A Walking Tour

The Walking Tour is 1.4 miles in length and begins at the Catlin Chapel (see map inside). Names on the map without a number are not on the tour but are described with a photo or are listed in Forest Hill Facts (on the back page). The tour includes only a few of the many interesting grave sites and monuments to be found at Forest Hill. Visitors are encouraged to explore on their own.

History of Forest Hill Cemetery

Owned by the City of Madison, Forest Hill Cemetery was established in 1868. The mayor, George B. Smith, described the location as "high and slightly, overlooking the entire city and surrounding lake. No more appropriate place could be selected for the burial of the dead." In fact, a thousand years earlier, resident Native Americans had built effigy burial mounds at this location. Although the view of the lake is considerably hidden today by the huge trees that have grown up, the cemetery still retains the park-like atmosphere that it had when it was first laid out. Forest Hill was an early example of the "rural" cemetery plan which had first begun in the U.S. with the creation of Mount Auburn Cemetery just outside Boston.

Confederate Rest Sec. 34 A large number of Confederate soldiers captured in 1862 at Island Number 10 and the Mississippi River were sent to prison at Camp Randall. Many sickened and died due to exposure and disease. They were buried in Confederate Rest.

Effigy Mounds and Veterans' Section Sec. 35 Two pyramid mounds and a linear mound (900-1200 A.D.) were saved from demolition by archaeologist Charles E. Brown (who is buried in Section 1). These additional linear mounds were destroyed at the turn of the century. Today, veterans from the Spanish American and more recent wars are buried around the mounds.

Slaughter Family Sec. 30 Moses Slaughter (1850-1933) was a professor of Latin at the University of Wisconsin, and author of essays and monographs on classical and Latin subjects. His wife, Cartusia Elizabeth Taylor Slaughter (1870-1963), was a civic leader, scholar, and author of several books. They shared an appreciation and love of the classics, which is reflected in their attractive monument.

Catlin Chapel Sec. 30 The Catlin Chapel was erected in memory of John Catlin (1833-1874), the Clerk of the Territorial Supreme Court at the first session in Beloit in 1856. He helped plat Madison in 1837 and served as first postmaster. He was Madison's first lawyer, the first district attorney, secretary of Wisconsin Territory (1846-1848), first Dane County judge, and president of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad. Catlin himself is buried in Rochester, New York.

Those gates were at the cemetery entrance until they were removed during the 1960's.

Forest Cemetery

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