

Wilmington Historical Society
309 W. Opp St.
Wilmington CA 90744
wilmingtonhistory@gmail.com

Finding Aid for the Historic Wilmington Cemetery Collection, 1934-2010

Collection Overview

Title: Historic Wilmington Cemetery Collection

Dates: 1934-2010

ID: HWC

Primary Creator: Wilmington Historical Society (Calif.)

Extent: 0.44 linear feet

Arrangement: Arranged at the collection level, alphabetically by subject.

Forms of Material: Documents, photographic materials

Language of materials: English

Abstract

The Historic Wilmington Cemetery Collection consists of textual and photographic material related to the history of the Cemetery between 1934 and 2010. This primarily consists of administrative records, photographs, event programs, newspaper clippings, historical sketches, and information pertaining to American soldiers and veterans buried in the Cemetery.

Administrative History

The Historic Wilmington Cemetery, at Eubank Avenue and "O" Street, just north of Pacific Coast Highway, is said to be the oldest active graveyard in Los Angeles County. The Cemetery was established in 1857 with a donation of five acres of land owned by Phineas Banning. The first person laid to rest in the cemetery was Banning's first child, Francenia Allibone "Fanny" Banning. Between 1859 and 1868, four more of Banning's children and his wife, Rebecca Sanford would also be buried in the cemetery. In the 1920s, the size of the cemetery was nearly doubled when father and son, William and Joseph Pashke, began to subdivide and sell plots on their own property adjacent to the eastern boundary of the cemetery. For nearly one hundred years, the cemetery was privately owned, and grounds maintenance was only performed by families tending to their ancestor's graves.

In 1955, the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations spearheaded a project to create an official cemetery district, intended to provide perpetual care for the cemetery, which had become an eyesore. Petitions were delivered to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and three years later the measure appeared as Proposition CC on the November Municipal ballot. The measure passed, the Wilmington Cemetery District was formed, and in January 1959 three men were appointed as the first trustees of the new district. Administration, operations, and maintenance of the Cemetery was funded by a combination of oil revenues, taxes, and the sale of plots.

In June of 1987, the Cemetery was reportedly forced to lay off its staff and close temporarily. This was primarily due to financial difficulties brought on by reduced oil royalties and budget cuts related to Proposition 13. The Los Angeles City Council approved an emergency loan to reopen the Cemetery, while the trustees worked to pass a resolution ordering the formation of an assessment district. In 1988, the resolution requiring property owners to pay a small yearly assessment fee was passed, securing stable funding for Cemetery landscaping, maintenance, and operations. With renewed interest in the Cemetery, community leaders began working to establish the location as a Los Angeles City landmark. In January 1989, the Cemetery was declared a historic cultural monument by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission.

The Historic Wilmington Cemetery is the final resting place for members of several first families of Southern California, as well as soldiers and veterans from every American war since the Civil War. Phineas Banning, who passed away in March 1885, was buried in the Wilmington Cemetery, but later moved to Angelus Rosedale Cemetery at the request of his second wife, Mary Elizabeth Hollister. Today, the Wilmington Cemetery District is known as the Los Angeles Harbor Area Cemetery District, and operates with a board consisting of a president, vice-president, secretary, and two commissioners. To date, the Cemetery has interred more than 10,000 individuals.

Scope and Contents

The Historic Wilmington Cemetery Collection consists of a small amount of textual and photographic material related to the history of the Cemetery between 1934 and 2010. This consists of Wilmington Cemetery District administrative records, photographs of Banning family and other Wilmington pioneer headstones, Memorial Day ceremonies conducted by Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post# 2967, newspaper clippings, historical sketches, and information pertaining to American soldiers and veterans buried in the Cemetery. The collection is arranged at the collection level, alphabetically by subject.

Subjects/Access Terms

Creator

Organization Name:

Wilmington Historical Society (Calif.)

Subject Headings

Topical Terms:

Cemeteries--California--Los Angeles
Historic landmarks--California--Los Angeles County
Historic sites--California--Los Angeles

Personal Name:

Banning, Phineas, 1830-1885

Organization Name:

Historic Wilmington Cemetery

Geographical Locations:

Los Angeles County (Calif.)
Wilmington (Los Angeles, Calif.)

Documentary Forms:

Documents
Photographic materials

Administrative Information

Processing Information:

 Holli Teltoe, 2023

Processing of this collection is made possible by generous donations from Marathon Petroleum Corporation, Wilmington Neighborhood Council, Fast Lane Transportation, I.L.W.U. Credit Union, Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, and Russell and Laura Mohberg.

Conditions Governing Use: Copyright for unpublished materials authored or otherwise produced by the creators of this collection has not been transferred to the Wilmington Historical Society. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

Conditions Governing Access: The collection is open for research use.

Preferred Citation: Historic Wilmington Cemetery Collection. Wilmington Historical Society.

Acquisition: This collection has been acquired and assembled by the Wilmington Historical Society from a variety of sources. The sources and dates of acquisition are unknown.

Collection Contents

Box 1

Folder 1: Administrative Records, 1975, 1990-1991, 2009-2010

Folder 2: American Soldiers and Veterans

Folder 3: Cemetery Grounds, 1958, 1996

Folder 4: Enumeration (1 of 2)

Folder 5: Enumeration (2 of 2)

Folder 6: Headstones

Folder 7: Historical Sketches

Folder 8: Historical Wilmington Cemetery Walking Tour Program, 1989 January 24

Folder 9: Memorial Day Events, 1985, 1989

Folder 10: Memorial Day Program Booklets, 1989-1990, 1993-1995, 2002-2005, 2007-2008, 2010, 2013, 2017

Folder 11: Newspaper Clippings, 1934, 1951-1959, 1967-1969, 1971, 1980-1992

Folder 12: Wilmington Cemetery District Minutes, Agendas, Deeds, 1959-1960, 1989-1990

Map Case 6

Flat File 1: Veterans of the Civil War Buried at the Historical Wilmington Cemetery

[end of box list]