. Reimold).

At one time, the land was heavily farmed and had an orchard, peony fields, and dairy cows. The site has been referred to as "The Maples" due to the large majestic trees planted by Van Raalte that form a dense canopy in the front of the house.

The entrance to the property from E. 16th Street is the long driveway that leads directly to the original house. A small addition was built on the south side in recent years, as was the white garage on the west. To the east of the house are two barns and the foundation for what was once a third storage building or barn.

The 160 acre parcel was developed into a park from 1991 to 1999. The house was maintained by John and Judy Madison, caretakers until 2003. The City of Holland made improvements to the house in 2004. Then DeGraaf Nature Center began housing Intern Naturalists on the second floor of this facility. Also, DeGraaf Nature Center began using the back sunroom of the house and the garage as classrooms for some of their programs. The sugar shack was moved to this site in 2005, so that DeGraaf Nature Center may begin tapping the maples and showing participants how maple syrup was made centuries ago.

Amenities

This city park contains a nineteenth century farmhouse and outbuildings set on a hilltop overlooking pasture and

woodlands that include a valley and a branch of the Black River. Parking is located off both 16th and 24th Streets and Country Club Road, providing access to nature trails, picnic shelter, play structures, as well as winter sledding and cross-country skiing. A MNRTF was granted to assist in the development of natural areas on the site.

- Historic Van Raalte Farmhouse
- DeGraaf Nature Center Sugar Shack
- Numerous marked nature trails
- Picnic shelter
- Play strutures
- Winter sledding
- Groomed cross country ski trails
- Parking

Supporting Documents

Cultural Landscape Report
Historic Structure Report
Van Raalte Photographs

Web Links

Directions to Van Raalte Farm

Source URL (retrieved on *2014-07-23 18:00*): http://www.cityofholland.com/parksandcemeteries/van-raalte-farm