

Street Names Tell Cranford History

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Over 200 years ago a sentry named James Morgan was tried and convicted of murdering Parson Caldwell, a young chaplain in Washington's army. Morgan's execution, a hanging, will long be remembered, for it took place in an area that later became known as Gallows Hill Road.

Not all of Cranford's streets have such an infamous history, but many of their names tell a part of the town's past. Several streets were named after early settlers and prominent families. Denman Road, for example, was named for John Denman, the first permanent white settler in Cranford, who came here in the early 1700's. Crane Parkway bears the name of the family of Stephen Crane, one of the original Elizabeth Associates who acquired property in the West Fields in 1699.

Dunham Avenue was named for an old family whose members included Grandmother Dunham, a bold old lady who reportedly was not afraid of the British and would sit right by her front window while a raid was going on. To scare them off, she placed a placard in the window with "Smallpox Here" written in large letters.

Alden Street took the first name of Alden Bigelow, a real estate developer in the 1860's, whose property is now Cleveland School grounds. In a similar manner, Miln Street was named for Miln P. Dayton, one of the partners in Bigelow's firm, and Eastman Street was named for the third partner.

Mendell Avenue carries the name of Judge William Mendell, a Civil War veteran and justice of the peace here for 50 years after the war.

Cranford's first mayor, Sylvester Cahill, was honored through the naming of Sylvester Street after him.

Adams Avenue bears the name of the first tax collector, Emmor K. Adams.

Ludlow Avenue was named for Gideon Ludlow, who was chairman of the Westfield enlistment committee during the Civil War.

Union Avenue has the name of the union of Civil War days, while Centennial Avenue was named in honor of the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Several Streets were named after Presidents, including Buchanan Street for James Buchanan; Arthur Terrace for Chester A. Arthur; McKinley Street for William McKinley; Coolidge Drive for Calvin Coolidge; Roosevelt Avenue for Theodore Roosevelt; Grant Avenue for Ulysses S. Grant, and Lincoln Avenue for Abraham Lincoln.

Some of the town's war dead also have had streets named after them. Among these are Fiske Terrace for Capt. Newell Rodney Fiske, and Army infantryman killed in World War I, and Alan Okell Place, Roger Norton Place, Chester Lange Place and Keith Jeffries Avenue for men killed in World War II.

Another group of streets, known as College Estates, bears the names of well-known American colleges. These include Amherst Road, Colby Lane, Cornell Road, Dartmouth Road, Brown Terrace, Harvard Road, Yale Terrace, Penn Road, Princeton Road and Rutgers Road.

Editor's note: Arthur Terrace, McKinley Street and Coolidge Drive are no longer on today's Cranford maps.