

= Grove Church Cemetery =

The Grove Church Cemetery is a nonsectarian cemetery , located on the western slope of the Hudson Palisades , along with several other cemeteries in a string of green open space , in Hudson County , New Jersey , United States . The Grove Church , who owns the cemetery , is one of the oldest religious bodies in the area , and it has had an operating cemetery since 1847 . Throughout its history , prominent families have been buried there , as well as American Civil war veterans . There have also been reports of vandalism and misuse of the property since the 19th century , and in 2007 some of the cemetery grounds were occupied by the homeless .

= = Location = =

Grove Church Cemetery is located at 1132 46th Street in North Bergen , New Jersey . The cemetery also fronts Kennedy Boulevard which in the 19th century was known as Dallytown Road , or Bergenwood Road . Overlooking into the Secaucus , it starts at the top and extends onto the middle of the western face of the Hudson Palisades . Grove Church Cemetery is one of several burial sites on the western slope , along with Machpelah Cemetery , Hoboken Cemetery and Weehawken Cemetery , which is only a few blocks away from Grove Church along with Palisades Cemetery . These grounds constitute a string of green open spaces in North Hudson County . The gated entrance is across the street , east of the Bergenline Avenue station of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail in Union City , New Jersey .

= = History = =

Located in then both Union Hill and New Durham , the Reformed Church at New Durham which was also known as the " Grove Church " , was for many years the only Methodist church in the area . It has been operational since April 12 , 1843 , and was one of the first religious bodies established in the wilds of North Hudson , the Bergen Woods . The first pastor was Reverend Philip Duryee who acted until 1844 , and was succeeded by William Taylor , a Rutgers graduate who later acted as pastor for a nearby Jersey City congregation . Taylor was succeeded by William Mabon in 1846 . The land at the cemetery has been used for burial purposes since 1847 , which has made it one of the oldest burial grounds in Hudson County . Typical grave depths are approximately five feet , and the grounds bare dry soils of yellowish earth , loose drift gravel , and pockets of sand , as well as occurrences of trap rock . Before the turn of the 20th century , there were two vaults on the premises , one made of brick and the other of stone ; there are many more now . Overall , the grounds at Grove Church Cemetery are roughly 8 acres (3 @. @ 2 ha) . Because of the natural descent of the cemeteries location on the western side of the Palisades , ground water flows into the surrounding marshes in Secaucus , and contamination of wells , springs , and water @-@ courses in the surrounding area is very low . Other than having a relatively large congregation , many of the church members were of wealth , and owned plots and vaults in the cemetery .

In the year 1890 , Edwin B. Young , a descendant of United Empire Royalists and a colonel in the King 's Royal , was made superintendent of the grounds . A particular wealthy family , the Gardners , had large granite vaults built very visibly to pedestrians along then Bergenwood Road . It was reported by the New York Sun that grave robbers had broken into various vaults at Grove Church . The Gardner vault had been found opened , which required the vandal to smash locks as well as break the iron railing , which was believed to be achieved by the use of hammers and chisels stolen from an adjoined marble yard . Robert Gardner 's metallic coffin was found opened , removed from the shelf upon which it sat . The investigation , led by Superintendent Young , left those involved unsure of why the perpetrators would have broken in , and with no apparent objective or reason , they concluded that it may have been done simply to desecrate the resting place of the dead . Young held that position of superintendent until 1899 , for the pursuit of real estate .

It is owned and maintained by the Reformed Grove Church , and is still active and well kept , and the offices are located on the cemetery grounds . There are 31 American Civil War veteran graves

at Grove Church Cemetery .

= = Use by the homeless = =

Called " a cemetery for the living " , it was reported in 2007 that between 30 and 135 homeless people were squatting in the Grove Church Cemetery . An investigation had been brought on by a sexual assault of a woman , who was near the Bergenline Avenue Station of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail , and by knife @-@ point was brought into the cemetery and assaulted . Upon searching the grounds , police found remnants of living activity , namely mattresses , pillows , and blankets , as well as garbage strewn across the lawn . Also , small shacks had been built along the perimeter . To the dismay of neighbors , who had complained about the noise and feeling unsafe , there was not much that the police could do to remove the people off of the premises ; there is no law against loitering in public places . One victim , however , claimed that there were bronze urns stolen from his relative 's tomb , and Reverend Douglas Shepler , the pastor of the Grove Reformed Church , reported a woman visiting a grave had her necklace ripped off and stolen by one of the men . In addition , the Reformed Grove Church had been supporting the homeless by providing them with meals , as it is within their rights and devotion to charity that they will not turn away anyone seeking help . It has a few times over the course of several years removed the homeless who were squatting there , but they manage to relocate there .

The homeless , who were by majority South and Central American males , said that they came into the area from their respective countries in promise of work . A particular individual who was interviewed said that the work he was told about had only been short term and , along with many of the others , had nowhere else to go . Most who had been approached about relocation into nearby homeless shelters express their hesitation to leave the Grove Church Cemetery grounds , fearful that they would lose the freedom they had on the public property . Measures were taken to remove and clean up the cemetery , and it is believed that while some may have entered into shelters , others likely still reside in the general area , while some had moved into the wooded eastern side of the Palisades hills in Union City , where many shacks can be seen supporting the homeless .

= = Notable burials = =

James Buttersworth (1817 ? 1894) , English painter who specialized in maritime art .

William Hexamer (1825 ? 1870) , American Civil War major .

Horace Grant Underwood (1859 - 1916) , transferred to Yanghwajin Foreigners ' Cemetery