

More Franklin Park Stories

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Weep not for me children dear...

Old Cemeteries Filled with Art and Verse

Older cemeteries are interesting places for a leisurely stroll. Weathered markers not only yield information eagerly sought by family historians, but often display art and verses that not only say something about the individual buried beneath, but also the time in which he lived. Burial grounds little disturbed by human activity may also yield heritage roses and other plantings once used to decorate graves. Strolling through an old cemetery is a walk through history.

Colonial era markers often feature images of death. Skulls, skeletons and angels of death were meant to frighten the living into leading more godly lives. Eventually, grave art was used to either portray grief or reveal something about the individual. It was during the Victorian era of the mid to late 1800s that elaborate grave ornamentation became fashionable.



Five 19th century church cemeteries are scattered throughout Franklin Park along with an historic burial ground and a newer memorial park with the cemeteries and memorial park in active use.

Founded in 1822, Fairmount Presbyterian is Franklin Park's earliest documented church. Its oldest markers are of typical early 19th century design, a vertical unpolished stone with a simple inscription placed directly into the ground. Slate, sandstone or whatever stone was available was used. Little Hill Methodist also features stones from the 1820s.

By the mid-1800s, after transportation improved and quarried stone from further distances became available, white marble was a popular choice for markers. Because marble is easily carved, grave art became more elaborate. A variety of verses and motifs with symbolic meanings were used to decorate markers. Stone masons often engraved their names on what were works of art. Because marble weathers quickly, however, many once beautiful markers are now worn and lichen covered. Polished granite gained popularity in the late 1800s and continues to be widely used.





A sheaf of wheat represented the harvest and was often used for those who died in old age.

*This lady was a good woman.
Walburga Soergel 1824-1899*



The upward pointing finger means ascension into Heaven. Elizabeth was the relict or widow of James Neely.



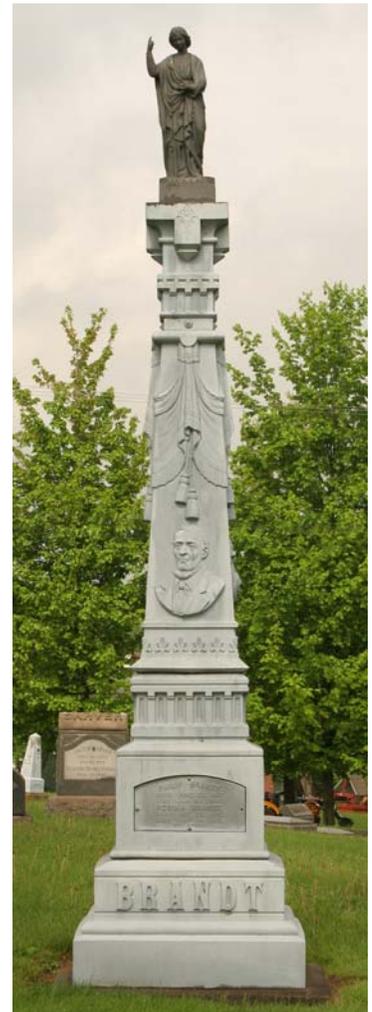
An arch depicted the passage into heaven of Thomas and Sarah Duff.

*A light is from our household gone,
A voice we loved is stilled,
A vacant place around our hearth,
Which never can be filled.
Adolph Beurermann 1819-1896*

*Sleep dearest Father take thy rest,
God calls thee home, He thought it
best. It was hard to part with thee,
but God's strong arm supported me.
Matthias Fisher 1814-1881*



James Neely and Alexander Crees(e) both died in 1864 while fighting in the Civil War. Crees died in the Battle of the Wilderness. His epitaph reads, *“Through many nights and dangers, Amidst our country’s gloom, This soldier of a loyal band, Was marching to the tomb.”*



Elizabeth Riley’s marker features an intricately carved angel, open door and flowers. The verse is no longer legible. Philip and Regina Brandt’s zinc marker depicts a draped funeral pall and Philip’s likeness. Their eleven year old daughter Christena’s zinc marker features a lamb, which marked the graves of children. German texts on Trinity Lutheran markers reflect the heritage of its founding families. Christena’s epitaph translates into *Farewell all her earthly friends.*