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But, in the late '60s or early '60s, when the Veterans' Monument was moved to its present site, that stone is now the focal point of the ceremonies, just west of the Masonic Temple.

I can remember my children marching in parade and ending up in the cemetery beside the grave stones of their great-grandparents and other ancestors. Gov. Warner, some Powers and many others who made history in the early days are buried there.

The original cemetery consisted of 2,500 lots, of which less than 100 are still unoccupied. In the early 1980s, the city of Farmington bought the adjoining land, fronting on Grand River and extending eastward. In late 1993, that parcel is being developed with an additional 650 lots that will be available.

West Farmington Cemetery

In 1926, the West Farmington Cemetery came into being as an adjunct of the Baptist Church. About 50 people had been buried half a mile south of the church on the farm of Thomas Johns, and then moved to the present location at the southeast corner of Twelve Mile and Halsted roads where the church membership dropped off and on Aug. 19, 1857, the present Baptist Church was reorganized in the Village of Farmington. The original church building was sold to Alonzo Sprague, who moved it to his farm and used it as a barn. It burned in 1938 after being struck by lightning.

The land was on some kind of a special lease and eventually it was rededicated in 1882 to the West Farmington Burial Ground Society. The neighborhood ladies, organized as the "Willing Workers," held a party every month and the

proceeds went to the upkeep of the cemetery.

The Halsted, Howards, McCrackens are some names associated with this cemetery. Maintaining the cemetery was dependent on the "Willing Workers" and other donations until the City of Farmington Hills took over around 1974.

In the early '90s Twelve Mile Road was widened and some graves had to be moved. Descendants of those to be moved were contacted for their consent. When no descendant could be located the court gave its approval. So, with the help of the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, the first two tiers of graves were moved to other parts of the cemetery, and the "antique" fence was again placed along Twelve Mile Road.

Quaker Cemetery

The next cemetery to be established was the Quaker Cemetery on Gill Road south of Oakland Avenue. It is next to what was original the Quaker Meeting House, constructed in 1876 after several preceding ones had burned.

As the religious members dwindled, it was a dwelling house and much later was an auxiliary building of a local nursing home. In the 1980s it was torn down and a large, modern house occupies the site of the first Quaker meeting group in Michigan.

But the Quaker Cemetery remains. It is part of the original land that founder of Farmington, Arthur Power, deeded to the Society of Friends for a meeting house and burial ground.

Ironically, the first persons to be buried there were Arthur's son Nathan's wife Selinda and their only daughter, five year old Phebe Menerva who died of cholera on

the same day on Aug. 2, 1832. They apparently contracted it from a Mr. Barnum who visited Detroit bringing soldiers back from the Black Hawk War.

Mr. Barnum's illness and subsequent death spread the virus and Phebe and Menerva succumbed. Nate Power, a later descendant known in the 1920s as Farmington's historian, wrote: "There were no ceremonies, no burial service. No other members of the family were the only cholera victims in the pioneer settlement."

But the next burial was that of Nathan Power's 13-month son George, who died on Christmas Eve four months after his mother and sister.

Other members of the Power family were interred there, and Robert Power wrote in 1964, "The last tombstone of a member of the Power family was placed in the cemetery in 1924 with the death of John Power who in his lifetime had been an actor, sailor, insurance executive and treasurer of Oakland County."

John Power's body was cremated and his ashes placed beneath a marker which reads, "John Power with Farragut in Mobile Bay."

"There are more than 200 graves in Farmington's Quaker Cemetery with the majority dating back prior to 1900," wrote Lee S. Peel in his book, "Farmington: A Pictorial History." "Fewer and fewer burials have taken place in the last 60 years and since space is now very limited it is highly probable that there will not be many more."

But, as the Quakers diminished, so did the state of the cemetery. The Farmington Historical Society was founded in 1962 and one of its first projects was, as Peel's book says, "was to put into

focus the deplorable state of the Quaker Cemetery fence and in a quiet burst of community and governmental pride, improvements were made. But the Power family in the early 1970s still provided some support for the upkeep of the cemetery."

North Farmington Cemetery

North Farmington Cemetery is located on Farmington Road about half-way between 13 and 14 Mile Roads.

In the "Oakland County Book of History" it is called the Wolcott Cemetery. It is owned and controlled by a cemetery association which was incorporated in March 1857 under the leadership of Chauncey D. Wolcott, Orange Culver and John H. Button. The first interment in the ground, was that of a young daughter of John Austin Nichols. The second burial was that of Gardner Frink.

They also moved some graves from land that had been used as a graveyard on the Wolcott Farm. The association was reincorporated in 1874, and is still maintaining the cemetery privately. This is the only cemetery in the area that has a veteran of each of America's Wars — from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam.

My sister, great-grandparents and various uncles, aunts and cousins are buried there.

Each of these five cemeteries have historic markers and are invited to visit them, read the markers, stroll through the peaceful places and view and read the gravestones and old-fashioned sculptures.

Kathryn Briggs is a Farmington historian.

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BY ETHEL SIMMONS STAFF WRITER

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Cards submitted by this and other organizations also are being displayed at all five offices of The Observer & Eccentric through the holiday season. Readers may stop in at any O&E office to look through the Christmas card book, select cards and find out how to contact the organization.

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