

Focus

They range from small family, church, and community plots that dot our landscapes to very large city cemeteries that occupy many acres. Far from the images of movies and ghost tales, cemeteries can be exciting resources for the study of local and cultural history. The cemetery as a historical resource is our focus in this issue.

Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis was selected as the example for study. It is the largest cemetery in Indiana and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. It is a fine example of the rural cemetery movement of the mid-nineteenth century.

In "Destination . . . the Cemetery," we provide an overview of the rural cemetery movement.

The next few pages—using Crown Hill as an example—describe and illustrate the many ways to look at a cemetery and the many resources that it offers.

Next, we singled out one individual buried at Crown Hill for closer study. We started with a fascinating gravestone and found one family's sad story.

On page 10, we provide some information about cemeteries and the law in Indiana. A status report on cemetery study in Indiana provides some context for the survey information that follows.

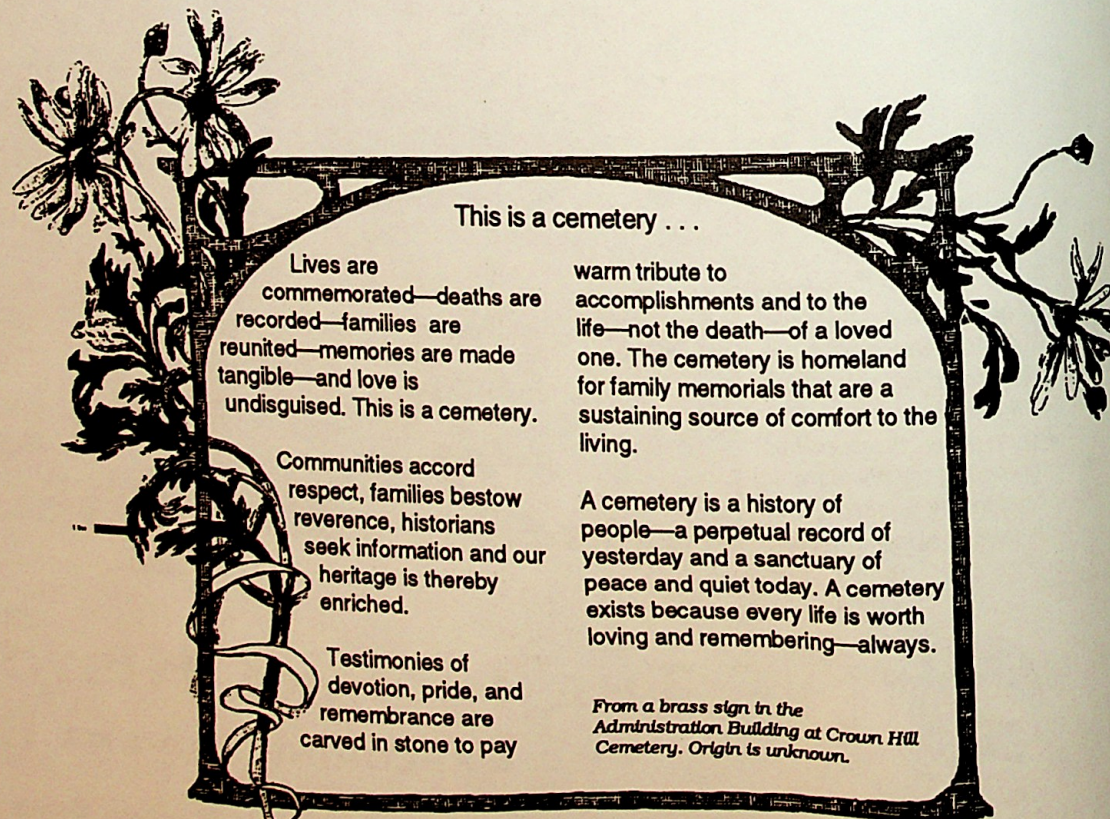
Over many years, chapters of the Indiana Junior Historical Society gathered cemetery information. That information is part of the collection of the Genealogy Division, Indiana State Library, and other repositories. Surveying a cemetery can be fun, informative, and a

contribution to your local history.

On page 12, we provide a form to use in a cemetery survey. Be sure to note the hints on pages 11 and 13 as you decide how you can add to your community's history through cemetery studies.

On page 14, we have provided a puzzle to solve using gravestone symbols. The "Apple" on page 15 contains some useful resources to enlarge upon your study of cemeteries.

Your community has cemeteries that can provide rich information about your history. You can help preserve that history by surveying and recording cemeteries, if that has not already been done. You can seek further documentation for the people and families represented. You can also promote the value of caring for and preserving the cemetery for future study.



Destination . . . the Cemetery

What is the most popular tourist attraction near where you live? Is it, for example, Lake Michigan, a historic site, a state park, an amusement park, or a race track? Have you ever thought about a cemetery as a tourist attraction?

Over one hundred and fifty years ago, new rural, or garden, cemeteries were growing into major tourist attractions in the Northeast. By 1850, rural cemeteries existed throughout the United States. The park-like settings and artistic monuments provided a peaceful, beautiful alternative to the noise and dirt of rapidly growing cities and towns. Guidebooks and travelers' accounts promoted these cemeteries to visitors.

The development of rural cemeteries demonstrated an important change in the way people thought about death and disease. Prior to the nineteenth century, the dead were buried in small plots on the family farm, in church burying grounds, or town graveyards

located near the meeting house.

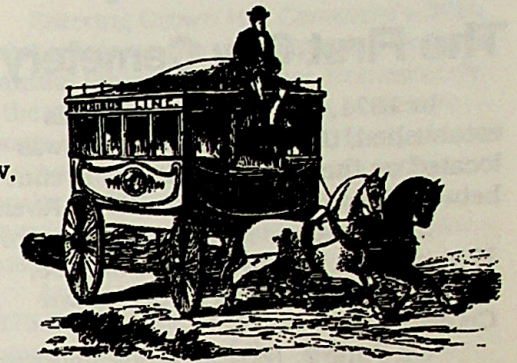
As cities and commerce grew, many burying grounds were removed, covered over, vandalized, or simply lost. Some Americans became concerned about a safe burial place for themselves and their families.

As populations in towns and cities grew, so did the numbers of dead—especially during epidemics of yellow fever or cholera. Town and church burying grounds filled up. Doctors and scientists discussed new theories about the spread of contagious disease, including the effect of overcrowded graveyards in cities and towns.

During the same time, rapid growth of cities and industry led many Americans to seek the ideals and values of an earlier rural lifestyle—including maintaining the family and strengthening appreciation of America's historical past.

The new rural cemetery, located away from the city, provided a place to bury the dead without fear of spreading disease. Its landscaped acres—including forests, flowers, water, and sculpture—also provided a place for the living to retreat from the city.

In 1864, when Crown Hill Cemetery opened, it was difficult to get there. The few roads that existed were in poor condition. Many people had no means of transportation. A private enterprise, the "Omnibus Line," provided a means of getting to the new cemetery.



Lot owners were responsible for erecting family monuments and individual markers and for maintaining their gravesites. Often they erected impressive, artistic sculptures, which displayed various religious, natural, or mythological symbols. Such sculptures also attracted visitors. So many visitors entered cemetery gates, in fact, that associations developed rules governing behavior.

Some critics denounced an intrusion of recreation amid grave-stones. The availability of beautifully landscaped areas for public enjoyment, however, became popular, and large, designed public parks soon developed as an alternative.

Today, cemeteries are popular places to visit. They still offer a chance to enjoy beautiful landscaping, sculpture, and architecture. In addition, they provide a window to the past through the study of monuments, inscriptions, related documents, and records.

Sources: Meyer, Cemeteries and Gravemarkers, and Sloane, The Last Great Necessity.

OMNIBUS LINE	
CROWN HILL	
OMNIBUS LINE	
<p>AN OMNIBUS LINE WILL COMMENCE RUNNING this, Monday morning, May 30th, from the Post Office, Palmer House and Bates House, to</p> <p>CROWN HILL CEMETERY,</p> <p>By the way of Camp Carrington, making four round trips daily, according to the following time table:</p>	
Leave.	Arrive.
7.00 A. M.	9.00 A. M.
9.30 A. M.	11.30 A. M.
1.30 P. M.	3.30 P. M.
5.30 P. M.	8.30 P. M.
<p>*Fare 25 cents, or 50 cents for the round trip, to either the Cemetery or the Camp</p>	

Indianapolis Daily State Sentinel, June 1, 1864