

DESCENDANT COMMUNITY OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY GROUNDS CEMETERIES, INC.

by Judy Klimt Houston, President

<https://descendantcommunity.org>

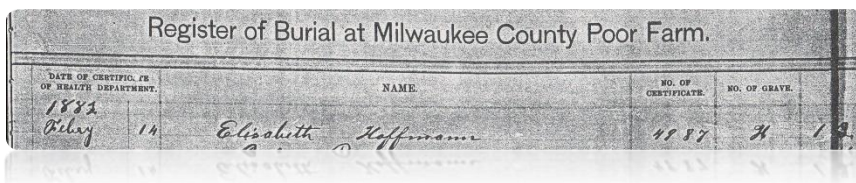
Did your ancestors reside in Milwaukee between 1852 and 1974? During these years, the County provided burials for residents who died when facing poverty, health issues, or if the individual was unidentified at the time of death. Four cemeteries were utilized at the County Grounds, with interment dates often indicating the burial site – though the Asylum cemetery interred its own specific patients from 1880-1914.

This article is one of several produced to detail the history of the County Grounds cemeteries which held the burials of approximately 10,000 Milwaukee County residents.



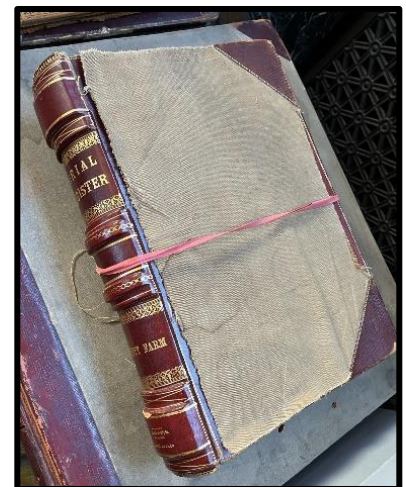
Milwaukee County purchased much of the Wauwatosa land in 1852 for the future planned care of Almshouse residents. One would assume the first burials to occur in Cemetery 1 would be shortly after the County began to accept residents at their “new” care facility.

Records of death were not required until 1852. A burial ledger does not exist for all but 34 burials at Cemetery 1.



As such, little is known of the persons interred at this site...until the following was penned into the first page. February 14, 1882 burial certificate of Elisabeth Hoffmann, grave H-1.

[Visit the Milwaukee County Historical Society to view the leather-bound burial register. Majority of the burial register was transcribed by volunteers leading to Find-A-Grave memorials.]



Disclaimer: Aerial images showing cemetery map placement(s) are from a 2022-2023 WHS slideshow presentation and are subject to minor changes when provided by the WHS.

Aug.	7	Unknown Man drowned	6324	M	29
	12	Amanda Johnson	6549	M	30
	13	Emma Sonntag	6369	M	31
	20	Unknown Man drowned	6637	M	32
	22	Fred W. Thedareten (Circumlocution)	6690	M	32
		Unknown Man	6691	M	32

Further down the first page, the August 22, 1882 entry for Fred Thedareten indicated "First in new cemetery." Assumption is this entry

identified the first person interred in Cemetery 2. When the Coroner's Inquest for Friedrich was reviewed, Friedrich's son signed their surname as "Thederahn." Based on this example and many similar issues found hidden amid the ledger, one cannot assume all names were spelled correctly.

The new start date of adult interments at Cemetery 3 is noted on July 3, 1925, while the children's move to Cemetery 3 is noted to begin November 4, 1925.

			New Cemetery for Elders	Start Here				
July	3	1925	Aug. Konowaki	June 29	1925	Margue	Edison Church Milwaukee	44 7 3
	16		Unknown Male Child	July 11		Margue	Edison Church Milwaukee	93 7 16
	21		John Wilson	July 17		Margue	Edison Church Milwaukee	45 7 21
Nov	4	1925	John Under	Oct 16	1925	St. Joseph	St. Joseph's Milwaukee	114 10 4
	7		New Cemetery for children	Start Here		St. Joseph	St. Joseph's Milwaukee	105 11 7
	10		Elizabeth Kumpf	Nov 2	1925	St. Joseph	St. Joseph's Milwaukee	105 11 10
			Baby Ed Under	Nov 7	1925	St. Joseph	St. Joseph's Milwaukee	105 11 10

The Register held names to the last burial inscribed as: Unknown White Female, grave 2 - on June 14, 1974.

617-14	Uiolet Katherine Waddington	2-4-74	St. Mary's	6-14-74	"	# 1
6-14-74	Unknown White female	found 5-5-74	Lake Mich	6-14-74	"	# 2

According to Brooke L. Drew's scholarly research¹, 7,794 names in total are found in the Register. Drew inspected approximately 250,000 records.

Cemetery 1: 34 persons listed on page 1 from Feb 1882 to Aug 1882 and prior to Cemetery 2 interments. Assumption is burials began soon after 1852 land purchase and continued to August 1882. Cemetery 1 held 500-700 adult burials and over 1,000 if the area also included infants.^{2 3}

Cemetery 2: 5,382 names were entered during the Cemetery 2 interment timeline. As many as 26% of names interred during Cemetery 2's operational timeline were omitted suggesting 7,226 individuals were actually buried at the second cemetery.¹

Cemetery 3: 2,378 names listed in the Register during Cemetery 3's operational timeline. Possible name omission(s). Appears an undetermined number of Cemetery 2 burials may have moved to Cemetery 3 about 1929-1930.^{3 4}

Asylum Cemetery 4: no Register exists. Based on various records = 150-300 burials.⁵

TOTAL INTERMENTS AT COUNTY GROUNDS = APPROXIMATELY 10,000 INDIVIDUALS

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WORKS CITED

- ¹ Drew, Brooke L., "Death in Anonymity: Population Dynamics and the Individual Within the Milwaukee County Poor Farm Cemetery, 1882–1925." (2018) *Theses and Dissertations*. 1787.
<https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/1787> (Retrieved 13 Aug 2024)
- ² Overstreet, David F and Sverdrup, Keith A., "Archaeology and Remote Sensing Investigations at Windsor Drive and Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee County Medical Complex, Milwaukee County, WI." GLARC Reports of Investigations No. 312 Milwaukee (1992, pp. 29-30)
³ <https://sites.uwm.edu/milwaukee-county-poor-farm-cemetery/the-mcpfc/timeline/> (Retrieved 13 Aug 2024)
- ⁴ Richards, P.B. et al., "Nine For Mortal Men Doomed to Die: The Archaeology and Osteology of the 2013. Milwaukee Country Poor Farm Cemetery Project." (2016, p. 4)
- ⁵ Richards, Patricia and John D. Richards, "Archaeological Investigations of Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Development Areas, Milwaukee County Grounds, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin." University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Report of Investigations #146 (2001, p. 51)

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