

3001 NOTRE DAME AVENUE – BROOKSIDE CEMETERY
Donald D. England (Winnipeg Superintendent of Parks), 1878



In 1877, the City of Winnipeg purchased property well beyond its boundaries (nearly 10 kilometers at the time), intending to establish its first cemetery. A Cemetery Committee was organized the following year and on October 6, 1878, the first burial took place at Brookside Cemetery. The facility has grown to be the largest in Western Canada, home to over 100,000 interments.

Immediate steps in its development included construction of various buildings including a caretaker's and foreman's houses, purchasing adjoining property for future expansion, extending rail lines to the property, building roadways and paths within the cemetery, adding a water tower, stone and a pair of metal gates on Notre Dame Avenue, a bridge over Omand's Creek and a chapel/morgue building.

Brookside Cemetery came under the management of the Public Parks Board in 1896 and under its guidance and its head gardener, David D. England (1865-1929), the City's first Superintendent of Public Parks, extensive landscaping was completed. Large greenhouses were built on the property to supply it with all the plants it needed.

The burials at the Cemetery are a history of Winnipeg: business leaders, entertainers, politicians along side everyday Winnipeggers, labourers, and destitute citizens whose burials were paid for by the City.

During World War I, Brookside Cemetery took on a new and important role, setting aside an area of the cemetery for military burials in conjunction with Winnipeg's designation as a major Canadian centre for the care of injured returning soldiers from overseas. Nearly all the veterans who succumbed to their injuries were buried at Brookside, regardless of their hometowns. Today, the Brookside Field of Honour is one of the largest and oldest Military interment sites in Canada and is considered Canada's most significantly designed Military Field of Honour. It features over 10,000 interments marked by Military Grey Barrie granite upright monuments. The Tear Drop Section contains approximately 151 of the earliest interments of the Field and represents the most war dead interred together in one section of any cemetery in Canada. The "Stone of Remembrance", the only one installed in Canada, were placed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in cemeteries across the world to remember Commonwealth veterans, especially those missing in action.

In 1977, the administration of Brookside Cemetery moved to the newly formed Parks and Recreation Department, the Cemetery Branch. In 2018, Brookside Cemetery was recognized by the Province as Manitoba's Provincial Cemetery.

Ongoing maintenance of flat and upright headstones is one of the important activities at Brookside. Beginning in 2008, the military headstones are undergoing a complete restoration, including headstone refurbishing, replacement of all concrete foundation beams, and new landscaping.

Elements of the cemetery that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Site:

- The arrangement of the cemetery yard with curvilinear pathways connecting several mostly amorphous burial sections.
- Landscape features including a variety of tree species, lawns, and stone and metal gates along Notre Dame Avenue.