

Brainerd and Westminster Cemeteries Cranbury, New Jersey

General Information Sheet

This file contains all recorded burials in the Cranbury Westminster and Brainerd cemeteries through the end of the year 2002, listed in a database.

Overview:

The PDF file is composed of records from the two cemeteries and the information was not gathered in the same way for each. The Westminster portion of the database was compiled by Ben DeAngelis as an Eagle Scout Project, using information found on monuments in the graveyard. No written burial records for Westminster have been located prior to 1987. It is possible there are burials in Westminster for which no monument exists or the monument is not readable. In the later case, the existence of a monument is recorded along with the notation that it was not readable or only partially readable.

How the Westminster cemetery developed once the oldest sections were sold out is not recorded. The burial grounds were established for the congregation (and relations) of the Second Presbyterian church and were later opened to members of the First Presbyterian Church (and relations) when the two churches merged in the 1930's. The Second Presbyterian Church itself was torn down in 1935.

The Brainerd cemetery portion of the database was compiled using monument inscriptions for the Old Yard, written Burial Book records, and data on the Plot Cards for the Main Yard. Again, it is possible there are burials in Brainerd for which no Old Yard monument exists, the Old Yard monument is not readable, or, for all yards, a written record was never recorded. Monuments for all portions of Brainerd other than the Old Yard WERE NOT examined.

The Brainerd Cemetery development can be roughly determined. (See the Brainerd Cemetery Map) The Old Yard developed to the North side of the First Presbyterian church, first with approximately 55 rows (not of equal length) with the plots numbered from North to South. Later, 20 additional rows were added, also of uneven length and number, but with the plots numbered from South to North. When this expansion was done is not known exactly, but the earliest burial date in these 20 rows is 1801, with several more in 1811 and 1812, giving an approximation of when the rows were added.

The next phase was the addition of what is now known as the Main Yard in 1854, with plots numbered from 1 to 397. These plots begin in the with North to South numbering, then go back and forth till the top of the block is reached, then jump to the next section and repeat, moving down the block. At first glance, this numbering approach is a curious way to number things, but as this project was in progress, the following description of mid-1800's surveying and land plot numbering came to light. It explains how land sections were numbered as they were surveyed in the mid-west and west, but it is apparent that the approach was a standard practice and apparently was applied when the Main Yard was originally surveyed. "Within the township, the thirty-six sections were numbered in an idiosyncratic fashion established by the 1796 act, beginning with

Section 1 in the northeast corner, and continuing first westward then eastward, back and forth in a 'boustrophedonic' fashion, that is, like an ox pulling a plow, until Section 36 was reached in the southeast corner." (*Measuring America*, Andro Linklater, Warner and Company, New York, New York, 2002)

Later, additional rows were added beyond these first two blocks of 397 plots, adding 108 additional plots. The earliest burials recorded in these rows date from 1872-1873.

Another complete block of plots was added to the south of the first two blocks of the Main Yard, plots numbered 506-784, an addition of 278 plots. The numbering system was modified to the extent that plot numbers start in the NW corner and across to the NE corner, then move one row south and return, using the same back and forth process as before, but with the new cardinal orientation. The earliest burial date in this block is in 1913.

The section known as F2 was added in the 1980's and the first burial recorded here was in 1986.

Various other small sections of the yards have been designated for cremation burials and burials of children.

The burial grounds known as the North Yard contain burials in a Potter's Field and a "Colored Section". These portions of the yard apparently are as old as most of the Old Yard, but, except for 24 plots in the "Colored Section", unstructured, with some graves in rows, where monuments exist, but in no surveyed, organized way. The combined areas of these two yards are now named the North Yard, but the database refers to them under their old designations to allow cross reference to the original records.