

## OAKLAND CEMETERY

QUOTES FROM THE BOOK, "RECOLLECTIONS", & LETTERS BY JOHN J. BROWER, D.D.S.

"On Hol's Wegje, the half-mile road, is the Presbyterian Cemetery; this cemetery, west of the Oakland church, was started in 1857. It is a sad story. My father's sister, Gertruda, 17 years, was the first to be buried in that wilderness spot and her grave has never been found. I did not know about this until John Dozeman, Jr., in 1954 told me about it. When Gertruda died of malaria in December of 1857 at 17 years of age, the cemetery still had to be surveyed by E. B. Basset. In 1858 Aart, her father, went in the spring to find her grave; but trees had been felled, brush burned in piles, and stumps and logs dragged away and Aart never found a sign of her grave. He kept it to himself until much later. I called on cousin, John Dozeman, Jr., who lived in the two front rooms of his large house east of Henry Kamps' home. Said John, 'I am 84 years and it is asthma that plagues me, but once or twice I go to the cemetery with scythe and rake. I mow up to the road for Moeder(Mother) thought the grave was under the road'.

"Apple-cheeked Jenna in long night dress was standing by the window looking out. Her straight black hair was parted in the middle and fixed in two tightly braided buns on the back of her head. The little paned window of their large log home was edged with snow. Never in all her seventeen years in Gelderland had she seen anything more surprisingly beautiful than this early morning in December in Noord Amerika. Fluffy snow piled high on the window sill, on the pump hood, on the axe handle in the chopping block, on every picket of the garden fence, on every twig and bough. The early morning sun outlined the snow with pink edges, but on Jenna's red cheek hung a glistening tear. 'Jenna, why are you up so early'? asked her startled mother who had just arisen after having been up many times during the night. The others, her husband, Aart, and children, Gertruda, Elisabet, Fenna, Jan, Alice and Hendrika, were still asleep. 'Geertruida' was all Jenna could say with choked-up voice. On that fairyland-like morning, as quietly as the snow flakes had fallen just so quietly Gertruda had slept away. Jenna had awakened and found her sister dead in bed beside her. Barteld Vredeveld, who lived one half mile north, the nearest neighbor, Justice of the Peace, reader of scripture in the church, came to offer sympathy and help to the grief-stricken family. Said he finally, advisingly, 'From my corner one half mile west by the crooked elm you go one half mile south. That's where the cemetery is going to be'. There Barteld with Dominie Smit and the family, none of the children out of their teens, saw their Gertruda laid away in the wilderness of 1857 during a December 24 snow, a white meaningful Christmas time. They had lived in Mich. scarcely 6 months.

"One day when school was out instead of going home the usual way I went a different way--down the half-mile road with Bert Timmer, my seat-mate. It was a nice little narrow road, the sides abloom with long-stemmed violets, Dutchman's breeches, blood root, May-apples, anemones, tall ferns and fern fronds. Past the

Ben Hol's place and the fenced-in burial ground. I did not know it then but nearly all the people who were laid to rest there belonged to my grandfather's Presbyterian church. There are the gravestones of Hendrik Petter, H. Everhardt, many Van Rhees, six young Geib children, Aart Brower and his wife--Aart dying the day before Christmas just as his daughter. The stone with ball on top has inscribed 'Here rest our beloved elders'. One stone has the name 'William Hodge, Devonshire, England, son-in-law of Lammert Kiel'. This acre is a peaceful solitary place getting permanent care from Overisel Twp."

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"One stormy snow-drifting night a stranger knocked on Kasper Van Ess', the wagon-maker in Drenthe, door. From five miles south the man, Philip Geib, had come on horseback to ask if Kas could make two little coffins. Two Geib children had died, they feared, of diphtheria and had to be buried hurriedly. In the morning Kasper with muscular cheeks and lips whistled across the open field to young Ichabod (later Dr. I.R. De Vries) to come to work for him. Some time later the same man came to ask for three little coffins. Three more Geib children had died suddenly during the epidemic of black diphtheria. In all, six young Geib children, Elizabeth, Mary, Anna, Carolyn, Jane and Jan, died".

HISTORY OF ALLEGAN AND BARRY COUNTIES, BY E.O. WAGNER, published June 19, 1880

"Early in Overisel Township's history a second burial-spot was set apart on Section 11 (Oakland), a half-acre having been purchased for the purpose on the quarterline. It was subsequently controlled by the township, and a half acre added, the whole being neatly fenced and made attractive by the watchful care of the neighboring residents."

*Mary Van Ess*

*1 1/2 Acre - bought by Boerman*

*to*

*Register office - Allegan Co. Mich*

*Received for Record 14 day of June A.D. 1891  
at 1 1/2 o'clock p.m. and Record in Liber 60  
of Deeds on pages 538.*

*Jan Van Klee-  
Lukas Verduvel  
Klaas Boerman  
Harm. Chapers  
Hendrik Verduvel  
Henrick Boerman*

*Jan Van Damp 71  
2 lot 71  
Geo Boerman  
B. Verduvel  
Hendrik Verduvel  
H. Verduvel  
Klaas Redden*

*Henrick Boerman  
H. Boerman  
Bart Verduvel  
in ex 11 of Overisel  
Burial-ground*