

MAPLE HILL CEMETERY, HENNEPIN COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Submitted by Barbara Sexton and Lauraine Kerchner

The *Minnesota Genealogist*, V. 9, No. 4 (Dec 1978), p. 152, carried an article in which Alfred J. Dahlquist reported finding in Belmont Park, Minn. a plaque listing names of 46 Grand Army of the Republic soldiers buried in Maple Hill Cemetery. The following article is the report of additional research.

Maple Hill Cemetery was the second cemetery in the village of St. Anthony and was located in the southwest corner of Section 6 of Hennepin County, bounded on the north by the street called Broadway, between Folk and Pillsbury Avenues northeast. The Village of St. Anthony is part of the present City of Minneapolis.

In 1840, R. W. Cummings obtained this land from the government; he reserved this twenty acre tract to be used for cemetery purposes. This burial grounds was considered a private cemetery and was named Maple Hill Cemetery at a dedication ceremony February 20, 1857. Only ten acres of the ground was platted.

There had been an "unofficial" burying grounds at 5th Avenue and 8th Street southeast. No records were ever kept or ever found for this the first burying grounds in St. Anthony. It is known that Wetsore O'Brien had several bodies from this cemetery moved to Maple Hill. Old time residents expressed the opinion that there was no doubt other bodies still lie where grounds have not been disturbed by street construction.

In 1890, the Health Department closed Maple Hill Cemetery because it was not properly maintained and because of vandalism. Land around the edges of the Cemetery were condemned by the City Council to be used for streets. Families were notified to remove their graves to other locations. Many graves were moved to Hillside and Lakewood Cemeteries. An 1894 Minneapolis Engineers Report (p. 139) informs us that 1,321 bodies and 82 monuments had been removed from Maple Hill Cemetery.

As no absolute records had been kept, it is hard to guess what might have been the fate of the remainder of the 5,000 graves estimated to have been at Maple Hill Cemetery. Mr. Wetsore O'Brien was listed as Sexton of the cemetery for many years.

Mr. Cummings had retained possession of the other ten acres in this tract and it lay idle as an overgrown field. Much vandalism and controversy developed over the use of this land. Mr. Cummings's death complicated the legal proceedings and disputes.

In 1908, an Improvement Assn. was formed and the cemetery was restored and fenced in at a cost of \$12,000.00, the remaining ten acres were cleared and used for a playground. The playground area had been awarded to the Park Board and this park was named Maple Hill Park. While this restoration was taking place, broken gravestones were uncovered. Two of

then reads: D. E. Pickett and Eldridge M. Tinney
Co. A. 146th Ill died Mar 4 1880 17 yrs

By 1916 the vandalism again became a problem. Residents of the area and members of the Dudley F. Chase Post of the GAR and the Rev. Harvey Klinger protested the desecration of the Soldiers Monument in the cemetery. Again there was debate, legislation, and litigation for much of 1916. Stones were carried away leaving little or no evidence as to any remaining graves. Final decisions were made and the Park Board was granted this land. A new and improved Park was made on these grounds about thirty years later.

The old Maple Hill Cemetery-Park is known today as Beltrami Park. It was dedicated August 13, 1948. When the Park Board started construction of Beltrami Park, concerned citizens protested the bulldozing of broken monuments to the edges of the Park, so the Park Board did record what could be salvaged from the thirteen piles that had been made.

In September, 1973, the stone of Janet Sleigh was revealed in some bushes at the edge of the Park. The rains had apparently washed away the dirt covering.

Others who had protested the moving of their graves were: F. C. Brittain of 3656 Garfield Ave. So. A city fireman, he said his mother, brother, and son are buried in Maple Hill Cemetery. Also Alderman Josiah M. Chase said his grandfather, Dr. Simon Rankin, who was a first physician in Minneapolis, and a baby brother and sister had their monuments "wrecked and moved." City Controller Dan C. Brown said his grandfather's and grandmother's graves were despoiled.

It is to be hoped that in some way a complete catalogue reconstruction of this cemetery can be made as some of the earliest settlers of Minneapolis were probably buried at Maple Hill Cemetery.

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Copied by Lauraine Kirchner

These are exact copies of recordings from a notebook in the offices of the Minneapolis Park Board. Four pages had been cut out preceding the File #1 recording.

File #1

Abbie Berry wife of Burk O'Brien - no dates
G. A. Rollins d August 21, 1869 39 yrs
Newton S. only son of S. W. Kertland d May 10, 1877 13 yrs
Alexander son of J. & E. L. Pierce July 13, 1867
Alma Sleigh child of G. & J. S. Woodley d Oct 11, 1862 age 5m 21 da
Lucy D. wife of D. Peabody d. Dec. 11, 1885 age 62 yrs
Frank A. son of David & L. D. Peabody d May 2 1883 age 22 yrs
Henry A. son of David & M. A. Murphy d June 28, 1868 age 1 yr 6 mo

File #2

child of S. & N. Lawrence d Feb 26, 1863 age 9 mo
 John Nelson b Dec 3, 1849 d Sept 8, 1883
 Alexander C. Belford d May 16, 1869 age 42 yrs
 Robbie son of S. & E. Lawrence d Oct 27, 1870 age 8 mo
 William son of J. T. & T. Mussel b Oct 4 d Nov 4, 1886
 Katy Eklung b Mar 25, 1847 d July 22, 1886

File #3

John Myer 46 yrs 6 mo
 Isabelle Munroe wife of J. E. McDougell d Dec 26, 1884 27 yrs
 Ida wife of Samuel R Splain d Nov 11, 1883
 Little Pearl d Feb 21 1883 1 yr 2 mo
 J. E. Wallace d Sept 14, 1860 29 yrs
 Charles Scott d Feb 11, 1864 40 yrs 8 mo
 Mary Ellen Lad d Nov 28, 1868 28 yrs

File #4

Eddie Vining d July 21, 1872 5 yr 8 mo
 Charles A. Delvin Co A 9th Minn d Aug 30, 1864 23 yrs
 Christian Coringer b Dec 23, 1800 d Mar 1, 1868
 August Hugo Swanson b Nov 4, 1888 d Dec 26, 1888
 Heinrich Uehlen b Sept 15, 1834 d Oct 24, 1872
 Harry A. Hewes d Dec 1883 43 yrs
 Elisha Hewes d Sept 11, 1886 40 yrs
 Nancy wife of William Allan d April 19, 1874 age 49 yrs

File #5

James O. Smith d Jan 21, 1886 64 yrs
 Lizzie T. wife of E. T. Lowell d May 18, 1884 age 22 yrs
 Jane Morrison wife of James O Smith d May 6, 1880 age 57 yrs
 John B. d Sept 18, 1859 9 mo
 John B. d Sept 29, 1860 11 da
 these John B. are on the same stone
 Emma wife of John E. Hagen d Sept 2, 1881 26 yrs 10 mo 10 da
 wife of J. A. Oleson d July 26, 1887

FILE #6

Fredrick Kaufer b Oct 20, 1857 d Nov. 26, 1887
 Mary Fletcher dau of Rev. J. F. Chaffee b July 7, 1850 d 1859
 James S. Cyphers d 1869
 John E. Stites son of M. & N. Stites d Apr 13, 1863
 Emma wife of L. D. Hill d Oct 16, 1872
 Stanway b Apr 1, 1884 d Sept 30 1884
 H. DeForist son of H. S. & Josephine Howe d Oct 13, 1856 14 mo

File #7

Francis Hanlon d May 22, 1887 age 58 yrs native of Ireland
 Emma Schroeder d Nov 12, 1879

Fredrick Gussner b Sept 2, 1827 d Jan 23, 1880
Anna wife of Rufus Cook d Feb 11, 1863 29 yrs
Florence W. dau of J. B. & E. A. Newman d Nov 5, 1882
Caroline W. wife of N. S. Munson d Dec 18, 1878 22 yrs 10 mo
Anna wife of J. H. Duffie d Sept 5, 1887 27 yrs 6 mo

File #8

wife of J. T. Hill d Apr 11, 1856 31 yrs
Anna L Gussner b Sept 1, 1872 d Nov 5, 1876
Olive E. Channel wife of W. L. Sargent d Oct 6, 1876 49 yrs

File #9

Carrie Lisette dau of Geo. F. & Susan Cross d Aug 15, 1858 1 yr 11 mo 23 da
Frank A. Farnam b June 13, 1879 d May 30, 1886
son of Christen & Marget Schuster a native of Sandusky Ohio died 1855
Olive Mary Ford b Aug 9, 1852 d June 9, 1888

File #10

Nathan Oelburn d May 12, 1855 56 yrs
Minerva wife of Ray Myer d Sept 21, 1881 23 yrs
Elizabeth d Dec 17, 1881 21 yrs record indicates only part of stone here
Allan Marshall b at Somerset Md. Sept 9, 1845 d Oct 10, 1880
Johann C. H. Beck b July 1809
Adelbert F. Dow b Calan Me Apr 17, 1846 d Sept 10, 1867 21 yrs
Elizabeth A. Fall d May 24, 1866 62 yrs
Lydia wife of Eddy Hickey d Jan 2, 1854 age 30 yrs
Henry J. sons of I. I. & C. Lewis d Sept 9, 1853 11 mo 21 da
Myrtle E. dau of D. & Jenny Wilson d Aug 14, 1874 2 yrs 2 mo

File #11

Elijah Packard b Sept 14, 1821 age 39 yrs 9 mo 18 da
these on one stone:
Wilbur b Jan 20, 1860 d Oct 3, 1869
Mabel b Mar 31, 1867 d Oct 27, 1869
children of I. T. & M. W. Reeves

File #12

Eleanore dau of W. T. & Mary Keover b Jan 4, 1837 d July 13, 1837 6 mo 9 da
Mary J. Woodcock d Dec 9, 1872 age 63 yrs
Anna M. dau of N. & Nancy Haley age 16 yrs 9 mo 25 da
Josephine wife of H. S. Howe d Apr 19, 1856 31 yrs
Little Curtis son of H. & L. A. Baker d July 17, 1862 age 3 mo 6 da
John Tasker d Feb 2, 1878 36 yrs
Arnt Glenn Steine -----
Joseph M. Prescott Co A 9th Minn Vol
Bally Stanchfield wife of William Stanchfield -- only part of stone