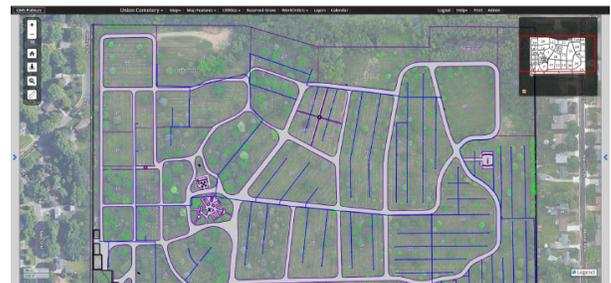# Union Cemetery Case Study

Every cemetery is unique, but large cemeteries with long histories typically share a common trait: They have copious records to maintain and manage. Union Cemetery in Maplewood, Minnesota, is no exception.

Union Cemetery was incorporated in 1889, thanks to backing from a coalition of various Swedish churches in the region. Located south of the Maplewood Nature Center, the cemetery consists of 60 acres of picturesque grounds and more than 26,000 burials.

For cemeteries of Union Cemetery's size, transitioning from paper to digital records can seem daunting—if not nearly impossible. But keeping important historical data secure for future generations and sharing that information with the local community make the investment of time and resources worthwhile. That's why Union Cemetery decided to migrate their cemetery maps and records to CIMS.

Protecting cemetery records

In the early 2000s, Union Cemetery wanted to update their record-keeping system. As a family-operated cemetery, the staff wanted to make sure that the next generation of cemeterians would inherit comprehensive and well-maintained records. This process started in-house. They scanned all their documents and maps, effectively digitizing over a century of information.

A view of the Union Cemetery map in CIMS Platinum.

For many cemeteries, converting paper records to digital files and storing them on an on-premises server is an important step toward modernizing cemetery management. However, these digital records may be just as difficult to access and share if not organized by an easy-to-use and dynamic database. At the end of the day, the Union Cemetery staff needed more than scanned documents to manage their cemetery efficiently. They needed to connect their wealth of data to an up-to-date map of their cemetery grounds.

Transitioning to an all-in-one solution

To streamline their operations, Union Cemetery partnered with Ramaker and implemented CIMS. As a full-service architecture and engineering firm, Ramaker has extensive GIS mapping capabilities. When it came time to migrate all of Union Cemetery's data to CIMS, a team of GIS experts used the cemetery's paper maps, as well as aerial imagery of the grounds, to accurately map each burial location.

"CIMS makes our jobs easier on a daily basis."

—Dominic Pierre, Union Cemetery Association

Union Cemetery Case Study

From there, Ramaker's dedicated CIMS team linked all ownership, interment, and marker information to the corresponding grave spaces.

Today, the Union Cemetery staff can view what's sold, what's reserved, and what's available on a real-time digital map.

"CIMS makes our jobs easier on a daily basis. I actually get to see a physical map of our cemetery rather than the old books that we used to have," said Dominic Pierre of the Union Cemetery Association.

The cemetery also uses CIMS to manage daily tasks, such as locating graves and monuments, creating work orders, and documenting completed maintenance tasks.

Growing with CIMS

Ramaker's relationship with Union Cemetery began in 2008, when the cemetery installed CIMS Desktop. Since then, both the cemetery and CIMS's offerings have grown and evolved. In 2019, Union Cemetery decided to move all their cemetery data to the cloud and upgraded to CIMS Platinum. The cemetery also uses the Burial Search feature, which allows them to share records with the public and assist genealogists with historical research.

> "Developing long-term relationships with the cemeteries we serve is what really sets CIMS apart."
>
> —Brandon Finley, Director of CIMS

"Industry-leading mapping technology is the cornerstone of CIMS, but our emphasis on developing long-term relationships with the cemeteries we serve is what really sets CIMS apart," said Brandon Finley, Director of CIMS.

Since 1998, Ramaker has provided cemetery management solutions that help cemeteries streamline operations and save money. Ready to modernize your cemetery's records? Email cims@ramaker.com or call (608) 643-4100 to start a conversation with one of the firm's CIMS experts.

855 Community Drive
Sauk City, WI 53583

(608) 643-4100
www.cimscemeterysoftware.com