

Faling Cemetery

GPS: 42.977557, -78.866537
569 Delaware Rd
Tonawanda, NY 14223

Faling Cemetery History

About the Cemetery

(The following is from John Percy's book, *Tonawanda, The Way It Was*, Partner's Press, 1979.)

Along the east side of old Delaware Road, at the corner of Willowbreeze, is located one of the oldest burial grounds in the area. This plot was established just north of the Richard Faling farmhouse on the 58-acre plot he settled about 1815 with his wife Catherine. The Falings and the Zimmermans to the north were the earliest families to settle along the old Indian trail that would become Delaware Road. When an infant daughter, Mary Ann Faling, died at six weeks of age in 1816, the plot was established. Because no minister was available to officiate at the funeral, her own mother conducted the simple rites. Other interments were made over the remainder of the 19th century.

Time has left its mark on the gravestones but enough can be seen on some of the remaining markers to give the visitor an idea of the history of that portion of the township during its pioneer era. The first historian of the Town of Tonawanda, Dr. Frederick S. Parkhurst, did much research on the history of the old cemetery about a half century ago. He discovered one old grave with a partly illegible German inscription which reads in part - "B. 1786 D. 1816."

Notable Graves

One particularly notable pioneer buried in the Faling Cemetery was Adam W. Zimmerman who died on August 30, 1839 at the age of 53. Another Zimmerman, Emeline, wife of pioneer Jeremiah Faling, died on September 4, 1886. The graves of Jeremiah and David Faling are marked with impressive columns. Numerous other markers indicate how numerous the Falings once were in the township. Many of the Falings used an Anglicized form of the German name, which accounts for the appearance of "Failing" on many old town maps.

Four veterans of the War of 1812 are buried here: William Zimmerman, 1796-1871; Jacob Zimmerman, 1783-1826; Peter Zimmerman, who died in 1854; Richard Faling died August 27, 1868. A Civil War veteran, Frederick Bleyle, who was born in 1806, died in 1890 and is buried here.

Other pioneer families represented in the cemetery include Martin, Shell, Cherry, Dimberger and Wire. Probably Jacob Wire was the earliest born of those interred in this cemetery. The former supervisor of the Town of Tonawanda was born four years prior to our Declaration of Independence and lived to the age of 85.

Cemetery Maintenance

This cemetery, sometimes known also as the Zimmerman Cemetery, reached its zenith toward the end of the 19th century. After Elmlawn Cemetery opened in 1901, many families had graves removed there. Today many of the old headstones in the historic Faling Cemetery are indecipherable due to weathering and the fact that many of them lay prostrate in the soil for so many years. In recent years, the Town of Tonawanda has maintained the cemetery as it is charged to do so by New York State law.

The present historical marker was placed there in 1971 in conjunction with the celebration of the Erie County Sesquicentennial. A dedication ceremony was held in June of that year and attended by Robert J. Faling, a direct descendant of Richard and Catherine Faling, Town Supervisor Carlton Cruickshank, Town Historian George Batterson and Village Historian John Percy. The old burial ground was re-dedicated on August 1, 1976 by the Tonawanda-Kenmore Historical Society as one of a series of observances of our nation's Bicentennial throughout the Town of Tonawanda.

Faling Cemetery Burial Records

For a listing of burials in this cemetery, please visit:

<http://www.interment.net/data/us/ny/erie/faling-cemetery/index.htm>